



# Economic and Social Council

Distr.: General  
20 February 2024

Original: English

## 2024 session

27 July 2023–24 July 2024

Coordination segment

### Summary record of the 7th meeting

Held at Headquarters, New York, on Thursday, 1 February 2024, at 10 a.m.

*President:* Mr. Rakhmetullin (Vice-President) . . . . . (Kazakhstan)

## Contents

Agenda item 8: Coordination segment (*continued*)

*Interactive discussion: “Conversation with Executive Secretaries of regional commissions and Chairs of functional commissions and expert bodies on sustainable, resilient and innovative solutions to accelerate the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development”*

This record is subject to correction.

Corrections should be submitted in one of the working languages. They should be set forth in a memorandum and also incorporated in a copy of the record. They should be sent as soon as possible to the Chief of the Documents Management Section ([dms@un.org](mailto:dms@un.org)).

Corrected records will be reissued electronically on the Official Document System of the United Nations (<http://documents.un.org/>).

24-01830 (E)



Please recycle



*In the absence of Ms. Narváez Ojeda (Chile), Mr. Rakhmetullin (Kazakhstan), Vice-President, took the Chair.*

*The meeting was called to order at 10.10 a.m.*

**Agenda item 8: Coordination segment (continued)**

*Interactive discussion: “Conversation with Executive Secretaries of regional commissions and Chairs of functional commissions and expert bodies on sustainable, resilient and innovative solutions to accelerate the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development”*

1. **The President** asked about the ways in which the Economic Commission for Europe (ECE) was facilitating the integration of environmental concerns into economic models among its member States, in order to strike a balance between economic growth and the preservation of natural resources. He also asked for further information on the initiatives taken to ensure sustainable and equitable economic progress.

2. **Ms. Molcean** (Executive Secretary of the Economic Commission for Europe (ECE)), panellist, speaking via video link, said that the green transition and the shift to a circular economy would help to reconcile environmental sustainability with increased prosperity. The sixty-ninth session of ECE, which had focused on the transition to a circular economy and the sustainable use of natural resources, and the seventieth session of ECE, which had addressed the digital and green transformations, had bolstered cooperation within the Commission on a number of initiatives related to those topics. Such initiatives included the ECE Convention on the Protection and Use of Transboundary Watercourses and International Lakes, which was open for accession by all United Nations Member States and contributed to better water management through transboundary water cooperation, an endeavour that was essential to reconciling the various uses of water resources and unlocking funding for the necessary infrastructure. Moreover, the ECE programme of environmental performance reviews, currently in its third cycle, helped countries to improve their environmental management and integrate environmental policies into economic sectors. Countries and companies in the region were also provided with tools to enable the traceability of supply chains so that they could present their environment-related activities transparently and credibly.

3. In February 2024, the Commission’s Inland Transport Committee was expected to adopt a strategy to reduce greenhouse gas emissions from inland

transport, with the goal of net-zero emissions by 2050. The green transition would cause difficulties for some geographical areas and population groups; a just transition was therefore necessary. ECE was working to advance climate goals while ensuring a positive economic outlook in areas such as coal-producing regions, which would be particularly affected by the transition.

4. **The President** wished to know the ways in which the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC) was addressing the unique economic and environmental challenges faced by the region, and the ways in which it was supporting member States’ efforts to orient the focus of their economic policies towards sustainability, resilience, risk reduction and equity.

5. **Mr. Salazar-Xirinachs** (Executive Secretary of the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC)), panellist, speaking video link, said that the countries of the region had a low capacity for economic growth, with average growth in the region expected to be only 1.9 per cent in 2024, following average growth of only 0.8 per cent between 2014 and 2023. That phenomenon was attributable to the countries’ inability to generate sufficient growth and therefore adequate numbers of high-quality jobs, and was worsened by climate shocks, which undermined food production and infrastructure and required the resettlement of people, among other consequences. Investment and financing for climate change adaptation were needed to address that situation. Countries in the region also faced high levels of inequality. ECLAC had identified six root causes of such inequality and had advised Governments in the region to take action to address them through an integrated approach. Countries in the region had weak institutional and governance capacities, a challenge that, in turn, hindered progress towards improving economic growth and reducing inequality. Such governance challenges were exacerbated by an increase in organized crime and drug trafficking, greater political polarization, and reduced trust in institutions and in democracy.

6. ECLAC was working to strengthen technical, operational, political and foresight capacities to address the challenges relating to governance, social dialogue and the political economy of reforms. It also recommended that countries scale up productive development policies by focusing on key areas relating to green growth, such as energy transition, electric mobility, the bioeconomy, the circular economy, food security and sustainable tourism. Comprehensive care systems were also essential to improve the labour participation and digital inclusion of women. ECLAC

was helping countries to advance tax reforms through the recently launched Regional Tax Cooperation Platform for Latin America and the Caribbean, which was led by Colombia and of which ECLAC served as the technical secretariat. ECLAC was also fostering discussions about the reform of the international financial architecture.

7. The seventh meeting of the Forum of the Countries of Latin America and the Caribbean on Sustainable Development, to be held in Santiago in April 2024, would provide an opportunity to review progress towards the Sustainable Development Goals and the six “transitions”, or entry points, leading to the fulfilment of the Goals: food systems; energy access and affordability; digital connectivity; education; jobs and social protection; and climate change, biodiversity loss and pollution. A special session on the Summit of the Future, to be convened in 2024 in accordance with General Assembly resolution [76/307](#), would be held in order to foster regional engagement and revitalize multilateralism.

8. **The President** asked about the views of the United Nations Forum on Forests concerning the role of forests in accelerating progress towards the Sustainable Development Goals, in particular building on the outcome of the twenty-eighth session of the Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change.

9. **Mr. Maniratanga** (Permanent Representative of Burundi to the United Nations and Chair of the United Nations Forum on Forests), panellist, said that there was growing global recognition of the importance of healthy forests for protecting the planet and building resilience against escalating climate crises, as such forests were fundamental to the transformation required to achieve sustainable development. At its twenty-eighth session, the Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change had attributed critical importance to forests and nature-based solutions, underscoring the need to halt and reverse deforestation and forest degradation by 2030, in accordance with the global forest goals of the United Nations strategic plan for forests 2017–2030.

10. The full potential of forests remained to be harnessed. The conversation, protection and restoration of forests must therefore be enhanced in order to offset the impact of climate change and accelerate the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. Increased investment was essential to improving forests’ resilience and capacity to adapt to climate change, and nature-based solutions should be used to address short-term and long-term shocks to

livelihoods. Progress towards the Goals should be accelerated through a holistic and comprehensive landscape approach and through activities such as afforestation, reforestation and the restoration of forests. Forest-based services and products, as well as the benefits of sustainable forest management for adaptive and resilient development, should be more broadly publicized.

11. Advancing the fulfilment of global commitments relating to forests, particularly the global forest goals of the United Nations strategic plan for forests 2017–2030, was critical to encouraging concerted action to tackle the drivers of deforestation and implement the 2030 Agenda. The United Nations Forum on Forests was the only intergovernmental body that provided a global framework for forest-related action in support of the accelerated implementation of the United Nations strategic plan for forests 2017–2030 and of the 2030 Agenda. At its nineteenth session, to be held in May 2024, the Forum would hold its high-level segment and carry out a midterm review of the international arrangement on forests. That session would provide a critical opportunity to promote synergies and collaboration on forests and their links to the Council’s work, and to strengthen integrated policy approaches to implement the 2030 Agenda.

12. **The President** wished to know the ways in which the Committee of Experts on the Transport of Dangerous Goods and on the Globally Harmonized System of Classification and Labelling of Chemicals was working to enhance global safety standards for the transport of dangerous goods and chemicals in the context of sustainable development.

13. **Mr. Pfund** (International Program Coordinator, Pipeline and Hazardous Materials Safety Administration of the United States Department of Transportation and Chair of the Committee of Experts on the Transport of Dangerous Goods and on the Globally Harmonized System of Classification and Labelling of Chemicals for 2023–2024), panellist, said that many dangerous goods, including those used daily in households worldwide, fell within the purview of the Committee of Experts. Such goods were subject to globally harmonized provisions that contributed to the safe management of chemicals throughout their life cycle and promoted global initiatives such as facilitating the market introduction of affordable and clean energy alternatives.

14. The recommendations of the Committee of Experts for the transport of dangerous goods were implemented through international legal instruments relating to air, maritime and land transport, in partnership with the International Maritime

Organization, the International Civil Aviation Organization, the International Atomic Energy Agency and ECE, and through regional and national instruments. The recommendations of the Committee of Experts for the protection of workers and consumers from exposure to hazardous chemicals were implemented in partnership with the International Labour Organization, the United Nations Environment Programme, the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, and the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development, and through laws adopted in more than 70 countries.

15. Consistent focus on technical and policy coordination between the various relevant organizations was critical to ensuring the safe and uninterrupted trade of hazardous materials. In order to expand its influence within its existing collaboration framework to emphasize the importance of Sustainable Development Goals relevant to its work, the Committee of Experts had drawn on the guidance provided at the Council's 2023 coordination segment by implementing a process to identify such Goals, enabling its secretariat to compile statistics to document and visually represent the impact of the Committee of Experts. That process remained under development; as it had been implemented quickly before the December 2022 session of the Committee of Experts, linkages with the Sustainable Development Goals had been identified in only 8 per cent of documents at that session, while that figure had increased to 20 per cent by the December 2023 session. The main Goals referred to had been Goal 3, on ensuring healthy lives and promoting well-being for all at all ages; Goal 12, on ensuring sustainable consumption and production patterns; Goal 16, on peace, justice and strong institutions; and Goal 17, on partnerships. The Committee had also incorporated into its agenda a standing item relating to ways in which to leverage its efforts to accelerate the implementation of the 2030 Agenda.

16. **Ms. Alisjahbana** (Executive Secretary of the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP)), panellist, in a pre-recorded video statement, said that accelerating progress towards the Sustainable Development Goals was a priority in Asia and the Pacific. However, the countries of the region were expected to make less than half of the progress required to achieve the Goals by 2030. In 2022, progress in the region had been strongest on Goal 7, relating affordable and clean energy, and on Goal 9, relating to industry, innovation and infrastructure; however, progress on Goal 13, relating to climate action, had been reversed.

17. Digital innovation, supported by enabling policy and regulatory regimes, could help to leverage the collective effort needed for meaningful course correction. The theme "Leveraging digital innovation for sustainable development in Asia and the Pacific" had therefore been selected for the eightieth session of ESCAP, to be held in April 2024. The study prepared by ESCAP on that topic had shown that the region was a hub for digitally driven innovations capable of turbocharging sustainable development. The region's sociodemographic profile, digitally literate youth, economies of scale and rapidly expanding digital infrastructure were also valuable in that regard. To harness such potential, regional digital cooperation should be strengthened through the full use of platforms such as the Asia-Pacific Information Superhighway.

18. Universal access to digital infrastructure, together with complementary policy environments that promoted digital inclusion, were essential. Diverse digital capabilities should be developed, particularly through lifelong learning in order to uphold the rights of vulnerable people, including older persons, to acquire in-demand and marketable advanced skills. The experience of some countries in the region in implementing regulatory sandboxes, in which experimentation was promoted and failure was tolerated without resulting in systemic instability, was also noteworthy.

19. The engagement of multiple stakeholders in the design and implementation of government policies would be critical. The United Nations could provide a valuable forum for sharing good practices relating to policy convergence and the financing of digital innovation in order to promote the inclusive development, replication and expansion of such innovation within and between countries. ESCAP stood ready to share the experiences and policy practices of the Asia-Pacific region with other regions.

20. **The President** asked about the innovative approaches used by the Economic Commission for Africa (ECA) to enhance the effectiveness of efforts to implement the 2030 Agenda and Agenda 2063 of the African Union.

21. **Mr. Gatete** (Executive Secretary of the Economic Commission for Africa (ECA)), panellist, speaking via video link, said that the tenth session of the Africa Regional Forum on Sustainable Development, to be held in Cairo in April 2024, would provide crucial contributions to the high-level political forum on sustainable development, advance the outcomes of the 2023 Sustainable Development Goals Summit and enable ECA, its strategic partners and United Nations

entities to reach consensus on the priorities of Africa in preparation for the Summit of the Future.

22. ECA and its partners had taken a number of steps to achieve results effectively and efficiently, in accordance with the 2030 Agenda and Agenda 2063 of the African Union. For example, to help its member States to generate wealth from their natural resources, ECA was supporting their efforts to develop and sustain high-integrity carbon markets that generated high-quality carbon credit. It was also scaling up the Great Blue Wall initiative, which had the potential to secure some 100 million tons of blue carbon and create 1 to 2 million blue jobs by 2030. In addition, ECA was supporting its member countries in the implementation of climate financing initiatives, including nature-for-aid swaps and the use of greener growth funds.

23. To foster inclusive green growth in Africa, ECA was actively supporting the efforts of member countries, such as the Democratic Republic of the Congo and Zambia, to develop regional value chains. It was also helping Zambia and Zimbabwe to create a common agro-industrial park in order to localize agroprocessing and supply and production chains, leading to improved food security and economic resilience. Moreover, ECA was supporting its member States in their efforts to increase their fiscal space by advocating global financial architecture reforms, and was working to reduce the risks associated with investments in order to attract private sector funding.

24. To promote digital transformation in Africa, ECA was supporting initiatives to empower girls, develop infrastructure, regulate emerging technologies, strengthen cybersecurity and bolster digital governance. ECA was also involved in the “Giga” initiative and the Smart Africa Alliance, in order to connect every school in Africa to the Internet by leveraging innovative financing models. The African Continental Free Trade Area could greatly amplify the impact of those initiatives; ECA was therefore closely collaborating with the African Union in order to accelerate the implementation of the related agreement.

25. **Mr. Revilla Lagdameo** (Permanent Representative of the Philippines to the United Nations and Chair of the Commission on the Status of Women), panellist, said that, in the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action, emphasis had been placed on the intrinsic link between women’s poverty, a lack of economic opportunities, limited access to resources, education in the digital age and support services. Reviews of the implementation of the Platform for Action over the previous 25 years had nevertheless revealed the insufficiency of budgetary allocations for gender equality-related activities across

the 12 critical areas of concern identified in the Platform.

26. The sixty-seventh session of the Commission, held under the theme “Innovation and technological change, and education in the digital age for achieving gender equality and the empowerment of all women and girls”, had provided an opportunity for the achievement of normative gains in that area. Digital technology could greatly facilitate the empowerment of women and girls, and would be central to the implementation of the 2030 Agenda. Although a basic necessity, digital access remained out of reach for many women and girls. Closing the digital divide between men and women was thus a crucial step towards gender equality both online and offline. Digital access had also led to new challenges, such as the perpetuation of gender stereotypes and negative social norms, and the creation of vicious cycles in which inequalities were amplified through digital tools.

27. In the agreed conclusions adopted at its sixty-seventh session, the Commission had offered clear guidance on the steps to be taken by Governments and other stakeholders in order to prioritize digital equity to close the digital divide between men and women; leverage financing for inclusive digital transformation and innovation to achieve gender equality and the empowerment of all women and girls; ensure gender-responsiveness in the design, development and deployment of technology; strengthen fairness, transparency and accountability in the digital age; enhance data science to achieve gender equality and the empowerment of all women and girls; and prevent and eliminate all forms of violence, including gender-based violence, occurring through or amplified by the use of technology.

28. **The President** wished to know the ways in which the Commission on Science and Technology for Development was facilitating global cooperation in science, technology and innovation in order to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals, particularly in the context of digital transformation.

29. **Ms. Amoroso das Neves** (Chair of the Commission on Science and Technology for Development), panellist, said that calls for the sharing of knowledge and technology among countries had consistently been heard at the Commission’s annual sessions. In response, in recent years, the Commission, through the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD), which served as its secretariat, had worked to enhance international collaboration, including North-South cooperation, South-South cooperation and triangular cooperation, in order to promote and share

science-technology- and innovation-related solutions for achieving the Sustainable Development Goals.

30. The Commission had also taken practical initiatives to facilitate knowledge-sharing and capacity-building through concrete partnerships. For example, under the CropWatch Innovative Cooperation Programme, launched in collaboration with the Academy of Sciences of China in 2021, the Commission was assisting 11 developing countries in their efforts to shift away from manual agricultural surveying towards a remote-sensing-based crop monitoring system, thus helping them to better predict crop yields and ensure food security. Significant numbers of women were also participating in the Programme. The Programme therefore contributed directly to the achievement of Sustainable Development Goal 2, on hunger eradication, Goal 5, on gender equality and empowerment, and Goal 17.

31. In 2021, the Commission had also launched, in collaboration with Okayama University in Japan, two programmes aimed at building research capabilities in developing countries. Those programmes directly supported the implementation of Goal 5 and of Goal 9, target 5, on enhancing scientific research in developing countries by fostering and nurturing young scientists in those countries. In August 2023, the Commission had held, in collaboration with the Science, Research and Innovation Institute of Thailand, a training workshop on biodiversity, circular and green growth for 17 female researchers from nine countries in Africa and Asia, an initiative that contributed directly to Goals 5, 12, 13 and 17.

32. In January 2024 in Azores, Portugal, the Commission had initiated, in cooperation with the Atlantic International Research Centre, a project to support the individuals responsible for crafting policies on science, technology and innovation in two developing countries in their efforts to use geospatial technology as a catalyst for sustainable urban development and the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals. That project contributed directly to Goal 11, on sustainable cities and communities, and to Goal 17. On 29 February 2024 and 1 March 2024 in Manila, the Commission also planned to hold, in collaboration with the United States and the Philippines, a workshop on harnessing the power of science, innovation and technology for disaster risk reduction. That project contributed directly to Goals 11 and 17. In addition, at its twenty-seventh session, to be held in April 2024, the Commission would discuss global cooperation in science, technology and innovation for development, in addition to hosting exhibitions on that topic.

33. **The President** asked about the ways in which the United Nations Group of Experts on Geographical Names was contributing to the standardization and dissemination of geographical names in order to support sustainable development.

34. **Mr. Jaillard** (President of the National Toponymy Commission of France and Chair of the United Nations Group of Experts on Geographical Names), panellist, in a pre-recorded video statement, said that, in 2024, the Group of Experts would focus on Sustainable Development Goals 16 and 17. Among populations worldwide, there was a widespread expectation that the language of each individual be respected in the establishment of geographical names, as such respect was a matter of identity, dignity, justice and peace. Nevertheless, challenges arose in situations involving interactions among speakers of different languages, particularly with regard to the names used in a certain language for places situated outside the area in which that language was spoken, and the solutions varied depending on the languages and, in some cases, the countries involved.

35. The Group of Experts had made progress in analysing such situations in its recent discussions on exonyms, concerning the names used in a certain language for places situated outside the countries in which the language was spoken, and on geographical names in minority and Indigenous languages, and attached great importance to the balanced treatment of such situations. In that regard, the Group of Experts had actively supported the Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues, particularly in the context of the International Decade of Indigenous Languages, in its efforts to conserve, promote and restore Indigenous geographical names by making them available in a database.

36. At its most recent session, the Group of Experts had strengthened its cooperation with United Nations mappers in order to improve the geographical data used in the Organization's missions, in particular its humanitarian missions. The Group of Experts was also continuing its work with the Committee of Experts on Global Geospatial Information Management on a collaborative project to identify and promote good practices relating to cooperation among national geographical names authorities and national mapping authorities. The Group of Experts would also include, as the main focus of the next edition of its biannual bulletin, a call for contributions from its members. The Group of Experts appreciated the fact that the Council recognized the cultural and practical importance of having standardized geographical names, as well as the value of the projects of the Group of Experts in that area.

37. **The President** asked for information about the latest work of the Committee of Experts on Global Geospatial Information Management, and about the ways in which the Committee was promoting the accelerated implementation of the 2030 Agenda.

38. **Ms. Merodio Gómez** (Vice-President of the National Institute of Statistics and Geography of Mexico and Co-Chair of the Committee of Experts on Global Geospatial Information Management ), panellist, said that the Committee of Experts was continuing to harness geospatial information to effectively address global challenges and carry out the 2030 Agenda. The Committee of Experts was also accelerating the implementation of its consensus-based frameworks, norms, principles and guides, including the development of geospatial capacities and capabilities, resulting in benefits to all Member States. High-quality, timely, comparable and accessible geospatial information was vital for decision-making relating to poverty reduction, climate change and resilience, as such decision-making required an understanding of geographic location. In providing a digitalized version of the physical world, geospatial information was relevant to many areas across the development and resilience paradigm.

39. The Committee of Experts recognized that the various aspects of resilience were interlinked and would require similar localized data in order to assess risk and inform decision-making. The Committee of Experts therefore intended to create, under its new substantive agenda item relating to geospatial information for climate resilience, separate sub-items on climate-related matters and on resilience for consideration at future sessions, so as to strengthen the coordination and coherence of its climate- and development-related work. The Committee of Experts was also capitalizing on geospatial information for effective land administration, which was essential to ensuring secure tenure rights and equitable access to land for all, and therefore to reducing poverty. In addition, the United Nations Global Geodetic Centre of Excellence was preparing, in consultation with Member States, a joint development plan to address the lack of resilience in the global geodetic infrastructure, which supported the devices needed to measure the Earth, ensured accurate location services for the benefit of national economies and underpinned many services vital to national development. Moreover, the seventh High-level Forum on Global Geospatial Information Management would be held in Mexico City in October 2024 under the theme, “Accelerating implementation: achieving resilience”.

40. **The President** asked about the strategies recommended by the Committee of Experts on Public

Administration to transform public sector institutions and governance for the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals.

41. **Ms. Fraser-Moleketi** (Chancellor of Nelson Mandela University and Chair of the Committee of Experts on Public Administration, panellist, said that a cascade of simultaneous crises had undermined the resilience of Governments at all levels, as well as their capacity to address the root causes of complex challenges in a holistic and context-sensitive manner. The application of the 11 principles of effective governance, identified by the Committee of Experts and by the Department of Economic and Social Affairs, remained a cornerstone of the Committee’s work. Multidimensional coverage of each of those principles was a useful means of enhancing policy analysis related to Sustainable Development Goal 16. The Goal indicators should be detailed enough to capture the quality of the action taken by Governments, while addressing analytical gaps in the review process.

42. The Committee of Experts had paid particular attention to the inclusiveness of public institutions in order to reinforce the 2030 Agenda and eradicate poverty. Those aims would require countries to take appropriate action and to implement their own models of participation, while providing an enabling environment for civic engagement so as to ensure that no one was left behind. Agile and data- and insight-driven institutions were necessary to improve preparedness and resilience in crisis management. Building such institutions required expanding access to new skills, fostering collaborative and citizen-centred mindsets among public servants, and strengthening the capacities of subnational governments and developing countries. A review of the capabilities of the public sector workforce to achieve the Goals and of the related training initiatives was also necessary. All actors should be made aware of the ambitious nature and potential of the Goals in order to accelerate their implementation.

43. Given the urgent need to strengthen the global response to climate change, it was necessary to expand the capacity of developing countries and subnational governments to gain access to climate financing. Training and assistance should, as a matter of priority, be provided for developed countries, international financial institutions and other actors committed to climate financing in order to improve their skills in analysing data and designing climate projects aimed at attracting investment. The Committee of Experts was also discussing insurance to better combat climate change and accelerate the implementation of the 2030 Agenda. Moreover, it saw value in linking institution-building and environmental management in

the context of peacebuilding in conflict-affected countries.

44. To strengthen Member States' capacities to address multiple crises, it was necessary to improve revenue forecasting and planning, and public financial management, while ensuring the required level of accountability, transparency and participation in budget processes. A focus on the Sustainable Development Goals should be central to national development planning. Similarly, when formulating budgets, national treasuries should meaningfully incorporate a focus on the Goals instead of including it as an afterthought in order to comply with the reporting requirements set by international or regional bodies. The Committee of Experts was also exploring ways to reduce poverty in fragile and conflict-affected settings through sounder public financial management.

45. The stimulation of public sector innovation through digital technology affected all government actors, including operational agencies, regulatory authorities and oversight bodies. Public service delivery should be managed through hybrid approaches that reflected people's needs and aspirations while addressing deficits in digital capacities. New policy and regulatory regimes and standards should also be adopted in order to improve data governance and mitigate the risks arising from the use of new technologies, such as artificial intelligence and social media. To that end, the Committee of Experts was exploring artificial intelligence-related governance. Furthermore, in response to calls for increased collaboration among the Council's subsidiary bodies, the Committee of Experts, together with the Committee for Development Policy, had organized, on the margins of the 2023 high-level political forum, a successful event on strengthening reporting and procedures related to the voluntary national review process.

46. **The President** asked about the initiatives taken by the Commission on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice to strengthen crime prevention, criminal justice and the rule of law in support of the Sustainable Development Goals.

47. **Mr. Šrámek** (Permanent Representative of Czechia to the United Nations in Vienna and Chair of the Commission on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice), panellist, speaking via video link and accompanying his remarks with a digital slide presentation, said that the Commission was preparing an in-depth review of the implementation of Sustainable Development Goal 16 ahead of the 2024 high-level political forum.

48. At its thirty-second session, the Commission had successfully negotiated six draft resolutions, which had subsequently been recommended by the Council for adoption by the General Assembly; the Assembly had, in turn, adopted the draft resolutions at its seventy-eighth session. For example, in its resolution [78/223](#), the Assembly had decided to hold the Fourteenth United Nations Congress on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice in the United Arab Emirates in 2026 under the theme "Accelerating crime prevention, criminal justice and the rule of law: protecting people and planet and achieving the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development in the digital age". The Commission was also taking a number of steps to strengthen its contribution to the accelerated implementation of the 2030 Agenda, in accordance with General Assembly resolution [78/225](#). For example, it had sent a note to all countries conducting voluntary national reviews in 2024 to encourage them to consider including in their reviews information related to the Commission's work, and to share the pertinent information contained in those reviews at the Commission's thirty-third session. The Commission had also invited all Member States and relevant stakeholders to provide their views on the ways in which the Commission could contribute further to the 2030 Agenda.

49. The Commission had also negotiated its first-ever draft resolution on equal access to justice for all, which had served as the basis for General Assembly resolution [78/227](#). As stated in the political declaration of the high-level political forum on sustainable development convened under the auspices of the General Assembly, it was necessary to build peaceful, just and inclusive societies that ensured equal access to justice and were based on respect for human rights, the rule of law and good governance. The Commission had also focused on access to justice during a thematic discussion held at its thirty-second session, during a number of special events and during the thematic discussions on the implementation of the Kyoto Declaration on Advancing Crime Prevention, Criminal Justice and the Rule of Law: Towards the Achievement of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, held in September 2023.

50. **Mr. Johnson** (Permanent Representative of Ghana to the United Nations in Vienna and Chair of the Commission on Narcotic Drugs), panellist, speaking via video link and accompanying his remarks with a digital slide presentation, said that the Commission was firmly committed to contributing to the implementation of the 2030 Agenda through international drug control policies that were balanced, integrated, comprehensive, multidisciplinary and based on scientific evidence. Efforts to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals



and to effectively address the world drug problem were complementary and mutually reinforcing.

51. The four resolutions adopted by the Commission at its sixty-sixth session reflected its commitment to taking action. For example, resolution 66/4, on alternative development, made a significant contribution to eradicating poverty in times of multiple crises. The Commission had also adopted resolution 66/1, setting out the arrangements for the midterm review to be held during the Commission's sixty-seventh session in 2024, in order to assess the progress made in addressing the drug-related challenges identified in the Ministerial Declaration on Strengthening Our Actions at the National, Regional and International Levels to Accelerate the Implementation of Our Joint Commitments to Address and Counter the World Drug Problem.

52. On 14 and 15 March 2024, in Vienna, the Commission would convene a high-level segment to adopt a concise, action-oriented document focused on taking stock of the implementation of all international drug policy commitments and on accelerating the fulfilment of those commitments between 2024 and 2029. The informal consultations on that document had started in January 2024. He had also launched the "Pledge 4 Action" initiative in order to encourage Member States to take concrete and effective steps to address the challenges described in the 2019 Ministerial Declaration. In addition, the Commission would actively participate in the preparations for the 2024 high-level political forum and in the Summit of the Future.

53. **The President** asked about the ways in which the Committee of Experts on International Cooperation in Tax Matters was addressing challenges in international tax cooperation in order to curb illicit financial flows. He also asked about the ways in which the Committee of Experts was supporting developing countries in their efforts to achieve an integrated approach to strengthening domestic capacities to mobilize resources for investment in sustainable development.

54. **Mr. Gbonjubola** (Director, Tax Policy and Advisory Department, Federal Inland Revenue Service of Nigeria, and Co-Chair of the Committee of Experts on International Cooperation in Tax Matters), panellist, said that the Tax Committee was mandated to provide a framework for dialogue with a view to enhancing and promoting international tax cooperation among national tax authorities; to consider how new and emerging issues could affect international cooperation in tax matters; and to give special attention to developing countries and countries with economies in transition in

dealing with domestic and international tax issues. The work of the Committee of Experts contributed to fair and inclusive tax systems that would strengthen the financial and fiscal policies of developing countries in accordance with the Sustainable Development Goals, supporting the whole-of-government responses necessary to meet the Goals and address contemporary challenges.

55. Through its four-year work programme, underpinned by a Sustainable Development Goals-centred approach, the Committee of Experts was influencing international tax norms and providing guidance in order to assist countries in their efforts to meet the Goals through effective policymaking and administration in a broad range of taxation-related areas. Those initiatives contributed to the tax-related capacity-building work carried out by the Department of Economic and Social Affairs and by other entities, and, in turn, were enhanced by the lessons learned from such capacity-building. The Committee of Experts looked forward to discussing such matters with the Council and its subsidiary bodies, in order to promote the mainstreaming of tax-related issues into the Council's work and to further incorporate the Goals into the work and guidance of the Committee of Experts. In that regard, he looked forward to the Council's special meeting on international cooperation in tax matters, to be held in March 2024.

56. **The President** asked about the measures taken by the Intergovernmental Working Group of Experts on International Standards of Accounting and Reporting to promote transparency and accountability in corporate reporting in order to support sustainable investment and the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals.

57. **Mr. Singhal** (Central Council Member and Chair of the Auditing and Assurance Standards Board of the Institute of Chartered Accountants of India, and Chair of the Intergovernmental Working Group of Experts on International Standards of Accounting and Reporting), panellist, speaking via video link, said that the Working Group had worked extensively to promote harmonization in sustainability reporting, with a view to facilitating investment flows and the attainment of the Sustainable Development Goals. After a series of deliberations, the Working Group had issued a report entitled "Guidance on Core Indicators for Sustainability and Sustainable Development Goal Impact Reporting" (UNCTAD/DIAE/2022/1). His own country, India, had also adopted reporting requirements relating to business responsibility and sustainability. Moreover, the Working Group had recently issued a report entitled "Tackling the Sustainability Reporting Challenge – A Policy Guide" (UNCTAD/DIAE/2022/3).

58. UNCTAD had developed an online training course on sustainability reporting, which was available to all Member States free of charge. It had also provided technical assistance to enable Member States in Africa and Latin America to build the regulatory, institutional and human capacities required for high-quality sustainability reporting. With financial support from the Government of Germany, UNCTAD was carrying out a capacity-building programme to help Cameroon and Mexico to implement international standards related to sustainability reporting. Moreover, UNCTAD was supporting regional partnerships dedicated to promoting sustainability reporting in Africa and Latin America, and additional such partnerships were being established for Asia, the Middle East and the Eurasian region. He suggested that businesses be requested to disclose their tax contributions as part of sustainability reporting in order to establish a link between such contributions and the Sustainable Development Goals. That could result in businesses taking greater pride in making such contributions and, ultimately, in their increasing the level of their contributions to boost their image.

59. **The President** asked about the approach of the Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights to upholding those rights as a fundamental means of achieving the Sustainable Development Goals.

60. **Ms. Crăciunean-Tatu** (Associate Professor at the Lucian Blaga University of Sibiu, Romania, and Chair of the Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights), panellist, speaking via video link, said that the Committee had systematically reaffirmed the critical role played by the full implementation of the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights in the achievement of the objectives common to the Covenant and the 2030 Agenda. The Committee had also demonstrated, through its work, the ways in which the rights protected under the Covenant underpinned the Sustainable Development Goals. For example, in a statement entitled “The pledge to leave no one behind: the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development” (E/C.12/2019/1), the Committee had set out a rights-based methodology to assist States in fulfilling their pledge to leave no one behind, drawing on the normative obligations stemming from the Covenant. In that statement, the Committee had underscored the importance of sustainably upholding rights for present and future generations, indicating that the failure or inability to respect human rights in the economic and social spheres had contributed to policy decisions that had fuelled the triple planetary crisis, traded away labour and social rights, and deepened inequalities.

61. Human dignity provided the basis for the indivisibility, interdependence and equality of civil, political, economic, social and cultural rights. Ensuring respect for such dignity required viewing economic, social and cultural rights not as aspirations but, rather, as legal standards for policy formulation. Ensuring such respect also required moving beyond an approach to economic development based on growth in gross domestic product towards a human rights-based approach, as well as focusing on the well-being, dignity and rights of people and of the planet, and providing everyone with education, universal health coverage, food, housing, social security, water, opportunities for participation in cultural life, and a healthy environment.

62. The international community must pay particular attention to gender equality and the rights of women and girls, especially by recognizing the value of the work performed by women and girls in the domestic, care and informal sectors. Collective efforts were required to protect the most disadvantaged and marginalized, address growing inequality, ensure that no one was left behind during the recovery from the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic, and accelerate the implementation of the 2030 Agenda.

63. **The President** asked about the ways in which the Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues was working to incorporate the rights and perspectives of Indigenous peoples into its efforts to implement the Sustainable Development Goals.

64. **Mr. Mejía Montalvo** (Political Scientist, National University of Colombia, and Chair of the Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues), panellist, said that making progress towards the Sustainable Development Goals required recognizing the existence of three categories of rights: individual rights, which were widely known; collective rights, encompassing the enjoyment of basic freedoms and goods by current and future generations; and the rights of collective rights-holders, such as Indigenous Peoples. The rights of collective rights-holders could neither be reduced to the sum of the rights of the relevant individuals nor conflated with collective rights, as the rights of such rights-holders were associated with the memory, identity, territory, systems of government, norms and institutions of the rights-holders concerned. Indigenous Peoples should therefore not be confused or associated with vulnerable or minority populations, local communities or other similar categories, as such classifications tended to eclipse or diminish their status. Specific and differential data were essential, and institutions became stronger by incorporating Indigenous perspectives.

65. The work of Indigenous Peoples had resulted in the inclusion of at least six references to such peoples in the Sustainable Development Goals. However, Indigenous Peoples were affected by most of the Goals, given the sustained pressure they faced as a result of increases in poverty and crime, as well as the effects of climate change and biodiversity loss, challenges that had caused them to migrate away from their communities. That situation required joint action by all United Nations and national-level entities.

66. States were called upon to take steps, in accordance with the specificities of their national contexts, to fulfil their international commitments relating to Indigenous Peoples, with the understanding that the right of those peoples to self-determination did not undermine State sovereignty. On the contrary, in places in which the right of Indigenous Peoples to identify themselves as such was legally recognized, democracy and pluralism had been strengthened, and biodiversity protection had increased.

67. **The President** asked about the ways in which the Commission for Social Development was promoting poverty eradication, social inclusion and equity in order to accelerate progress towards the Sustainable Development Goals and leave no one behind.

68. **Ms. Kwishaka** (Second Counsellor, Permanent Mission of Burundi to the United Nations, and Vice-Chair-designate of the Commission for Social Development), panellist, said that the Commission would hold its sixty-second session from 5 to 14 February 2024. The priority theme identified for the session was “Fostering social development and social justice through social policies to accelerate progress on the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and to achieve the overarching goal of poverty eradication”, and the emerging issue identified was “The influence of digital transformation on inclusive growth and development: a path to realizing social justice”. Those topics had been selected in order to bring the Commission’s work into line with that of the Council for improved coordination.

69. At its sixty-second session, the Commission would discuss issues highly relevant to the Council’s coordination segment, in particular ways to eradicate poverty, tackle inequality and accelerate the implementation of the 2030 Agenda. It would be essential to promote a rights-based approach to social services and to improve the design and implementation of evidence-based policies for the effective and fair distribution of services, in order to ensure universal health coverage, social protection and high-quality education for all, as a means of combating poverty and

inequality. Social considerations should also be centrally integrated into broader development frameworks, and social, economic and environmental policies should be designed and implemented synergistically.

70. Poverty eradication efforts should be focused particularly on sub-Saharan Africa, which accounted for an ever-increasing majority of the world’s poor. People in that region were also vulnerable to climate change, as significant numbers of them lived in rural areas and depended on agriculture for their livelihoods. Rural development and support for agriculture were thus critical to poverty eradication in the region.

71. **Ms. Espinoza Madrid** (Deputy Head of Mission, Embassy of Honduras in the People’s Republic of China, and Chair of the Commission on Population and Development), panellist, said that the adoption of the Programme of Action of the International Conference on Population and Development in 1994 was significant in that it demonstrated Member States’ consensus on the impossibility of global development without full respect for the human rights of all people. Prompt action was required to address the complex challenges facing the world, including threats to the rights of migrants and to peace, as well as food security and climate change, both of which were essential to people’s lives and to the sustainability of the planet.

72. Significant opportunities nevertheless existed. The agenda on population and development provided a broad, holistic and in-depth road map for the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals. It was essential to build on the Programme of Action of the International Conference on Population and Development in order to address the inextricable link between demographic dynamics and sustainable development. The regional-level reviews of the Programme of Action conducted in 2014 had provided clear guidance for harnessing the progress achieved in order to eliminate inequality within and between countries. The Chairs of the functional commissions and expert bodies had a responsibility to work in a strategic and coordinated manner, addressing substantive issues and eschewing discussions of parameters and procedures.

73. The renewal of political commitment was critical to accelerating progress in the implementation of the population agenda, taking into account demographic trends and transitions. The Commission’s relevance within the Council should be restored so that the population agenda did not remain siloed. People-centred development, which required full respect for human rights, as well as the equality and well-being of all

people, was at the heart of the Commission's work and of the work of the United Nations as a whole.

74. **Ms. Dashti** (Executive Secretary of the Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia (ESCWA)), panellist, in a pre-recorded video statement, said that the international community's commitment to international law and the principles underpinning the 2030 Agenda was being threatened. Fundamental tenets such as respect for human rights, the concept of leaving no one behind, inclusivity and intergenerational justice were on the verge of losing all credibility, in particular in the Arab region, as evidenced by the devastation in Lebanon, Libya, the Sudan, the Syrian Arab Republic and Yemen, and, in particular, in the recent war on Gaza, which had resulted in the deaths of 25,000 people, half of them children. The destruction of essential infrastructure and the increasing number of persons with disabilities was further exacerbating that situation.

75. ESCWA was urgently collaborating with regional and local partners to address the immediate and long-term consequences of those crises. Member States must come together to ensure sustainable peace in Palestine and break the cycle of conflict, as they had a collective responsibility to uphold international law, provide financial support to developing and conflict-affected nations, and integrate humanitarian, development and peace efforts.

76. The reviews of progress in the implementation of Sustainable Development Goal 16 conducted at the Arab Forum for Sustainable Development and at the high-level political forum served as a reminder of the critical connection between sustainable peace and sustainable development. The Council must recognize that connection and commit itself to ensuring lasting peace as the foundation for the achievement of the Goals in the Arab region.

77. **The President** invited Member States and observers to participate in the interactive discussion.

78. **Ms. Mendoza Elguea** (Observer for Mexico) said that the fifty-seventh session of the Commission on Population and Development would provide a critical opportunity to evaluate the status of implementation of the Programme of Action of the International Conference on Population and Development and its contribution to the monitoring of progress towards the 2030 Agenda. That session would also provide a valuable opportunity to highlight the Commission's work in harnessing sustainable population policies in support of the 2030 Agenda and to improve coordination with United Nations entities. In the future, Member States should show flexibility in order to enable the Commission to fulfil its mandate, avoiding the adoption

of radical positions that undermined the advancement of the population agenda at the United Nations, as well as the reinterpretation of concepts that had been clearly defined in 1994.

79. Noting that the seventh High-level Forum on Global Geospatial Information Management, to be held in Mexico City in October 2024, would be focused on the theme "Accelerating implementation: achieving resilience", she asked whether the Committee of Experts on Global Geospatial Information Management had identified any other priority themes for its work in supporting Member States' efforts to implement the 2030 Agenda. Mexico also appreciated the work of the Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues and valued the participation of Indigenous Peoples in various international processes.

80. **Mr. Meschchanov** (Observer for the Russian Federation) said that ECE had a unique mandate with respect to the implementation of the 2030 Agenda in Europe and Central Asia, as it helped to strengthen multilateral and sectoral cooperation in those regions. The Russian Federation was therefore concerned by the decrease in the effectiveness of ECE owing to the politicization of its work, namely as a result of discrimination against representatives of certain countries on the basis of their nationality, and of the blocking of technical cooperation projects. Such acts were not conducive to the attainment of the Sustainable Development Goals in Europe as a whole. The Russian Federation was nevertheless interested in strengthening ECE and would participate actively in its core activities in 2024. The Russian Federation would place special emphasis on increasing the economic, intellectual, scientific and technical potential of partner countries, as well as on helping those countries to make the best use of the global markets of goods and services, and to diversify their economic relations and achieve more active participation in integration processes.

81. The Commission on Science and Technology for Development was to be commended for its efforts to advance scientific progress and the agenda on the information society in Member States. In that regard, he wished the Commission success in its preparations for the World Summit on the Information Society (WSIS+20) Forum High-Level Event, to be held from 27 to 31 May 2024. He also wished to know the ways in which the Committee of Experts on International Cooperation in Tax Matters could help to facilitate the work being done in the General Assembly to ensure effective and inclusive tax cooperation.

82. **Ms. Ortiz Miranda** (Chile) said that Chile attached great importance to the coordinated work of the

Economic and Social Council system and to its invaluable contributions to the development of guidance to support the activities of the United Nations system as a whole, as well as the design of public policies at the national and local levels. She also thanked ECLAC for hosting, at its headquarters on 23 and 24 January 2024, the special meeting of the Council under the theme “The future of work: towards a productive, inclusive and sustainable global society”.

83. The coordination segment provided an important opportunity for the Council to proactively guide the work of its subsidiary bodies and of the entities of the United Nations system as a whole on economic, social and environmental matters, particularly by providing recommendations for concrete, consistent and coordinated policies to accelerate the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals and address the multiple crises affecting the planet. With only 15 per cent of the Goals on track to be achieved by 2030, and progress towards 50 per cent of the Goals deemed to be weak or insufficient, immediate collective action was required in order to achieve, by 2030, the common aim of a sustainable, inclusive, prosperous and resilient world in which no one was left behind.

84. The Council’s policy guidance had a crucial role to play in forums such as the sixth session of the United Nations Environment Assembly, the fourth International Conference on Small Island Developing States, the third United Nations Conference on Landlocked Developing Countries, and the Summit of the Future. The value of the coordination segment lay in its ability to bring together the various actors of the Economic and Social Council system to discuss and coordinate their activities in support of the 2030 Agenda and poverty eradication in times of crisis.

85. **Ms. Merodio Gómez** (Vice-President of the National Institute of Statistics and Geography of Mexico and Co-Chair of the Committee of Experts on Global Geospatial Information Management ), responding to the representative of Mexico, said that the agenda and panellists for the seventh High-level Forum on Global Geospatial Information Management were still being determined and would soon be revealed.

86. **Mr. Gbonjubola** (Director, Tax Policy and Advisory Department, Federal Inland Revenue Service of Nigeria, and Co-Chair of the Committee of Experts on International Cooperation in Tax Matters), responding to the representative of the Russian Federation, said that the Committee of Experts had been serving the global community for decades, analysing various issues related to taxation and providing guidance to assist in the development of national

economies. The Committee of Experts had a valuable role to play in helping Member States in the General Assembly to resolve their differences of opinion with regard to technical issues related to the implementation of the Assembly’s resolutions on the promotion of inclusive and effective international tax cooperation at the United Nations. The secretariat of the Committee of Experts would also provide direct support for the implementation of those resolutions.

87. **Ms. Espinoza Madrid** (Deputy Head of Mission, Embassy of Honduras in the People’s Republic of China, and Chair of the Commission on Population and Development) said that she was grateful to the representative of Mexico for her comments regarding the role of Commission’s work in Latin America and beyond. One of her main aims was to restore the Commission’s relevance as a forum for reviewing the agenda on population and development. The Commission must have a holistic and comprehensive agenda so that it could address all the Sustainable Development Goals and the objectives of the Summit of the Future, enabling Member States to set aside their differences and reaffirm their shared goals.

88. **Ms. Amoroso das Neves** (Chair of the Commission on Science and Technology for Development) said that the current meeting had enhanced her understanding of the ways in which the Commission on Science and Technology for Development might coordinate with the Council’s other subsidiary bodies in order to enhance the impact and quality of their work. For example, the Commission might meaningfully collaborate with the Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues on matters relating to vulnerable groups. She would therefore contact the heads of some of those bodies to share with them her ideas for future cooperation.

89. **Mr. Salazar-Xirinachs** (Executive Secretary of the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC)), speaking via video link and responding to the representative of Chile, said that the special meeting of the Council under the theme “The future of work: towards a productive, inclusive and sustainable global society” had been very successful and had included events held in commemoration of the seventy-fifth anniversary of the adoption of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and of the establishment of ECLAC. He wished to thank the Council President for making that special meeting possible.

90. **Ms. Molcean** (Executive Secretary of the Economic Commission for Europe (ECE)), speaking via video link, said that further progress was necessary across all the Sustainable Development Goals. In

February and March 2024, the regional commissions would convene regional forums on sustainable development, which would be essential in facilitating the progress necessary to meet the Goals. The achievement of sustainable development would require engagement with all actors, with a strong emphasis on civil society, youth participation and the participation of local authorities.

*The meeting rose at 12.05 p.m.*