United Nations E/2024/SR.18

Economic and Social Council

Distr.: General
11 June 2024

Original: English

2024 session
27 July 2023–24 July 2024
Operational activities for development segment

Summary record of the 18th meeting
Held at Headquarters, New York, on Thursday, 16 May 2024, at 10 a.m.

President: Mr. Ladeb (Vice-President) . . . . (Tunisia)

Contents

24-08735 (E)

In the absence of Ms. Narváez Ojeda (Chile), Mr. Ladeb (Tunisia), Vice-President, took the Chair.

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

Agenda item 7: Operational activities of the United Nations for international development cooperation (*continued*)

(a) Follow-up to policy recommendations of the General Assembly and the Council (*continued*) (A/79/72-E/2024/12, A/79/72/Add.1-E/2024/12/Add.1 and A/79/72/Add.2-E/2024/12/Add.2; E/2024/5)

Interactive discussion: "Means of implementation: digital cooperation, science, technology and innovation, and capacity-building for national efforts to advance the Sustainable Development Goals"

1. **Mr. Thapa** (Nepal), Permanent Representative of Nepal to the United Nations, moderator, said that the interactive discussion would be focused on the ways in which digital cooperation and science, technology and innovation could be leveraged as means of implementation to accelerate the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals. At a time when progress towards the Goals had been halted or even reversed as a result of the multiple challenges facing the world, digital cooperation and science, technology and innovation could help to accelerate such progress. However, increased efforts must first be made to bridge digital divides and achieve a just digital transition.

2. **Ms. Alisjahbana** (Under-Secretary-General and Executive Secretary of the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP)), panellist, said that, despite a broad range of global challenges, the Asia-Pacific region had remained resilient and resourceful. Building on its social and demographic profile, digitally literate youth, economies of scale and rapidly expanding access to digital infrastructure, the region had emerged as a hub of digital innovation, although it remained the region of the world in which the digital divide was most pronounced. Digital innovations were transforming urban development, financial inclusion, the circular economy and public service delivery. Moreover, the value of digital transactions in the finance sector was projected to reach approximately $6.7 trillion by 2026.

3. At its eightieth session, held in April 2024 under the theme "Leveraging digital innovation for sustainable development in Asia and the Pacific", ESCAP had adopted its resolution 80/1, in which it encouraged all its members and associate members to strengthen regional and multi-stakeholder cooperation in order to promote research and development, and to foster human development and a culture of innovation and entrepreneurship with a view to expediting the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. ESCAP had also recognized the need to promote dialogue and technical cooperation, while affirming that there were different approaches and tools available to each country, in accordance with its national circumstances and legal frameworks, for augmenting the scale and positive impact of digital innovations, noting, in particular, countries in special situations.

4. Capacity-building involving partnerships with Governments, academic institutions and enterprises was also vital for building in-demand skills. For example, the Government of Indonesia had, in collaboration with partners including ESCAP, developed an online programme to promote the development of job skills and entrepreneurial capabilities among groups such as owners of micro- and small businesses, women and persons with disabilities. To nurture the growth of such digital innovations, regional cooperation was necessary in order to harmonize policy frameworks. A blueprint for such cooperation would therefore be considered at the Asia-Pacific Ministerial Conference on Digital Inclusion and Transformation, to be held in Kazakhstan in September 2024. In the future, the international community must embrace emerging platforms aimed at promoting digital innovation and intelligently deploy digital solutions based on common understanding, shared approaches and collaborative governance.

5. **Ms. Hershey** (Resident Coordinator in Bhutan), panellist, speaking via video link, said that the transformative power of science and technology, particularly digital technology, was evident in daily life in all corners of the globe. Although in 1999 Bhutan had become one of the last countries to connect to the Internet, currently all schools in the country had Internet access and 87 per cent of the population used the Internet, far above the global average of 67 per cent. Given the rapid evolution and expanding global reach and impact of technology, the global community must harness technology for good. In particular, development-system actors must, on the basis of a shared vision of an open, free, secure and human-centred digital future in which no one was left behind, leverage science and technology to accelerate the implementation of the 2030 Agenda.

6. To achieve that goal, the Office of the Resident Coordinator in Bhutan was supporting the United Nations country team's efforts to develop knowledge products, convene dialogues, coordinate planning exercises and bring people together to empower the United Nations to address the needs and priorities of the

country and its people. Guided by the national digital strategy, and in partnership with such stakeholders as the government technology platform GovTech, the United Nations in Bhutan was mobilizing millions of dollars to advance digitalization priorities under the Government's thirteenth five-year development plan, aimed at facilitating the transformation of Bhutan into a high-income country by 2034.

7. In collaboration with the Government, the country team had given high priority to digital technology and digital cooperation as a means of addressing key challenges faced by Bhutan, including protecting people from disasters, enhancing learning outcomes and improving crop and food security. Non-resident entities also played a critical role in ensuring the collective implementation of digital solutions, as evidenced by the support provided by the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization for the monitoring of water quality, the work done by ESCAP on the facilitation of digital trade, and the initiatives taken by the International Telecommunication Union (ITU) in relation to cybersecurity and public access to data.

8. Such efforts had had a dramatic and far-reaching impact in Bhutan. A pregnant woman living in the most remote village of the Himalayas could now have her uterine contractions and the heart rate of her fetus monitored from a distance in order to detect and counteract risks. Young people were also being enabled to develop digital tools in order to reduce human-animal conflict with a view to protecting their agricultural livelihoods. Furthermore, girls were increasingly entering fields relating to science, technology, engineering and mathematics. As resident coordinators and United Nations country teams worked to leverage technological shifts to support sustainable development, they counted on global leaders, at the Summit of the Future, to reach agreement on an ambitious normative framework, such as a global digital compact, and to turbocharge progress towards the Sustainable Development Goals.

9. **Ms. Mamesah** (Observer for Indonesia) said that digital technology had immense potential to support economic growth and accelerate progress towards the Sustainable Development Goals. In Indonesia, digital transformation had accelerated inclusive development, resulting in more effectively targeted social assistance, national identification programmes and financial services. To further harness digital technology, the United Nations development system should, using its expertise and resources, help to bridge technological and digital divides by facilitating technology transfers, capacity-building and the development of policy tools adapted to the needs and priorities of developing countries, including with a view to improving skills related to digital infrastructure and digital literacy. In addition, the development system could enhance collaboration by mobilizing diverse stakeholders, given the pivotal role played by multi-stakeholder partnerships in pooling resources. She welcomed the fact that Indonesia had become the regional hub on big data and data science for Asia and the Pacific, with support from the Department of Economic and Social Affairs and ESCAP.

10. **Ms. Alisjahbana** (Under-Secretary-General and Executive Secretary of the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP)) said that ESCAP understood the immense challenges faced by the region in terms of development, climate change, poverty, inequality, and the scaling up of existing technological innovations. Assistance from the United Nations development system was essential to facilitate the scaling up of such innovations.

11. **Ms. Hershey** (Resident Coordinator in Bhutan), speaking via video link, said that, in order to promote digital transformation and sustainable development, the United Nations had developed the PLUS application to facilitate the planning of school menus by helping to quantify, on the basis of the items available in the schools and local communities, the food required for school meals on a monthly basis. In Bhutan, the application had increased sourcing from smallholder farmers by 60 per cent and had created a level of demand that enabled farmers to plan their production up to one year in advance. It had also led to a 15 per cent reduction in the cost of meals in four schools. Moreover, through the menus it generated, the application had ensured that students were provided with milk once a week and had facilitated the piloting of new crops in local communities, thereby supporting diet diversification. The application was therefore accelerating the achievement of Sustainable Development Goal 2, on addressing hunger, Goal 3, relating to health and well-being, Goal 11, on sustainable cities and communities, and Goal 12, on responsible consumption and production.

12. Digital cooperation in Bhutan had also been excellent. For example, the United Nations country team had recently visited the ITU office in New Delhi in order to learn from the cooperation between ITU and the Government of India in developing emergency communications and early warning systems, and in enabling access to online courses through Wi-Fi without relying on the Internet. Such cost-effective technologies, which facilitated the provision of life-saving and life-changing information, represented the way forward for Bhutan. They also addressed a broad

range of Sustainable Development Goals, in particular Goal 17, relating to strong partnerships.

13. **Ms. Hershey** (Resident Coordinator in Bhutan), speaking via video link, said that other countries could draw on the example of the visit between the United Nations country team in Bhutan and ITU in India, as that visit had enabled Bhutan to examine the technology developed in India in order to determine its fitness for purpose and replicability in Bhutan. Such South-South cooperation, as well as the co-creation of solutions adapted to countries' specific needs, would be essential. The PLUS application could also easily be scaled up for use in institutions, such as hospitals, that were required to provide nutritious food to large numbers of people in a cost-effective manner. Dialogue with international financial institutions would also be essential in analysing the costs and benefits of the adoption and maintenance of new digital technologies.

The meeting was suspended at 10.40 a.m. and resumed at 11.30 a.m.

Panel discussion: "Means of implementation: financing the Sustainable Development Goals – development financing priorities that can have a catalysing effect to achieve system-wide results in the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development"

14. **Ms. Buenrostro Massieu** (Deputy Permanent Representative of Mexico to the United Nations), moderator, said that the purpose of the panel discussion was to identify critical financing areas that required better guidance and policies. The panellists were invited to discuss the following matters: how the United Nations development system was helping Member States to secure sustainable financing for development that was aligned with their national priorities to accelerate the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals; which innovative financial instruments had helped Member States to mobilize private investments to secure sustainable financing pathways for the achievement of the Goals; the role that integrated national financing frameworks played in the financing of sustainable development priorities and the achievement of the Goals within countries, and the main barriers to the effective implementation of those frameworks; how cooperation among international financial institutions, the United Nations development system and Member States could be improved to increase investments in support of national sustainable development priorities, and how such partnerships contributed to overcoming financing challenges.

15. **Mr. Steiner** (Administrator of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP)), panellist, said that, although the total wealth available in the global economy was larger than at any point in modern history, dozens of countries were forced to spend more on interest payments than on education or health. The transition towards a net zero global economy should be accelerating, but investments to tackle climate change were falling victim to geopolitical and geoeconomic tensions. Wealth, investment and financing were concentrated in a small number of countries, while the parts of the world in greatest need were deprived of access to capital.

16. Integrated national financing frameworks were not a solution to those contradictions, but rather served as an expression of solidarity with countries that had been struggling in the aftermath of the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic and in the current times of economic and financial distress. Together with the Department of Economic and Social Affairs, the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) and United Nations country teams, UNDP had established such frameworks in 86 countries around the world.

17. Dozens of developing countries had to base decisions about their future on their credit rating. The three major credit rating agencies had only four offices in Africa between them, but their ratings could add billions of dollars to African countries' borrowing costs. Given the stark reality faced by developing countries in the current world economy, the international community needed to co-invest, mobilize resources and de-risk markets to enable private capital to be invested at a far greater scale, particularly in parts of the world that were traditionally overlooked by financial markets.

18. Integrated national financing frameworks and the Integrated National Financing Framework Facility, established by UNDP together with the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development, were helping Governments to explore the full range of national financing options, as well as private capital, foreign direct investment and concessional financing. The frameworks had led some Governments to address underfunding of the Goals in their national budgets by reallocating expenditures in favour of vulnerable groups in order to leave no one behind.

19. Integrated national financing frameworks should not be subject to any conditions, as countries were not promised a single extra dollar under the frameworks. The United Nations was not, after all, an international financial institution or an investor. Nevertheless, it had developed a useful tool that had been embraced by countries, empowering them to set their own priorities

within their domestic resources, to borrow on capital markets with green, blue and sustainability bonds, and to attract additional financing through concessional loans and grants from the international community.

20. **Mr. Li** Junhua (Under-Secretary-General for Economic and Social Affairs), panellist, said that, in its *Financing for Sustainable Development Report 2024*, the Department of Economic and Social Affairs had highlighted the lack of financing for the Goals as a key challenge facing the world. In his Sustainable Development Goal stimulus proposal, the Secretary-General had called for an additional $500 billion in financing for the Goals. To translate that proposal into action, lending by multilateral development banks would need to be scaled up through ambitious capital increases and the rechannelling of special drawing rights. The reform of the existing international financial architecture would also be important in injecting more liquidity into sustainable development financing.

21. Integrated national financing frameworks were a good example of a strategic tool at the disposal of the United Nations system for helping Member States to mobilize additional sustainable development financing. The frameworks had helped countries in the global South to align their national development priorities with both domestic and external markets, and had provided an integrated strategy for attracting more public and private investment in the Goals. Through the Integrated National Financing Framework Facility, countries were offered technical assistance and expert guidance on the implementation of the frameworks. The Department of Economic and Social Affairs also provided technical support to Small Island Developing States in building their financing capacities.

22. **Ms. Duarte** (Under-Secretary-General and Special Adviser to the Secretary-General on Africa), panellist, said that, for the past 40 years, financing for development in Africa had been designed and implemented on the basis of the perception that Africa was deprived of financial resources, but that was not the case at all. More than 75 per cent of the development needs of Africa were financed from African resources, and Africa generated far more from public revenue and private savings than it received in foreign direct investment, portfolio investment or official development assistance. Paradoxically, Africa was also in debt distress, losing more than $500 billion on an annual basis. Furthermore, despite generating enough financial resources to be able to access international capital markets, Africa was not able to mobilize those resources because, as a natural result of globalization, they were in the possession of international financial institutions and the private sector. By leveraging its data, knowledge and trust, the United Nations system was best placed to support Africa in acquiring the right risk profile to access international capital markets. The United Nations needed to recognize that Africa generated a huge amount of financial resources and reform its delivery model accordingly.

23. **Mr. Peral** (Resident Coordinator in Tunisia), panellist, speaking via video link, said that financing for the Goals was one of the main challenges for middle-income countries such as Tunisia. The United Nations country team in Tunisia, working closely with the Government of Tunisia, had been contributing to efforts to address that challenge. Great progress had been made in making the country team fit for purpose. The Resident Coordinator Office had been strengthened, enabling it to play a substantive and systematic role in creating a robust framework for attracting and effectively utilizing financial resources for the Goals. The framework had been used in the elaboration of a national development plan and vision that were fully aligned with the Goals.

24. The Joint Sustainable Development Goals Fund had enabled the United Nations country team to put in motion the integrated national financing framework for Tunisia. With the technical assistance of UNICEF and UNDP, the country team had helped the Government of Tunisia to conduct assessments of financing needs, the fiscal space, the financing landscape, risk and mitigation, and public systems for financing the Goals. Such initiatives had been key to enabling the Government and the private sector to leverage resources for the Goals. Another notable initiative had been the development of a comprehensive strategy for financing the Goals, which had brought together international financial institutions, the private sector and the Government.

25. At the request of the Government of Tunisia, the United Nations country team had created a multi-partner trust fund for youth and employment that was aligned with relevant national strategies and the Global Accelerator on Jobs and Social Protection for Just Transitions initiative. The country team was working on an innovative approach with the Islamic Development Bank that would unlock $100 million in financing.

26. **Mr. Tun** (Observer for Myanmar) said that the World Bank had reported that financial sector reforms in his country had stagnated and were in danger of being reversed following the illegal military coup in 2021. Microfinance institutions had been affected by the ensuing domestic banking crisis. The recent unlawful forced conscription by the military junta had pushed many young people, including those working in the private sector, to go into hiding or flee the country. More

than 3 million people had been internally displaced and more than 18.6 million people were in need of humanitarian assistance. Nearly half the population was living below the national poverty line.

27. It was evident that the military junta remained the major root cause of the economic, social and political instability in the country and the primary obstacle to the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals in Myanmar. Securing sustainable financing pathways for the Goals would require major efforts to restore peace and stability in Myanmar. His country remained open to collaborating with the United Nations development system and the international community to implement an integrated national financing framework. Eradicating the military dictatorship and building a federal democratic union was the only viable path towards regaining system-wide results in the implementation of the 2030 Agenda.

28. **Ms. Hamdouni** (Observer for Morocco) said that her delegation would like to hear more about the added value of integrated national financing frameworks and their successful implementation in middle-income countries. Her delegation would also be interested to hear perspectives on how shifting the current paradigms for international development cooperation, namely, by promoting better understanding of the vulnerabilities of developing countries and using measures of progress towards sustainable development that went beyond gross domestic product (GDP), would help to change the landscape. She wondered what more could be done to build a broad consensus on the need for measures that went beyond GDP to respond to the current realities of financing for development. She asked how the United Nations development system was preparing for the Fourth International Conference on Financing for Development and what role United Nations country teams and resident coordinators would play in those preparations.

29. **Mr. Ben Lagha** (Tunisia) said that his country fully supported the proposed Sustainable Development Goal stimulus and the proposal to rechannel special drawing rights through the multilateral development banks. He asked what practical steps should be taken to make progress on the various proposals. Although developing countries had financial resources, access to those resources was an issue for a number of reasons, including high interest rates. His delegation would like to know what could be done to avoid the creation, by credit rating agencies, of obstacles to concessional financing. More efforts and political will were needed to reach consensus on certain issues, and the United Nations could lead the way in that regard.

30. **Ms. Jiménez de la Hoz** (Spain) said that, in the lead-up to the Fourth International Conference on Financing for Development, progress should be made in promoting international tax cooperation; enhancing and expanding debt treatment and management mechanisms; improving financing by facilitating the evolution of multilateral development banks and making better use of special drawing rights; and harnessing the potential of digital technologies.

31. Her delegation welcomed the efforts of the co-facilitators of the outcome document of the Summit of the Future entitled "A Pact for the Future". The revised draft contained important commitments that were both ambitious and realistic. Spain had already assumed many of those obligations, as demonstrated by its commitment to allocating 0.7 per cent of its GDP to official development assistance, and its support for the Sustainable Development Goal stimulus and for the establishment of a minimum global wealth tax.

32. **Mr. De Rezende Pinto** (Brazil) said that many developing countries faced difficulties in securing resources from multilateral development banks. Despite commendable efforts to facilitate access to developing financing, developing countries continued to encounter significant barriers. Another persistent issue was competition among United Nations agencies for financing due to overlapping thematic mandates. Developing countries continued to face hurdles in obtaining grant financing without the endorsement of a multilateral agency, leading to delays in the implementation of crucial development projects. Procedures for granting loans to developing countries should be simplified to accelerate access to essential resources and enhance the efficiency and effectiveness of the financial support. Fewer conditions should be attached to those loans.

33. **Mr. Mwasota** (United Republic of Tanzania) said that, in most developing countries, including the United Republic of Tanzania, national development plans had not been linked with the financial resources needed to achieve them. In 2021, his Government had made the strategic decision to adopt an integrated national financing framework in a new era of collaboration between the public and the private sectors. In collaboration with UNDP, his Government had implemented a development financing assessment, which had subsequently become its financial strategy. By leveraging innovative financial avenues, his Government had not only diversified its funding sources but had also gained access to vibrant financial markets within the country. About 65 per cent of the financing for the national five-year development plan was expected to come from the private sector. The financing

of government development plans had also been reformed. Moody's had upgraded the credit rating for the United Republic of Tanzania from B2 to B1 and assessed the country's outlook as stable.

34. **Ms. Paereli** (Germany) said that cooperation among the United Nations development system, international financial institutions and other financing partners was indispensable for the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals. Given that only 55 per cent of United Nations Sustainable Development Cooperation Frameworks included international financial institutions, her delegation wished to know what steps were being taken at the Headquarters, regional and country levels to bring that rate up to 100 per cent and whether collaboration with financing partners could be evaluated throughout the system to identify best practices and models of collaboration.

35. Public resources alone would not suffice to close the financing gaps. Partnerships with the private sector were needed to jointly address common challenges. Her delegation asked what steps were being taken to bring together the various actors to provide and unlock resources. Her delegation would be interested to hear the lessons learned from the introduction of integrated national financing frameworks in harnessing the convening role of the United Nations to assist countries in identifying, mobilizing and aligning financing. Lastly, she asked how the current discussion was linked to the strategic dialogues on the funding compact.

36. **Mr. van der Straaten** (Observer for the Kingdom of the Netherlands) said that not enough initial data were available on the use of integrated national financing frameworks to create and steer bankable projects. He asked how the frameworks could be made more attractive to international financial institutions, multilateral development banks and private capital entities and what the main challenges were to their effectiveness and implementation. With a view to the Summit of the Future, the quadrennial comprehensive policy review of operational activities for development of the United Nations system and the Fourth International Conference on Financing for Development, his delegation would welcome ideas on how collaboration between international financial institutions and the United Nations development system could be improved to scale up investments in national sustainable development priorities. Integrated national financing frameworks were one instrument to that end, but more were needed. He asked how to enable the private sector to play its role in mobilizing private instruments to secure sustainable financing pathways for the Sustainable Development Goals.

37. **Ms. Mamesah** (Observer for Indonesia) said that the gap in financing for the Sustainable Development Goals had reached $1 trillion in her country. Her Government was therefore steadfast in its commitment to promoting innovation in sustainable financing for the Goals. To that end, it promoted public-private partnerships and had published a sustainable financing road map. It also utilized Sustainable Development Goal bonds, blended finance, results-based payments, Islamic finance and incentives for the use of crowdfunding to raise private capital for sustainable investments. An integrated national financing framework had been in place in Indonesia since 2022, further bolstering sustainable financing by connecting key stakeholders in blended finance, impact investing and faith-based and social financing. Each country needed to develop a strategy tailored to its unique circumstances, and country ownership was crucial to ensuring the effectiveness of each strategy's implementation. Robust international support, particularly from the United Nations system, was crucial to harnessing innovative financing potential.

38. **Ms. Pindera** (Canada) said that the proliferation and fragmentation of development assistance mechanisms had been a challenge in recent years. Some mechanisms had been operating as flow-through mechanisms rather than raising private capital through crowdfunding, which was critical to achieving the Goals. Her delegation would welcome suggestions on how to address that issue.

39. **Mr. Kormakov** (Observer for the Russian Federation) said that developing countries, especially those in Africa that were confronting debt crises, would not be able to overcome the various challenges and achieve the Goals if the current unfair system was maintained. The solution did not lie in reducing expenditures, as such measures hit the poorest the hardest and led to increased inequality; the solution lay in addressing income and reforming the international tax system to make it fairer and more inclusive. Current taxation rules prevented developing countries from obtaining important resources that could be used for development. The United Nations system and all Member States should support the process initiated by the Group of African States to reform international tax cooperation.

40. **Mr. Steiner** (Administrator of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP)) said that the United Nations should intensify its engagement with international financial institutions in the context of its work within countries. In many countries, the United Nations engaged actively with the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund, but there were some

countries in which there was essentially no interaction among those bodies.

41. He was grateful to those countries that had supported the Integrated National Financing Framework Facility, thereby supporting countries in conducting their own assessments, analysis and deliberations. Given that countries had been in fiscal distress in the aftermath of the COVID-19 pandemic and were currently faced with an increasingly tight international capital market, the frameworks were relevant and useful. However, they were not a solution to the vulnerabilities faced by countries, but rather an emergency measure to stabilize economies. Official development assistance was still at 0.37 per cent, behind the target of 0.7 per cent, and was a declining source of financing for many countries. In addition, outflows of foreign direct investment exceeded inflows. The outlook was therefore bleak for many developing countries, least developed countries and low-income countries.

42. Additional financing was urgently needed to enable countries to invest in areas such as digital public infrastructure with a view to creating multiplier effects that would lead to job creation, economic growth and the building of infrastructure that would attract private sector investment. The fact that 70 per cent of the indicators and targets of the Goals would benefit from digital infrastructure and technology to accelerate implementation had been highlighted in a report presented by UNDP and ITU ahead of the Sustainable Development Goals Summit.

43. The harsh reality was that many of the most vulnerable countries were also the least attractive to the private sector and capital markets. Through de-risking, hybrid finance and fiscal incentives, the wealthy economies that held many of the funds and hosted the international financial institutions could be incentivized to seek investment opportunities in economies that currently had no chance of attracting private capital.

44. UNDP had enabled a number of countries to access financial markets with Sustainable Development Goal bonds. Those countries had then raised capital that was three to four times the total turnover of that delivered by UNDP in a year. Thus, there were good examples of a more accessible pathway for middle-income and upper-middle-income countries. In countries such as Cabo Verde, Nigeria and the United Republic of Tanzania, integrated national financing frameworks had enlarged the financing scope by either refocusing domestic expenditure or enabling the development of new instruments with which to access capital markets.

45. There was no reason why integrated national financing frameworks should not succeed in fostering greater cohesion and cooperation between the United Nations development system and multilateral development banks. Discussions had been held with the World Bank on ensuring more seamless cooperation at the country level in deploying those instruments.

46. **Mr. Li** Junhua (Under-Secretary-General for Economic and Social Affairs) said that the major bottlenecks for the global South were the lack of financing for the Sustainable Development Goals and debt distress. Revitalizing the political will and determination of all Member States and institutions to take ambitious steps was the key test for the United Nations as a whole. The main questions for the Organization to consider were how to rapidly scale up affordable financing from international financial institutions; how to better handle or develop domestic markets through policies and cooperation among partners; and how to define a road map for moving forward with the reform of the international financial architecture. The most important objective was to increase the representation of developing countries, which would lead to greater trust and confidence in multilateral institutions, including the United Nations system.

47. Debt servicing was the major outflow from developing countries, and the outflows from developing countries were currently greater than their income. It was widely recognized that developing countries could not invest in the Goals owing to their high debt stocks and debt servicing burdens. A number of proposals had been put forward to address those issues, including debt swaps, credit enhancement, State-contingency clauses and climate-related disaster clauses, but concrete results had yet to be achieved. The United Nations system had also endeavoured to foster global consensus on guidelines for sovereign creditor and debtor responsibilities, and to improve debt management and debt transparency, but it remained to be seen whether the political will was there.

48. Discussions were ongoing at the United Nations about how to enable countries to generate more domestic resources. In 2023, the General Assembly had established the Ad Hoc Committee to Draft Terms of Reference for a United Nations Framework Convention on International Tax Cooperation. The hope was that improved international tax cooperation would help Member States, especially those in the global South, to mobilize additional domestic resources. The inclusiveness of the international tax regime was essential for the effectiveness of tax cooperation.

49. Efforts to move beyond GDP in measures of progress towards sustainable development were on

track. The Department of Economic and Social Affairs, together with UNDP and others, would establish a specific task force to develop related indicators for Member States.

50. **Ms. Duarte** (Under-Secretary-General and Special Adviser to the Secretary-General on Africa) said that, to ensure that cooperation between international financial institutions, the United Nations development system and African Member States resulted in scaled-up investments and financing, the fact the financial resources were in the possession of international financial institutions and the private sector needed to be addressed. The United Nations development system was well equipped to support African Member States in obtaining those resources. If African Member States were supported in producing predictable cash flows, they would be in a much better position to access international capital markets. The United Nations system was well placed to support de-risking to address the issue of credit rating agencies.

51. **Mr. Peral** (Resident Coordinator in Tunisia), speaking via video link, said that integrated national financing frameworks were not a silver bullet for unlocking financing for the Goals, but they provided Governments with tools for engaging with the private sector and international financial institutions, and had positive repercussions. It was therefore worth investing in the frameworks. About $1 million had been invested in the integrated national financing framework in Tunisia. Globally, the Joint Sustainable Development Goals Fund had invested $70 million in support of frameworks around the world.

52. The partnership between the United Nations and international financial institutions needed to be built and sustained. An instrument like the integrated national financing frameworks was needed to facilitate discussions among the various partners.

53. In terms of measures of progress towards sustainable development that went beyond GDP, international financial institutions were increasingly interested in discussing not only macroeconomics, but also how to expand social protection and how to develop policies that would, for example, improve food security or support the climate agenda. Innovative ways of cooperating were needed to help countries to unlock national and international financing for the Goals.

The meeting rose at 1.10 p.m.