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Held at Headquarters, New York, on Friday, 4 October 2024, at 3 p.m.

Chair: Ms. Sorto Rosales (Vice-Chair) (El Salvador)

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In the absence of Mr. Maniratanga (Burundi), Ms. Sorto Rosales (El Salvador), Vice-Chair, took the Chair.

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

Agenda item 26: Social development (continued)

- (a) Implementation of the outcome of the World Summit for Social Development and of the twenty-fourth special session of the General Assembly (continued) (A/79/154)**
- (b) Social development, including questions relating to the world social situation and to youth, ageing, persons with disabilities and the family (continued) (A/79/61 and A/79/157)**
- (c) Literacy for life: shaping future agendas (continued) (A/79/155)**

1. **Mr. Borlone Díaz** (Chile) said that, at the forthcoming Second World Summit for Social Development, States should promote a people-centred approach with an emphasis on the pillars of social development, namely, the eradication of poverty, full and productive employment, decent work for all and social inclusion. Discussions on the care agenda should be incorporated into efforts to strengthen those pillars. The care economy and support systems for caregivers were essential for addressing unpaid care work, which was performed predominantly by women and often went unnoticed in formal employment systems.

2. His Government had recently adopted an Act establishing a national care system that guaranteed the right to care for dependent persons and caregivers, both paid and unpaid, and was aimed at promoting autonomy and independent living and preventing dependence. Under the system, care was placed at the centre of social protection policies and recognized as an additional pillar of social development. By integrating the care agenda into the global dialogue on social development, the international community could reconfigure economies and societies to promote greater inclusion, equity and decent work for all.

3. **Mr. Kwarra** (Nigeria) said that, in the face of the accumulation of humanitarian, economic, social, food and climate crises, Member States must work together to implement the right policies to ensure that people were able to feed themselves and did not fall into poverty. With many developing countries on the verge of famine, the United Nations should continue to champion inclusive, just and sustainable development for all.

4. His Government had made it a priority to include the most vulnerable people in all its development programmes and frameworks. Its social development policies and programmes were designed to support economic growth, job creation, security, food production, health and education. His Government had launched a social protection system as part of its plans for reducing extreme poverty, food insecurity, malnutrition and inequality and alleviating the suffering of vulnerable families. The system included a conditional cash transfer programme, which had been updated to cover an additional 15 million households.

5. With the aim of providing financial assistance to students from poor backgrounds and ensuring high-quality education for all, his Government had launched a student loan scheme that would help to increase school enrolment rates and to reduce rates of dropout due to financial constraints. His Government was organizing a national youth conference to enable young people to participate actively in nation-building and contribute to policies that would affect their lives.

6. **Ms. Margaryan** (Armenia) said that her Government had rolled out universal health coverage, providing accessible and affordable healthcare services across the country, and was transitioning to a system of universal inclusive education for all children, regardless of their circumstances. The new Criminal Code of Armenia included stronger safeguards against violence and discrimination. To combat early marriages, her Government had enacted legislative amendments to set the legal age for marriage at 18 years with no exceptions. Social protection measures were being strengthened to better assist persons with disabilities, including through the expansion of caregiver services and the ongoing implementation of a functionality-based disability assessment system.

7. The mass forced displacement of 120,000 people from Nagorno-Karabakh had underscored the urgent need to expand public services in Armenia. In response to the multidimensional challenges faced by the forcibly displaced population, her Government had mobilized efforts to enhance social security, healthcare, housing and education. In collaboration with international partners, her Government had been working to build the psychosocial resilience of the affected individuals.

8. Climate resilience and sustainability had been integrated into the national policies of Armenia, particularly those affecting the agricultural sector. Given the critical importance of digital literacy and innovation, her Government was focused on ensuring equal opportunities for boys and girls in the fields of science, technology, engineering and mathematics. In recent years, her Government had launched awareness-raising campaigns for children, parents and teachers on safeguarding personal information in the global digital landscape. The national demographic strategy for the period 2024–2040 was aimed at supporting family well-being, active ageing and migration management and fostering an environment in which older persons could participate actively in socioeconomic life.

9. **Mr. Chala** (Ethiopia) said that, in the light of the growing global challenges of deepening inequalities, climate crises and conflicts, the international community should collectively assess and address the gaps and challenges hindering social development and recommit to placing people at the forefront of development.

10. Social development was a key focus of his Government's development plan. Support was provided to small-scale farmers and pastoral communities across Ethiopia through a flagship initiative to enhance production and productivity. The Ethiopian Green Legacy initiative had played a vital role in job creation and environmental protection. The national wheat production programme was bringing Ethiopia closer to achieving food self-sufficiency. Urban renovation and development projects were promoting job creation and boosting local economies. Through a coding programme, young Ethiopians were being equipped with the skills to thrive in the digital future.

11. The achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals was significantly off track and progress in social development since the World Summit for Social Development had been unsatisfactory. The global community must recommit to accelerating the achievement of the Goals through solidarity and cooperation. The complex and multifaceted challenges facing the world required unified, collective action.

12. **Ms. Kasymalieva** (Kyrgyzstan) said that, on the World Day of Social Justice on 20 February 2024, the Permanent Mission of Kyrgyzstan to the United Nations and the International Labour Organization had organized a commemorative event on the theme "Global coalition for social justice: bridging gaps, building alliances".

13. Her Government had incorporated the Sustainable Development Goals and the principles of social development into its core strategic development frameworks.

A robust legal framework had been established to ensure equitable working conditions and fair wages for all citizens of Kyrgyzstan. Government benefits had been substantially increased, resulting in improved living standards for low-income families and vulnerable groups. The labour market in Kyrgyzstan was stable, with a low unemployment rate of 5 per cent. Government projects had been instrumental in unlocking the labour potential of low-income families, empowering them to work in sectors such as agriculture, livestock farming and services.

14. Government services in Kyrgyzstan were being digitalized with a view to ensuring transparency and accessibility. Her Government was implementing policies aimed at achieving gender equality, providing an accessible environment for persons with disabilities and improving the quality of life of older persons. Such initiatives had helped to mitigate the effects of poverty and to promote social justice and equality.

15. **Mr. Abu Snaina** (Libya) said that, despite the challenges facing his country, social development remained a top national priority. His Government was working to meet the needs of the most vulnerable groups by providing social benefits, universal healthcare, free education for all and food security. Recognizing the family as the nucleus of society, his Government was seeking to strengthen its status to enable it to continue playing its effective role in preserving values, raising children and providing social stability.

16. As part of its national information and communications technology strategy for the period 2023–2027, his Government had developed robust and affordable infrastructure covering the entire country. Libya had been ranked first in Africa in the Information and Communications Technology Development Index in 2024. While technology was vital for bridging the development gap, the dangers posed by technology, such as the spread of misinformation, hate speech and racism, must not be overlooked.

17. Older persons in Libya received comprehensive care from families and the State. Under the Pension and Social Solidary Act, the most vulnerable groups, including older persons, widows, orphans and persons with disabilities, received a steady income.

18. His delegation was deeply concerned about the deteriorating socioeconomic situation of the Palestinian people in the occupied territory, where the occupying Power continued to implement oppressive practices and policies. Libya condemned in the strongest terms the genocidal war that had been carried out by the Zionist entity against civilians in Gaza for more than one year and the expansion of the war into Lebanon. The war was yet more evidence of deliberate harm to civilians by targeting residential areas and destroying healthcare facilities, schools and other services, thus undermining the collective endeavour to promote social development in Palestine and the region as a whole.

19. **Ms. Mangalanandan** (India) said that her country had made significant progress towards the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals through localized solutions, empowering communities to take ownership of their development. Through the world's largest healthcare initiative, her Government provided free health insurance to over 540 million people. As a result of a national campaign to improve maternal and child nutrition, rates of stunting and underweight had decreased.

20. As at 2024, over 116 million rural households in India had been equipped with functional tap water connections, marking a significant step towards ensuring water security and reducing the burden on women and children in rural areas. Her Government's focus on clean energy had enabled 99.8 per cent of households in India to switch to clean cooking fuel. India was leading the way in renewable energy, with 40 per cent of its energy coming from non-fossil fuel sources.

21. Her Government's digital transformation campaign had empowered citizens and improved governance. The biometric identification system, which had near universal coverage, enabled over 1.3 billion citizens to gain access to social protection schemes.
22. Her Government's efforts to empower women were evidenced by the rise in women-led enterprises. Over \$1.55 billion in loans had been dispersed to women entrepreneurs under a government scheme. Her Government had significantly scaled up investments in social development through flagship programmes aimed at addressing gender disparity, eradicating poverty and promoting economic inclusion.
23. **Ms. Gebrekidan** (Eritrea) said that her Government had made significant strides in providing free and equal access to education, healthcare and social services. Despite previous United Nations sanctions and persistent hostile acts, such as unilateral sanctions resulting in economic pressure and an unfavourable regional security situation, her Government had guaranteed the rights to education, health and social protection for all citizens, leaving no one behind.
24. The challenges facing the world required a renewed commitment to solidarity, cooperation and multilateralism. Global structural inequalities and systemic injustices, including the unsustainable debt burden on developing countries and the unfair global economic order that was deepening poverty and exclusion, must be addressed. A new equitable and inclusive international economic system in which human needs were prioritized over profits should be promoted. International policies to support sustainable development, tackle climate change and ensure the transfer of technology and resources to developing nations were needed.
25. **Ms. Tito** (Kiribati) said that, since achieving independence 45 years previously, her country had focused on improving access to education, health services, entrepreneurship and employment, resulting in improved livelihoods and well-being for its people. The formerly male-dominated school system in Kiribati had been transformed into a system based on gender parity. As a result, educational opportunities for girls had increased, and more women held administrative, professional and technical positions that had been monopolized by men during the pre-independence period.
26. The public service in Kiribati was equipped with the knowledge, skills and tools needed to make the country a thriving democracy capable of determining its own future. Nevertheless, more could be done to build the capacities of professionals handling partnerships or business contracts with foreign companies, as such companies often took advantage of local board members and managers of State-owned enterprises.
27. Her Government had implemented a universal health policy, ensuring free health and medical services for all citizens. In Kiribati, education for pupils aged between 6 and 11 years was compulsory and free, and secondary education for pupils aged between 12 and 18 years was free. Kiribati did not have care institutions for older persons or children, because families were expected to care for them.
28. **Mr. Philakone** (Lao People's Democratic Republic) said that developing countries, especially the least developed countries and landlocked developing countries, continued to face challenges in their economic development, including low growth in productive capacities, poverty and high vulnerability to external shocks and the adverse impacts of crises, hindering their efforts to achieve national development objectives and implement the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. To overcome those challenges, partnerships and multiregional cooperation must be strengthened. The international community must collectively work to effectively address ongoing global crises and ensure sustainable development.

29. His Government was committed to achieving the Sustainable Development Goals through its socioeconomic development plan, its national strategy up to 2025 and its Vision 2030. Although progress had been made, his country continued to experience economic and financial difficulties, to suffer the consequences of natural disasters and to face challenges in reducing the gap between rural and urban areas, eradicating poverty, enhancing its disaster preparedness and response capacities, and facilitating technology transfer and digital connectivity.

30. **Ms. Mbasogo** (Equatorial Guinea) said that her Government had integrated the 2030 Agenda and the Agenda 2063 of the African Union into its national sustainable development strategy up to 2035, the priorities of which were the eradication of poverty, social inclusion, sustainable peace, productivity and industrialization, and environmental sustainability.

31. As part of its efforts to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals, her Government had held inclusive consultations with adolescents and young people in Equatorial Guinea, with the aim of seeking their views on the impact of the Goals on young people and evaluating progress towards the achievement of the Goals in the country. Consultations had also been held with various development stakeholders, including civil society, the private sector, academia and the United Nations, with the aim of devising a rescue plan for people and the planet.

32. Her Government had adopted measures to promote biodiversity conservation, forest protection and the responsible use of marine resources. A ministerial department for environmental issues had been established. Since 2021, her Government had been implementing a national health development plan with the aim of building a resilient national health system and guaranteeing universal access to high-quality health services. Her Government had approved electricity tariffs that would make electricity affordable and sustainable for all citizens and residents of Equatorial Guinea.

33. **Mr. Kiboino** (Kenya) said that, in 2023, his Government had rolled out a policy encompassing social protection measures for all Kenyans from birth to old age. Under the national safety net programme, which targeted poor and vulnerable households, cash transfers were made to 1.3 million beneficiaries in Kenya. To complement that programme, his Government was implementing a project to promote social and economic inclusion, particularly for women and young people.

34. Recognizing the family as the fundamental unit of society, his Government was implementing family-centred policies and programmes aimed at promoting family well-being, empowering families to participate in socioeconomic development and fostering healthy family relationships and child development. His Government was creating jobs, especially for young people, through the establishment of digital hubs, and was seeking to improve digital literacy and digital infrastructure to facilitate access to the digital economy.

35. Older persons must be allowed to participate fully in sustainable development, given their role as custodians of heritage and transmitters of social values and their contribution to the economy through tax remittances, the transfer of assets and resources to families and communities, volunteering and participation in the formal or informal workforce. The national policy of Kenya on older persons and ageing provided a comprehensive framework for the provision of care and assistance to older persons and the promotion of their full participation in society and public life.

36. **Mr. Caccia** (Observer for the Holy See) said that social development could not be achieved without inclusion. People on the margins must be viewed as individual members of communities, rather than collectively as mere recipients of services. The serious and pervasive effects of poverty made its eradication essential to the achievement of integral human development. Meeting the immediate needs of those

living in poverty was important but was not a lasting solution; more creativity and resources were needed to address the root causes of poverty. The effects of poverty were not only material but also spiritual and should be addressed as such.

37. The family played a vital role in caring for the young, older persons and people in need. Children raised in a stable and supportive family environment tended to enjoy better health, educational and economic outcomes. Parents were the primary educators of their children. Families faced many challenges, ranging from unemployment and housing shortages to natural disasters and conflicts. Addressing those challenges required support for the formation of healthy families and intervention when necessary to ensure the safety and well-being of family members, particularly women and children.

38. **Mr. Barreto Da Rocha Paranhos** (Brazil) said that his Government placed social development at the heart of its national and international priorities. The international community should collectively address social development through a comprehensive, pragmatic and cooperative approach. Brazil was seeking to do its part both domestically and internationally.

39. In 2023, his Government had reinforced its successful family grant programme, through which financial support was provided to nearly 22 million families. As president of the Group of 20, Brazil was launching a global alliance against hunger and poverty, with the aim of consolidating resources and expertise to implement tested public policies and social programmes for the eradication of hunger and poverty worldwide. His Government remained steadfast in its commitment to uphold the human rights of all citizens and was working tirelessly to promote development while addressing multiple and intersecting forms of discrimination, with a view to ensuring the safety and dignity of every individual.

40. **Mr. Pedroza** (Peru) said that reducing the digital divide was an essential precondition for the achievement of social development without leaving anyone behind. Universal connectivity should therefore continue to be promoted, especially in remote or hard-to-reach regions where access to technology remained limited.

41. Combating poverty in all its forms and dimensions, including extreme and multidimensional poverty, continued to be the greatest global challenge and should be the top priority for all countries. His Government was implementing a national development and social inclusion policy up to 2030, which was aimed at eradicating social exclusion and monetary and multidimensional poverty through a localized approach based on human rights. His Government was also seeking to measure multidimensional poverty with a view to improving social protection policies.

42. Together with the international community, regional and local governments, the private sector and civil society, his Government was working to provide inclusive access for all Peruvians to high-quality healthcare, education and food, which were essential for social development.

43. **Ms. Dabo N'diaye** (Mali) said that the Sahel region was plagued by a security crisis that was hindering her country's efforts to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals. While her Government was working to facilitate the settlement or peaceful return of internally displaced persons and refugees, climate change continued to affect the Malian people. Recent floods had claimed many victims, leading the Government to declare a national disaster.

44. Despite those combined challenges, her Government was determined to strengthen the national social protection system. It had thus adopted measures to improve healthcare coverage and provide cash transfers, giving priority to the most disadvantaged groups. To ensure decent living conditions, her Government had set up a programme to provide housing for thousands of Malians. Her Government was

making every effort to improve access to basic social services, including drinking water and electricity.

45. Her Government had taken measures to facilitate the integration of thousands of young people into the labour market and had set employment quotas for persons with disabilities. Her Government had established institutes for specialized training, including in the field of artificial intelligence; women were strongly encouraged to enrol in them. Her Government also supported the financing of projects for the empowerment of women. Recognizing the family as the foundation of social development, her Government was working to consolidate and promote its family policies.

46. **Ms. Messaoud** (Algeria) said that, given the many remaining global and national disparities and gaps in social development, the international community should engage in effective cooperation and take an integrated and comprehensive approach to ensure that all resources were mobilized and no one was left behind.

47. Her Government had been pursuing an ambitious path for the development of Algeria, with a focus on building resilience and adapting to innovation and economic modernization. Her Government had made education a priority, leading to high literacy rates in the country. Free access to primary, secondary and higher education had been expanded. In 2023, the rate of access to elementary and primary schools had reached 98.9 per cent and the rate of attendance of pupils aged between 6 and 15 years had reached 97 per cent.

48. Algeria had registered more than 33 million Internet users in 2024, representing an Internet penetration rate of over 72 per cent. To enhance public services, her Government had adopted a national digital transformation strategy for the period 2025–2030. Her Government had invested in healthcare, leading to improvements in maternal and child health, and was committed to ensuring high-quality health coverage for all citizens. Various social protection schemes, including pensions, family allowances and disability benefits, had been established to provide financial support to vulnerable people in Algeria. Her Government had adopted policies to strengthen the status of older persons and ensure their economic and social integration.

49. **Mr. Branco** (Timor-Leste) said that, through its strategic development plan for the period 2010–2030, his Government envisaged making Timor-Leste a healthy, educated and self-sufficient society by 2030. To do so, his Government had made significant progress in addressing the economic and social needs of the people and the issues of malnutrition, stunting, maternal health and health in general.

50. The representation of women in Parliament had stood at 40 per cent since 2023, marking a positive step towards gender equality in Timor-Leste. However, sexual violence and gender inequality remained prevalent, particularly in rural areas. Legislative reforms and awareness-raising campaigns were therefore being implemented to enhance gender equality and inclusion, and support services were provided for survivors of violence.

51. To ensure that local communities were included in the national development process, his Government had taken steps to protect cultural heritage and integrate cultural development into its programmes. His Government was striving to eliminate racism and racial discrimination and to promote self-determination for all citizens.

52. Given that almost 70 per cent of the population of Timor-Leste was aged below 45 years, his Government had designed programmes to support the needs of young people and had allocated a significant portion of the budget for 2025 to youth development. His Government had also implemented programmes to strengthen the family, to provide care for older persons and persons with disabilities, and to enhance community safety and access to justice.

53. **Mr. Pary Rodríguez** (Plurinational State of Bolivia) said that his Government recognized both individual and collective rights, thereby protecting the diversity of the Bolivian people, including the Indigenous campesino peoples and persons of African descent. Given the historical injustices faced by women, gender equality must remain a priority. Gender-based violence and discrimination were persistent problems that required urgent attention. Access to education and to sexual and reproductive rights was essential for empowering women. Children were the future of societies; they must have access to health and education and be protected from all forms of exploitation and violence. Comprehensive policies were needed to guarantee a dignified and full life for older persons and persons with disabilities.

54. The international community should work together towards a holistic vision of human rights that was not based on double standards or political or geopolitical interests. Unfortunately, certain countries participated in negotiations on the elaboration of international treaties and agreements within the United Nations with the sole aim of weakening them and ultimately failed to sign or ratify them. Such a practice undermined global efforts to protect human rights and the credibility of the international community. The universality of human rights was non-negotiable and must be applied equally to all persons, regardless of their origin, gender, race or religion. Political or geopolitical considerations must not be allowed to determine the application or scope of human rights.

55. **Mr. Milambo** (Zambia) said that his Government had been implementing social protection programmes aimed at improving the well-being of the Zambian people and building their resilience to shocks and risks. It was focusing on policies to address the poverty situation and ensure that poor people had access to productive resources, including credit, education and training.

56. In preparation for the Second World Summit for Social Development, the international community should examine digital technologies in the context of social development. Governments and the international community had an opportunity to accelerate the implementation of the 2030 Agenda by using information and digital technologies to enhance the effectiveness and inclusiveness of social policies.

57. The international community should broaden and strengthen partnerships with a view to establishing supportive international frameworks for trade, market access, taxation, technology and climate change responses. Sufficient, predictable and well-coordinated financing for development should be provided in line with the Addis Ababa Action Agenda of the Third International Conference on Financing for Development.

58. His Government remained committed to United Nations strategies to promote social development. Such strategies had equipped Zambia with sustainable, shock-responsive and inclusive means of fostering social development through the promotion of employment and decent work, improved access to high-quality education, the provision of basic healthcare, poverty reduction efforts and specific policies for young people, women and persons with disabilities.

The meeting rose at 4.35 p.m.