



# Economic and Social Council

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## 2024 session

27 July 2023–24 July 2024

High-level segment

## Summary record of the 35th meeting

Held at Headquarters, New York, on Thursday, 18 July 2024, at 10 a.m.

*President:* Ms. Narváez Ojeda ..... (Chile)

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*Panel discussion on multilateral solutions for a better tomorrow: the role of the Economic and Social Council towards a sustainable and resilient path by 2030*

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

**Agenda item 5: High-level segment on reinforcing the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and eradicating poverty in times of multiple crises: the effective delivery of sustainable, resilient and innovative solutions** (*continued*) (E/2024/52)

**(b) High-level policy dialogue, including future trends and scenarios related to the Council theme and the long-term impact of current trends** (E/2024/33 and E/2024/55)

1. **Mr. Li Junhua** (Under-Secretary-General for Economic and Social Affairs), introducing the report of the Secretary-General entitled “Reinforcing the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and eradicating poverty in times of multiple crises: the effective delivery of sustainable, resilient and innovative solutions” (E/2024/52), said that a confluence of catastrophic global and national events was undermining the ability of developing countries to eradicate poverty and end hunger. Investment in the Sustainable Development Goals was a cost-effective resilience-building strategy because it addressed economic, social and environmental challenges simultaneously. For example, countries that had made more progress in achieving the Goals before the onset of the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic had been in a better position to cope with the impact of the pandemic.

2. Countries must prioritize eradicating poverty and ending hunger to enable people to contribute to and benefit from a thriving economy, as that would create a cycle of prosperity that would foster people’s ability to address new and emerging risks. In addition, choosing investment pathways that contributed to policies and programming across multiple Goals made it possible to accelerate progress towards the Goals and to build greater resilience. Six such pathways, known as “transitions”, had been identified by the United Nations development system: food, energy, digital connectivity, education, jobs and social protection, and climate action. In the report, the Secretary-General had assessed challenges and opportunities in those areas, including increasing agricultural efficiency and promoting circular agriculture; accelerating the renewables revolution; leapfrogging towards greener development trajectories for developing countries by leveraging technology; strengthening digital public infrastructure; improving access to high-quality education for girls and better equipping learners with skills for the future; and accelerating decarbonization and promoting more sustainable consumption and production practices.

3. Enabling just transitions required rethinking development financing and the international cooperation supporting such financing. Rapid action should be taken to find solutions for countries facing high debt levels and other constraints that prevented them from investing in the Goals. Lastly, as the global system was only as strong as its weakest link, enhanced multilateral cooperation was required to achieve sustainability and resilience for countries, individually and collectively.

4. Introducing the report of the Secretary-General entitled “Long-term impacts of current trends on the realization of the Sustainable Development Goals” (E/2024/55), he said that, in the report, the Secretary-General assessed five interconnected and mutually reinforcing factors and their potential long-term implications for the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development: the effect of geopolitical tensions on the global economy; changing labour markets; rapid technological change; the intensifying adverse impact of climate change; and the evolving nature of social contracts. More effective policies and institutional action in those areas would facilitate the attainment of the Goals.

5. To eradicate poverty and achieve the Goals, stronger multilateral efforts were needed in order to resist and reverse geoeconomic fragmentation. Countries must also adapt to rapidly changing labour markets, an endeavour for which education, digital connectivity and social protection would be critical. Policies should also address workers’ vulnerability to working poverty and precarious employment and promote equal labour market participation. In addition, countries must enact policies aimed at facilitating access to new technologies and must bolster the ability of economies to adopt and utilize them.

6. Policy approaches were needed to integrate climate adaptation and mitigation, and sustainable development efforts, into all areas covered by the Goals. That would require adopting climate-resilient strategies, making significant investments in science and early-warning systems, and strengthening international cooperation relating to high-impact science and technology. Lastly, the opportunity to reshape social contracts on the basis of the 2030 Agenda and the Goals would facilitate the achievement of a more inclusive, just, peaceful, resilient and sustainable world. The Summit of the Future, to be held in September 2024, would provide an opportunity to harness multilateralism to secure a sustainable and prosperous future for all.

7. **Mr. Ocampo** (Committee for Development Policy), introducing the report of the Committee for

Development Policy on its twenty-sixth session (E/2024/33), said that, as its contribution to the theme of the Council's 2024 session, the Committee had, at its twenty-sixth session, focused on innovation ecosystems for development, structural change and equity. Despite the existence of a clear international consensus on the potential of science, technology and innovation to contribute to sustainable development, that potential remained vastly underfulfilled, particularly in developing countries, but also from the perspective of the global public interest. In addition, the rapidly changing global economy and innovation landscape, against a backdrop of multiple and compounding crises, could accentuate existing divides and push people and countries further behind.

8. Policy frameworks must be reassessed in order to harness the potential of science, technology and innovation for development. Effective innovation systems must be created to address the long-standing challenges resulting from a new generation of global shifts, challenges that included the undersupply of technology for many development priorities; the extreme concentration of technological investments and capacity in a few countries; severe inequities in access to the products of innovation and in education systems; and ineffective arrangements for the transfer of technology, including those under the Agreement on Trade-Related Aspects of Intellectual Property Rights (TRIPS Agreement).

9. Existing frameworks and institutions were inadequate to promote innovation in a dynamic setting. Policy frameworks relating to science, technology and innovation must harness such phenomena as the rise of financialization and the increasing importance of intangibles, the advance of the fourth industrial revolution, demographic changes, the energy transition and geopolitical developments related to the distribution of critical minerals, and global agricultural trends in order to support sustainable development and public priorities.

10. Intellectual property rights must be leveraged more effectively to contribute to development, structural change, equity and resilience building. Frameworks relating to intellectual property rights had the dual objective of generating incentives for technological research and innovation and disseminating the benefits of such research and innovation. However, the level of protection of such rights in current systems often far exceeded that required to promote innovation, and had led to high prices and an undersupply of public goods, thereby undermining the global dissemination of the benefits of innovation. Under international agreements,

Governments could balance the goals of innovation and access through flexibilities such as compulsory licensing and government procurement. Although technologically advanced countries had established such flexibilities in legal frameworks and in practice, developing countries faced obstacles in making use of them owing to gaps in information, trade sanctions and other forms of political pressure, as well as incompatible national legal frameworks.

11. Developing countries could more effectively utilize existing policy space to pursue their development priorities and address contemporary challenges such as those associated with climate change and the energy transition, the rise of digital creative industries and the need to ensure preparedness for future pandemics. Better use could also be made of intellectual property rights in order to stimulate local innovation through such methods as copyrights in creative industries, utility models for small and medium enterprises and the protection of Indigenous knowledge in design. Flexibilities could be leveraged more proactively to advance public priorities, including to reduce the cost of medicines as part of a pandemic response strategy and to accelerate the adoption of clean energy technologies, and as a broader element of developing countries' industrial policies. New challenges, such as the energy transition, would require new approaches, for example, co-development and co-ownership mechanisms.

12. The international community should reassess the global system supporting innovation for development in order to enable it to respond to twenty-first-century challenges, including by conducting further policy research and drawing on experiences worldwide, in particular across the developing world. Collaborative research and development should be expanded, for example, by using the Consultative Group on International Agricultural Research (CGIAR) model, in which research on food production was patented but access to technology was unrestricted. In addition, the African Continental Free Trade Area provided an opportunity to develop a coherent regional intellectual property rights policy that supported structural transformation, inclusion and equity. Furthermore, international organizations should provide developing countries with proactive assistance at the country level for such public-interest-related measures as the formulation of intellectual property policy frameworks and for the use of such frameworks as development policy tools, as well as for the implementation of flexibilities under the TRIPS Agreement. Such organizations should also expand their work on global governance for the ethical use of new technologies, and greater importance should be attributed to innovation

and intellectual property rights in the graduation process for the least developed countries and in the development of smooth transition strategies.

13. In 2024, the Committee for Development Policy had conducted its triennial review of the list of the least developed countries. The Committee welcomed the Council's endorsement of its recommendations for the graduation of Cambodia and Senegal, looked forward to the General Assembly's action on the matter and congratulated Cambodia and Senegal on their development achievements. Countries that had recently graduated required support from the international community to ensure a smooth transition from the least developed country category. Such support was particularly necessary given that the challenging global context, characterized by increasingly frequent and severe crises, had in some cases led to reversals in the development progress of countries in the graduation pipeline. The Committee thanked the Council for its support of the Committee's enhanced monitoring mechanism for graduating and graduated countries, and called on development partners to provide the financial resources necessary to operationalize the Sustainable Graduation Support Facility. The Committee was also reviewing the graduation framework for the least developed countries in order to facilitate deliberations on a smooth transition out of the least developed country category.

14. The Committee would continue to support the Council and appreciated the increasing interaction between the Committee and the Council throughout the year. The Committee would contribute to the new generation of voluntary national reviews, and, in February 2024, had issued a communiqué in which it had proposed a new approach that involved paying greater attention to the transformative elements of the 2030 Agenda. In addition to their role in follow-up and review, voluntary national reviews enabled countries to share experiences, helping them to navigate the policy challenges with which they were faced at a time of great uncertainty and planetary threats. Lastly, the Committee was currently working on formulating new policy pathways for development in line with the challenges and realities of the twenty-first century, pathways that it hoped would support the Council's efforts before and after 2030.

*Panel discussion on multilateral solutions for a better tomorrow: the role of the Economic and Social Council towards a sustainable and resilient path by 2030*

15. **Ms. Tlhabi** (Broadcaster and author, South Africa), moderator, said that crises faced by her own

country, South Africa, in recent years had underscored the need to redouble efforts to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals. Given that the international community as a whole was on track to meet only about 17 per cent of the roughly 140 Goal targets, the panel discussion would focus on the ways in which the Council could be utilized to accelerate progress towards those targets. She asked how the Council could better harness the expertise of its subsidiary bodies to support the implementation of the 2030 Agenda and more informed decision-making.

16. **Ms. Stoeva** (Permanent Representative of Bulgaria to the United Nations), panellist, said that, in 2022, the Council had conducted a review of the work of its subsidiary bodies in order to align it with the 2030 Agenda. The review had revealed the wealth of knowledge contributed by the subsidiary bodies to the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals, knowledge that was considerably underutilized. Member States, the Secretariat and the subsidiary bodies must therefore implement the recommendations arising from the review. The Council should also task its subsidiary bodies, in accordance with their mandates, with drafting expert papers on emerging issues in order to support informed decision-making.

17. **Ms. Tlhabi** (Broadcaster and author, South Africa) asked how the United Nations system could better support the commitments made at the 2023 Sustainable Development Goals Summit and facilitate more effective, inclusive and ambitious multilateralism.

18. **Ms. Cousens** (President and Chief Executive Officer, United Nations Foundation), panellist, said that a better future could only be achieved through multilateral solutions. However, multilateral institutions often failed to deliver results that were commensurate with their ambitious commitments, leading to a loss of confidence and credibility. The fact that only 17 per cent of the Sustainable Development Goal targets had been achieved should generate significant pressure and incentives to accelerate progress. All relevant stakeholders, particularly youth, must be involved. The international community must also increase the level of available financing, including by scaling up investment in the Goals by at least \$500 billion per year, as provided for under the Sustainable Development Goal stimulus package, and by taking an ambitious approach to such opportunities as the Fourth International Conference on Financing for Development. A cultural shift was needed within multilateral institutions to facilitate more regular and honest discussions about divisive issues, as exemplified by the General Assembly's discussions on international tax cooperation at its seventy-eighth session.

19. **Ms. Tlhabi** (Broadcaster and author, South Africa) ask how youth could be empowered to contribute to the implementation of the Pact for the Future, to be adopted at the Summit of the Future.

20. **Mr. Paullier** (Assistant Secretary-General for Youth Affairs), panellist, said that the Pact for the Future was being negotiated at a critical juncture, characterized by record-high levels of conflict and inadequate progress towards the Sustainable Development Goals and the achievement of inclusive and representative engagement mechanisms. It was therefore more important than ever to mainstream youth participation in decision-making at all levels.

21. The Pact for the Future provided an opportunity to enhance the inclusiveness of decision-making bodies. First, all young people must be empowered to meaningfully participate in implementing the Pact in partnership with Member States and other actors. That would require identifying and addressing the structural barriers to their participation, including by transforming social and cultural conceptions of youth as inexperienced or incapable of making decisions. Adequate and flexible funding was also required to meet the specific needs of young people, and affirmative action must be taken to support the engagement of young people at all levels of decision-making and policymaking, with a special focus on those who had traditionally been left behind. It was also necessary to develop a new approach for collaboration in the multilateral system, characterized by innovation and strategic foresight.

22. The first revised draft of the Pact for the Future had recently been adopted. While strong wording on youth participation had been included in chapter IV of the Pact, it was unfortunate that the reference to the development of a global standard for meaningful youth engagement, contained in the zero draft, had been omitted. In accordance with the Secretary-General's policy brief on youth engagement, the United Nations Youth Office stood ready to support the establishment of such a standard in order to ensure the inclusive and meaningful participation of youth in the implementation of the Pact for the Future.

23. **Ms. Tlhabi** (Broadcaster and author, South Africa) asked how digital transformation, digital connectivity and emerging technologies, including artificial intelligence, could foster inclusivity in support of the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals.

24. **Ms. Bogdan-Martin** (Secretary-General, International Telecommunication Union (ITU)), panellist, said that the international community had a responsibility to ensure that no one was left behind in the physical or

virtual worlds. One example of effective multilateralism in the digital domain was the ITU World Radiocommunication Conference, which was focused on the resources that made global communications possible, including the radio-frequency spectrum and satellite orbits. The equitable distribution of such resources required international coordination and collaboration, as well as stewardship. At the most recent World Radiocommunication Conference, held in 2023, key decisions had been taken on issues such as the use of the radio-frequency spectrum for space-related activities, science and mobile communications, all of which had a direct impact on the Sustainable Development Goals and were related to the main aims of ITU, namely, achieving universal connectivity and a sustainable digital transformation.

25. Strengthened governance capacity was necessary at the multilateral level to increase hope and solidarity, including in the digital world. To achieve that goal, the pace of digital inclusion must be aligned with that of digital transformation, an endeavour that would require enhanced skills development. Greater attention must also be paid to cybersecurity and to ensuring the affordability of technology worldwide. Policy and regulatory frameworks must strike a balance between facilitating digital innovation and minimizing the risks associated with such innovation. Lastly, the international community must reverse the current underwhelming trajectory of progress towards the Goals. As demonstrated by recent research conducted by ITU, digital technology could be leveraged to accelerate the implementation of 70 per cent of the Goal targets.

26. **Ms. Tlhabi** (Broadcaster and author, South Africa) asked about the achievements made and challenges encountered by the Commission on the Status of Women in promoting gender equality and women's empowerment, particularly in relation to the 2030 Agenda.

27. **Mr. Alwasil** (Permanent Representative of Saudi Arabia to the United Nations and Chair of the Commission on the Status of Women), panellist, said that, as the second largest global platform for dialogue on the achievement of gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls, the Commission brought together a wide range of stakeholders in order to influence policy and share best practices and lessons learned, thereby contributing to the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals. The Commission's interactive dialogues with youth representatives, ministerial round tables and town hall meetings with civil society organizations and the Secretary-General demonstrated its critical convening role.

28. At its previous three sessions, the Commission had achieved landmark outcomes, providing, for the first time, concrete policy recommendations on climate change, digital technology, poverty and gender-sensitive financing for development. In particular, at its sixty-eighth session, the Commission had made bold and forward-looking commitments relating to gender-responsive financing for development, debt relief and taxation, commitments that he hoped would be replicated at the Fourth International Conference on Financing for Development and in the political declaration to be adopted by the Commission in the context of the thirtieth anniversary of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action.

29. Challenges nevertheless persisted, including a difficult global political landscape characterized by an increasing backlash against gender equality, the undermining of hard-won gains and a growing division between development and the protection of human rights. Conflict, climate change and food insecurity were on the rise, disproportionately affecting women and girls. The goal of equal pay for equal work remained illusory, and unpaid care work continued to be performed mainly by women and girls. Efforts to address those issues must be focused on gender equality and gender-responsive policies, and gender equality must be integrated into all aspects of the 2030 Agenda.

30. **Ms. Tlhabi** (Broadcaster and author, South Africa) asked how the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD) was addressing challenges such as financing, inequality in global trade and global economic governance to support the achievement of the Goals.

31. **Ms. Grynszpan** (Secretary-General, United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD)), panellist, said that the rise of large emerging economies in the global South had led to the de facto economic and political decentralization of world affairs, with the global South currently representing about 40 per cent of all economic output and more than one third of all global trade. Global governance structures had nevertheless not adapted to that shift, leading to a risk of fragmentation. Multilateralism was therefore necessary to enable centralization and foster inclusion. For example, regional trade agreements could help countries lacking access to global supply chains to participate in them and to achieve structural transformation. Frameworks such as the Group of 20, the Group of Seven and the grouping of Brazil, Russia, India, China and South Africa (BRICS) could strengthen multilateralism, and regional multilateral development banks could scale up the public and private investment

required to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals in certain regions.

32. UNCTAD had, under the leadership of the Secretary-General, been working with the United Nations Development Programme, the Department of Economic and Social Affairs, the regional economic commissions and the resident coordinator system to address challenges relating to global economic governance. For example, it had been promoting the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goal stimulus package in all relevant forums. It had also assisted in the drafting of the Secretary-General's policy brief on the international financial architecture and had contributed to his policy briefs on a global digital compact and on moving beyond gross domestic product. UNCTAD was also actively participating in the preparations for the Fourth International Conference on Financing for Development.

33. In 2024, UNCTAD had also produced, in conjunction with the regional commissions, its second annual report entitled *A world of debt: a growing burden to global prosperity*, in which it had revealed that 3.3 billion people lived in countries that spent more on servicing debt than on education or healthcare. UNCTAD had been assisting those countries in various ways, including by helping them to develop national debt registries to allow them to track their debt levels. It had also been facilitating trade through the digitalization of customs and port systems, an endeavour that had led to significant increases in income from those systems in Angola and Madagascar. Moreover, through its "Transforming for Trade" initiative, UNCTAD had been helping countries to establish productive diversification policies in order to build more sustainable and inclusive economies, including by using investment and technology-based strategies.

34. **Ms. Tlhabi** (Broadcaster and author, South Africa) asked about the most critical challenges currently facing multilateralism and the ways in which the Council could help to overcome them.

35. **Mr. Kimani** (Executive Director, Center on International Cooperation, New York University), panellist, said that the Council must be strengthened in order to enable the United Nations to promote economic prosperity and to restore the Organization's relevance and prestige. The growing trust deficit between and among States and regions, as well as the diminished role of the United Nations against a backdrop of escalating rivalries between major Powers, were paving the way for the rise of authoritarianism, undermining the mediation of armed conflicts and empowering actors

intent on reversing hard-won gains in the areas of human rights, democracy and poverty alleviation.

36. To reverse those trends, the Council must harness political determination and innovation, in accordance with its mandate as an apex institution. In that regard, it would be necessary to strengthen the Council's role in enabling meaningful and inclusive discussions on financing for development, in particular its engagement with the Bretton Woods institutions. Council Presidents could pursue agreements on action points over the course of their terms, and regular meetings, guided by agreed agendas on financing, monitoring and evaluation, should be held. The Council should also provide a platform for engagement with multilateral development banks and agenda-setting bodies such as the Group of 20. The Fourth International Conference on Financing for Development provided an important opportunity to advance such initiatives.

37. The work of the Council's functional commissions should be aligned with the Sustainable Development Goals in order to strengthen decision-making and accelerate implementation. The Commission on the Status of Women had achieved the greatest progress in that regard; the Statistical Commission, the Commission on Population and Development, and the Commission for Social Development should follow its example. Transparency and collaboration among the functional commissions would be enriched through the use of a shared digital platform on which to publish data, progress reports and best practices related to the achievement of the Goals. The functional commissions should also utilize the 2025 comprehensive review of the Sustainable Development Goal indicators to enhance their focus on those furthest behind through the use of disaggregated and localized data, as called for in the political declaration adopted at the 2023 Sustainable Development Goals Summit. Follow-up on implementation should also be enhanced after the conduct of voluntary national reviews.

38. **Ms. Tlhabi** (Broadcaster and author, South Africa) asked how Member States and other stakeholders could more effectively follow up on the implementation of the outcomes of the Summit of the Future and similar forums.

39. **Ms. Stoeva** (Permanent Representative of Bulgaria to the United Nations) said that the Council, as a forum that fostered engagement and partnerships among stakeholders, was uniquely positioned to facilitate the whole-of-society approach required to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals and implement the Pact for the Future.

40. **Ms. Tlhabi** (Broadcaster and author, South Africa) asked how financing-related obstacles to the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals could be addressed.

41. **Ms. Cousens** (President and Chief Executive Officer, United Nations Foundation) said that the solutions required to resolve financing-related issues were well known and involved focusing, in particular, on equity- and governance-related, as well as technical, matters. Although gradual progress was being made, a much more ambitious approach to the mobilization of all types of resources was necessary in order to accelerate the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals and leave no one behind. That would require much more honest discussions of the impediments in that regard. For example, the extraordinary digital divides faced worldwide, even in wealthy countries, were unacceptable.

42. **Ms. Tlhabi** (Broadcaster and author, South Africa) asked how the Council could foster more inclusive trade policies to promote sustainable development and resilience.

43. **Ms. Grynspan** (Secretary-General, United Nations Conference on Trade (UNCTAD)) said that the Council's unique role as a platform for dialogue and coordination among multiple stakeholders must be leveraged. Through enhanced coordination, greater resources and more streamlined processes, the Council must be empowered to identify integrated solutions to challenges in such areas as debt, development, technology, investment, growth and the environment, in particular in the global South. To that end, there was a need for candid dialogue among high-level stakeholders who did not necessarily share the same views.

44. **Ms. Tlhabi** (Broadcaster and author, South Africa) asked about the kinds of transitions that were required to accelerate the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals and how youth could play a central role in that regard.

45. **Mr. Paullier** (Assistant Secretary-General for Youth Affairs) said that, in 2018, the Secretary-General had launched the United Nations Youth Strategy in order to address the needs, build the agency and advance the rights of young people in all their diversity, and to ensure their engagement and participation in the implementation, review and follow-up of the 2030 Agenda. The Strategy involved working with young people as equal partners rather than as the beneficiaries of policies, and was currently being implemented by 58 United Nations entities and all 132 United Nations country teams. It was therefore a powerful means of

ensuring that youth played a central role in the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals.

46. During the 2024 high-level political forum on sustainable development, the United Nations Youth Office had issued the fourth progress report on the Strategy, including, for the first time, a public-facing dashboard that could be used to help visualize and navigate the relevant data, thereby promoting accountability. The Office had also issued the first interim review of the Strategy, in which it had recommended that the Strategy be better aligned with global, regional and national measures and pathways for the acceleration of progress towards the Goals, in accordance with the six transitions identified by the United Nations development system. Those transitions could have a multiplier effect across the Goals and were priorities for young people; they should therefore guide efforts to accelerate progress under the United Nations Youth Strategy. Youth had the creativity, expertise and experience needed to implement the 2030 Agenda, but often lacked opportunities and power. All stakeholders, particularly those with power, must therefore support investment in skills development among young people and create channels for their engagement with the Organization.

47. **Ms. Tlhabi** (Broadcaster and author, South Africa) asked how the Commission on the Status of Women could enhance its contribution to the Council's work on promoting gender inclusivity and gender equality.

48. **Mr. Alwasil** (Permanent Representative of Saudi Arabia to the United Nations and Chair of the Commission on the Status of Women) said that the Commission could enhance its contribution to the Council's work by helping the other functional commissions to mainstream gender equality in their own activities and in those of the Council more broadly. For example, he had recently participated in a side event organized by the Commission on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice, in which he had identified synergies between its work and that of the Commission the Status of Women, as well as potential future areas for collaboration. It was necessary to identify more opportunities for the discussion of relevant commitments and implementation road maps between the Commission on the Status of Women and other functional commissions that addressed gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls. Such discussions should be focused on ways in which to fulfil such commitments and enhance systematic and statistics-based follow-up in order to monitor progress and identify challenges, as well as on the exchange of best practices among Member States and other stakeholders.

49. There had been many calls for the revitalization of the Commission, including a proposal for the inclusion of such a call in the Pact for the Future. He had also supported the Council President's call for the establishment of a task force for that purpose. The Commission had consulted with Member States on the proposal to revitalize the Commission and was closely following the development of the wording proposed for inclusion in the Pact. Stronger partnerships with a broad range of stakeholders should be fostered. Lastly, the thirtieth anniversary of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action would provide a key opportunity to place women and girls at the centre of efforts to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals.

50. **Ms. Tlhabi** (Broadcaster and author, South Africa) asked how, instead of promoting competition, the digital environment could be leveraged for international cooperation in the implementation of the 2030 Agenda.

51. **Ms. Bogdan-Martin** (Secretary-General, International Telecommunication Union (ITU)) said that countries seeking to advance development must harness digital technology. Despite calls in 2015 for the establishment of a Sustainable Development Goal on digital connectivity, that issue had not been considered a top national or international priority until the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic. Although the Secretary-General had been prescient in developing the High-level Panel on Digital Cooperation in 2018, the pandemic had been largely responsible for significantly increasing the number of people connected to the Internet, having led to 10 per cent growth in 2020 alone, and for ensuring the widespread inclusion of references to digital connectivity in voluntary national reviews.

52. The Council had a crucial role to play in coordinating discussions on artificial intelligence governance, particularly given that many countries were not involved in the initiatives currently being taken on the matter. Those initiatives had revealed the need to develop common standards; reduce the trust deficit; provide capacity-building, particularly in the global South; adopt an inclusive, whole-of-society approach; address ethics and human rights as a matter of priority; and bridge the digital divide between men and women. For its part, ITU was redoubling its efforts to translate standards into actionable frameworks through collaboration with other standard-setting bodies, including within the United Nations system, and through the Inter-Agency Working Group on Artificial Intelligence. It was also cooperating with the World Intellectual Property Organization and the World Health Organization on artificial intelligence and health, and with the World Meteorological Organization on early warning systems and disaster risk management.



53. Much more remained to be done in order to build capacities, harness development financing and improve digital infrastructure, especially in underserved areas. In that regard, the Partner2Connect platform of ITU enabled stakeholders to submit pledges of financial support for improving connectivity in remote areas, including in the field of artificial intelligence. ITU was also bringing together a broad range of stakeholders through its Artificial Intelligence for Good Global Summit. For example, at the most recent such Summit, held in 2024, developed and developing countries had marked Artificial Intelligence Governance Day by highlighting the need to focus on responsible artificial intelligence, create interoperability standards, ensure that artificial intelligence did not create new divides, demonstrate solidarity and share resources.

54. **Ms. Tlhabi** (Broadcaster and author, South Africa) asked how the organs established under the Charter of the United Nations, including the Economic and Social Council and the Security Council, could develop a closer relationship to address issues of common interest in a complementary way.

55. **Mr. Kimani** (Executive Director, Center on International Cooperation, New York University) said that the Charter organs could achieve better results jointly, rather than individually. The Summit of the Future and the 2025 review of the peacebuilding architecture would provide valuable opportunities for discussion among those organs. The Presidents of the Security Council and the Economic and Social Council could also meet to develop shared agendas for the meetings and sessions of those bodies so as to foster better understanding of and cooperation on issues that fell within the mandates of both bodies. Such coordination could be particularly beneficial in relation to the Multinational Security Support Mission in Haiti, as the Mission was tasked with security functions by the Security Council but was also relevant to the Economic and Social Council's work insofar as improvements in livelihoods, food security and community resilience were necessary to address the crisis, a point that had been reflected in the recommendations of the Council's Ad Hoc Advisory Group on Haiti.

56. Joint discussions between the Economic and Social Council and the Security Council could also cover peacebuilding and initiatives related to the international financial institutions. The functional commissions of the Economic and Social Council could be utilized to contribute to the issuance of complementary policy recommendations and action plans by the two bodies. In addition, the President of the Economic and Social Council could be invited to participate in Security Council open debates in order to

ensure that responses to conflicts and crises were focused on both security-related and socioeconomic dimensions, and thus addressed root causes. The establishment of a regular summit among Charter organs should also be considered.

57. **Mr. Wiśniewski** (Poland) said that a unified global response was necessary to address the multiple crises faced by the world, including the aftermath of the COVID-19 pandemic and military conflicts such as the Russian aggression against Ukraine. Peace and prosperity could not be achieved without ensuring sustainable development, tackling climate change and promoting women's empowerment, endeavours in which the Council played an indispensable role.

58. Poland took its membership on the Council very seriously and was prepared to take tangible action to implement the 2030 Agenda. Drawing on its lessons learned with regard to building an efficient and inclusive State, Poland would focus on promoting resilience, ensuring global food security, strengthening democratic institutions and reducing inequality. Poland was also proud to have been elected to the Statistical Commission, the Commission on Science and Technology for Development and the Programme Coordinating Board of the Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS for terms of office beginning on 1 January 2025. In addition, it would serve as Chair of the sixty-third session of the Commission for Social Development. As a member of the Preparatory Committee for the Fourth International Conference on Financing for Development, Poland was committed to ensuring that the outcomes of the Conference were both ambitious and achievable. Poland would fulfil its responsibility to reduce global imbalances and inequalities.

59. **Mr. Garrido Melo** (Chile) said that the Council had a crucial role to play in building a sustainable and resilient future. Although the Council had been essential in facilitating global dialogue and integrated policymaking, it was more than a discussion forum, as it contributed to practical and positive change in the lives of people, especially the most vulnerable. The Council could improve the effectiveness of its operations and maximize its impact by fully utilizing its subsidiary bodies, as they provided a platform for sharing technical expertise and fostering policy coherence to address complex challenges in such areas as climate change, poverty eradication and gender equality.

60. The Council's power must be harnessed in order to improve decision-making, accelerate the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals and implement

the Pact for the Future, initiatives that would require concerted efforts to support inclusive multilateral action, with meaningful participation by all stakeholders. The broad variety of platforms for consultation and dialogue offered by the Council served as a powerful reminder of the progress achieved and the central role of multilateralism, as such platforms not only promoted the implementation of the 2030 Agenda but also demonstrated the possibility of empowering individuals and communities worldwide. Chile called for a renewed commitment to multilateralism and strengthened cooperation within the Council in order to enhance political dialogue, exchange knowledge, and broaden regional and international dialogue and collaboration, and, in particular, to ensure tangible outcomes for the most vulnerable.

61. **Ms. Hoang** Thi Thanh Nga (Observer for Viet Nam) said that Viet Nam was deeply committed to multilateral cooperation and to United Nations efforts to implement the 2030 Agenda. To that end, it had forged dynamic partnerships with United Nations entities and other development stakeholders to mobilize resources and expertise and build capacities to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals.

62. Multilateral platforms, particularly United Nations entities, should play an enhanced leadership role in coordinating global efforts to address development challenges by strengthening international laws and cooperation mechanisms. It was necessary to build a Council that was more adaptive and responsive and that provided in-depth studies and practical guidance on emerging issues such as technological advancement, healthcare and environmental sustainability. The Council could also enhance coordination among United Nations agencies, funds and programmes in order to streamline funding flows, avoid duplication of efforts and leverage synergies. The efficiency of the resident coordinator system and of United Nations country teams should be improved to ensure better alignment between United Nations activities and national priorities. Moreover, the Council should promote increased official development assistance, engage in policy dialogue to explore innovative financing mechanisms, encourage developed countries to fulfil their international aid-related commitments, facilitate technology transfers and build developing countries' capacities for sustainable development. The Summit of the Future would provide a once-in-a-generation opportunity to revitalize the multilateral framework; Viet Nam would therefore participate proactively in the Summit.

63. **Ms. Yanna** (Observer for Indonesia) said that the multilateral system was under heavy scrutiny, as

progress towards several Sustainable Development Goals remained severely off track. Restoring people's optimism, hope and confidence in multilateralism was therefore crucial, and the Council's involvement was central in that regard.

64. Emphasis must be placed on delivering concrete results. The Council played a significant role in mobilizing and coordinating United Nations system-wide programmes to bolster Member States' efforts to achieve the Goals, in ensuring policy coherence and in formulating policy recommendations. The high-level political forum should continue to serve as the main annual platform for deliberating on and enhancing support for accelerating the implementation of the 2030 Agenda. To that end, voluntary national reviews should be utilized optimally to promote partnerships in order to address challenges and gaps and advance progress. In addition, local governments should be further encouraged to conduct voluntary local reviews and to assess progress and identify challenges in localizing the Goals.

65. Placing the Goals at the heart of the international financial institutions, particularly the Bretton Woods institutions, was crucial. The Council should provide a platform for meaningful engagement between Member States and the Bretton Woods institutions to ensure that those institutions were attuned to Member States' needs and priorities.

66. The Summit of the Future would provide a prime opportunity to make the multilateral system more inclusive and fit for purpose. The Pact for the Future should therefore ensure the necessary reform of the system, as that would be crucial to the implementation of the 2030 Agenda and to the fulfilment of the promise to leave no one behind.

67. **Mr. Tseng** (Observer for Amitofo Care Center International) said that strengthening partnerships and leaving no one behind were essential to accelerate the development of innovative solutions, including with regard to climate change, and thereby achieve the Sustainable Development Goals. Climate change, the COVID-19 pandemic and other crises had hindered efforts to reduce global poverty. Nevertheless, over the previous two decades, Amitofo Care Center International had been supporting steps taken by African countries to improve education and healthcare and reduce poverty in order to lessen inequality and promote equal opportunities for vulnerable people, thus bolstering prosperity at the individual and community levels.

68. To reach zero hunger, the international community must improve food security and address malnutrition

through agricultural innovation in order to enhance agricultural flexibility and food production, as that would reduce disease and promote economic prosperity. Amitofo Care Center International had also worked to strengthen resilience and self-reliance in communities. In addition, it helped non-profit organizations to advance cooperation in matters related to peace and justice. To promote development, access to justice must be ensured, discrimination must be reduced, and democratic organizations must be used to alleviate poverty and revitalize multilateralism. Knowledge and common resources must be harnessed to accelerate the implementation of the Goal targets. In addition, innovative financing mechanisms would stimulate development.

69. Amid various crises, new approaches should be taken to accelerating the achievement of the Goals. Synergies among United Nations entities should be increased. All stakeholders should contribute to making progress towards the Goals so that the responsibility did not lie exclusively with Member States, and medium and small institutions should participate. Inequality should be reduced to create a more just and orderly future for the following generation.

70. **Ms. Tlhabi** (Broadcaster and author, South Africa) asked the panellists to explain their vision for the future.

71. **Ms. Stoeva** (Permanent Representative of Bulgaria to the United Nations) said that multilateral solutions were the only way forward, given the nature of the challenges faced. The Pact for the Future provided a useful opportunity to develop such solutions and to translate words into actions.

72. **Mr. Alwasil** (Permanent Representative of Saudi Arabia to the United Nations and Chair of the Commission on the Status of Women) said that the current meeting had been valuable for fostering coordination and cooperation on ways to advance objectives related to women and girls. In the future, it would be essential to increase such cooperation, share experiences and identify synergies among the various bodies that promoted the rights of women and girls.

73. **Mr. Martinez Badillo** (Chief, New York Office of the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD)), speaking on behalf of Ms. Grynspan, said that, in preparing for major upcoming events such as the Fourth International Conference on Financing for Development, UNCTAD would focus mainly on developing integrated solutions to issues involving the international financial architecture, the multilateral trading system, governance in the areas of technology and digitalization, and taxation and investment, in order to create an

environment that was conducive to development. In particular, in the period leading up to the Second World Summit for Social Development, UNCTAD would examine the role of economic development as an underpinning for social development in order to address the related matters comprehensively and coherently, drawing on contributions from all stakeholders.

74. **Ms. Bogdan-Martin** (Secretary-General, International Telecommunication Union (ITU)) said that she was optimistic that a better future could be built. In particular, she hoped that the universal accessibility of safe, inclusive and affordable digital technology would help to accelerate the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals and unleash tremendous opportunities for economic, social and cultural empowerment. The Summit of the Future would enable the international community to make the more ambitious commitments needed to effect such change. Multilateralism and a solution-focused approach were essential; the Council's engagement was therefore particularly valuable.

75. **Mr. Paullier** (Assistant Secretary-General for Youth Affairs) said that he wished to clarify that the role of the United Nations Youth Office was not to represent youth but to support the establishment of mechanisms for their enhanced participation.

76. Methods of engaging with young people must be transformed if their trust was to be gained. In that regard, in preparation for the Summit of the Future and with the support of the Futures Laboratory, the United Nations Youth Office had, using existing research on youth perceptions, emerging trends and related issues, conducted an exercise aimed at identifying potential future scenarios for transformative youth involvement. Two such scenarios had been identified. In the first, which was characterized by the continuation of the existing level of youth participation over the following 10 years, mistrust between formal institutions and informal movements was likely to grow, divisions between generations would increase as a result of digitalization, and youth vulnerabilities would worsen, mostly in developing countries. Consequently, younger generations would become increasingly disillusioned with the multilateral system, a situation that could undermine the gains achieved by the United Nations.

77. In the second scenario, which was characterized by transformed governance systems in which youth participation was mainstreamed using emerging technologies, the potential of young people as digital natives would be harnessed; robots, new accountability mechanisms and digital administrations would be established; and the social contract would be renewed

through intergenerational interactions. In addition, high-level negotiations would be advanced through initiatives specifically targeted to the realities faced by young people. The gap between formal institutions and organic youth movements could thus be bridged.

78. **Ms. Cousens** (President and Chief Executive Officer, United Nations Foundation) said that the current watershed moment must be harnessed to foster the equitable cooperation necessary to achieve a brighter future. In particular, the Council's broad scope in terms of priority issues, stakeholder entities and geographical reach, as well as its status as an apex institution, should continue to be leveraged to promote ambitious innovation in the identification of solutions to existing and emerging problems. The Council also had unparalleled potential to foster accountability across the United Nations system by focusing on gaps in implementation and delivery, an approach that would, in turn, increase trust. Strong collective will was required to fulfil the promise of the 2030 Agenda.

79. **Mr. Kimani** (Executive Director, Center on International Cooperation, New York University) said that, against a backdrop of multiple crises, the Council could help to repair broken social contracts and forge peace by fulfilling its mandate and promise. That would require political will on the part of all delegations to make the Council the forum in which the most meaningful discussions with the Bretton Woods institutions were held; entities across the United Nations system were held accountable for deliverables; progress towards the Sustainable Development Goals was clearly assessed; and high-level meetings were convened with bodies such as the Security Council in order to address the root causes of conflict from a socioeconomic perspective.

80. **Ms. Neis Caraffa** (Observer for the Fundação Antonio Meneghetti) said that the Fundação Antonio Meneghetti was providing more than 2,000 young people with an education, guided by the principles of humanism, ontopsychology (the theory that knowledge was real only if it could be applied to reality) and pedagogy, as such an education was a pre-requisite for finding sustainable, resilience-focused and innovative solutions. The Fundação Antonio Meneghetti fostered continuous development within communities, as its current projects were focused on children, young adolescents, adults and older persons; such lifelong learning empowered the projects' beneficiaries to further their own development. In all its activities, the Fundação Antonio Meneghetti provided students with information relating to the Sustainable Development Goals, as local-level work could help to support global commitments.

81. **Ms. Hamza Baldo** (Observer for the Next Century Foundation) said that she was speaking on behalf of the Sudanese diaspora in the United Kingdom. The Sudan sought to participate actively in the United Nations; it was currently facing a war that had caused people to flee the country and put every woman and girl at risk of being raped.

82. As none of the pledges made to stop the famine in the country had been fulfilled, she called on Member States to divert all the money that they had allocated for the purchase of exports from the Sudan into a fund to support humanitarian programmes, members of the Sudanese diaspora and Sudanese refugees without access to food, sanitation or healthcare, and to thereby alert the international community to the situation in the country. Such a fund would be the equivalent of the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East, but for the Sudan; the proceeds from every purchase of exports from the Sudan would be used to provide relief, enable humanitarian access and promote peace in the country.

83. Platforms must be unified to establish peace processes, and the Sudanese people must be allowed to participate in their future. The achievement of even one of the Sustainable Development Goals in the Sudan would represent progress for youth and, in particular, for women, who constituted more than 50 per cent of the population and 65 per cent of informal-sector workers, and who did not have access to prenatal or postnatal care or to vaccines for their children. She appreciated Member States that had stood in solidarity with the Sudan. The United Nations must focus on delivering results, in particular by reducing arms sales.

*The meeting rose at 12.20 p.m.*