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Chairman: Mr. Djumala (Vice-Chairman)..... (Indonesia)

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In the absence of Mr. Seixas da Costa (Portugal), Mr. Djumala (Indonesia), Vice-Chairman, took the Chair.

The meeting was called to order at 3.15 p.m.

Agenda item 98: Environment and sustainable development (*continued*) (A/56/115-E/2001/115, A/56/115/Corr.1-E/2001/92/Corr.1, A/56/189, A/56/74, A/56/222-S/2001/736, A/56/303, A/56/304, A/56/318, A/56/358, A/56/395)

(a) Implementation of Agenda 21 and the Programme for the Further Implementation of Agenda 21 (*continued*) (A/56/25, A/56/3, A/56/306, A/56/379)

1. **Mr. Salazar** (Peru) said that the World Summit on Sustainable Development presented an opportunity for the international community to confront the main threats to security. Extreme poverty, which had an adverse impact on the sustainability of resources, and the exclusion of developing countries from the benefits of globalization, could be considered the root causes of such threats. Sustainable management of the Earth's resources required the incorporation of environmental issues into any development strategy. The growing costs of such incorporation would have to be funded by existing or new international financial mechanisms. The Summit would have to make sure that such mechanisms were fully operational.

2. The commitments outlined in the various international Conventions dealing with the environment should not only have specific means of implementation, but should also be accompanied by a fair and transparent international trading system which ensured adequate market access to the products in which developing countries had the clearest comparative advantage.

3. While sustainable management of forests could help reduce the impact of greenhouse gas emissions, developed countries must fulfil their commitments to reduce such emissions, as they had pledged to do when signing the Kyoto Protocol to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change. The dangers of inaction were very real, as demonstrated by the increasing frequency of the El Niño phenomenon.

4. Peru was also deeply concerned at the effects of global warming on the ecosystem of the Andes, where

the glaciers were shrinking noticeably. Peru therefore accorded high priority to the International Year of Mountains, and had hosted an international workshop to raise awareness of the crucial role of mountain ecosystems in maintaining natural and genetic heritage and biological diversity.

5. His delegation looked forward to the successful conclusion of the deliberations of the Working Group on Access and Benefit-sharing, which had been charged with the task of promoting the value of traditional knowledge and ensuring appropriate access to genetic resources. In that regard, it was heartening to note that the recent draft ministerial declaration issued by the World Trade Organization had drawn attention to the need to take account, in the trade negotiations, of the link between Trade-related Intellectual Property Rights (TRIPs) and the traditional knowledge.

6. Further discussion was needed on the scope of global environmental governance, which had been designed to resolve problems regarding the fragmentation and effectiveness of the international environment agenda. Peru believed that the World Summit on Sustainable Development was the proper framework within which to consider ways to deal with any lack of coherence. The focus should be on how to improve the management of sustainable development so as to achieve the goals of Agenda 21.

7. **Ms. Loemban Tobing-Klein** (Suriname) said that Suriname had undertaken an assessment of its national strategies. Environmental protection had been included in its five-year development plan, yet there was evidently a need for greater understanding of issues on sustainability. Other factors which impeded proper planning for sustainable development were inadequate data collection, and a lack of experience in defining specific sustainability targets.

8. Suriname was working to achieve the goals set forth in Agenda 21. Forests, inhabited by indigenous peoples, accounted for 80 per cent of its territory. The Government had been working on environmental education and had actively encouraged the participation of indigenous groups in decisions which directly affected the forest.

9. Greater coordination between ministries and increased private sector involvement in environmental issues were crucial. Suriname was pleased to report it had made substantial progress in the area of public participation and the participation of non-governmental

and community-based organizations. Its limited but encouraging national achievements had strengthened its belief that the achievement of sustainable development required a common endeavour, strong political will and understanding in order to create the fundamental changes necessary to achieve long-lasting development for all.

10. **Mr. Bautista** (Philippines), reporting on his country's efforts to implement Agenda 21, said that the Philippines Agenda 21 included direct and proactive efforts for conserving, managing, protecting and rehabilitating the environment through an approach that harmonized economic, ecological and social goals. The Government had taken significant steps to include the most vulnerable members of society, for example through the use of gender budget analysis in the national context, and had strengthened the role of the private sector in environmental management. The Philippines had also accelerated forest renewal and launched pilot projects to determine the actual costs of unsustainable economic practices.

11. It was unfortunate that implementation of Agenda 21, at the international level, had been somewhat disappointing due, in part, to the failure of the international community to fulfil their commitments regarding assistance.

12. Turning to the World Summit, he said that participants should focus on leaving the Summit with a programme of action that was understandable, time-bound and adequately funded. Secondly, the principle of common but differentiated responsibility should continue to be the framework for discussion and, thirdly, efforts should continue to focus on how individual countries could help themselves to face the challenges of development. Efforts should be made to incorporate the views of all stakeholders, including the business sector and civil society and, finally, the Summit should emphasize that international governance should be aimed at enhancing the participation of developing countries.

13. **Mr. Lenagala** (Sri Lanka) said that the international community had come a long way towards placing increased emphasis on sustainable development. It was essential to the continuation of human life that all countries should integrate and balance economic, social and environmental concerns when meeting their needs. While the idea had seemed revolutionary, when first introduced in 1992, most

countries had now taken steps to develop national strategies aimed at achieving the goal of sustainable development.

14. His Government remained fully committed to supporting the efforts on sustainable development and attached great importance to the 10-year review of the implementation of Agenda 21. It looked forward to a series of successful deliberations leading to the World Summit and believed that the Summit would aim at the removal of obstacles to the implementation of Agenda 21.

15. **Mr. Desai** (Under-Secretary-General for Economic and Social Affairs), responding to questions regarding preparations for the World Summit on Sustainable Development, said that Local Agenda 21 activities (A/56/379, para. 11) were widely recognized as one of the most important and successful aspects of the implementation of Agenda 21. The International Council for Local Environmental Initiatives, the UNDP Capacity 21 and the secretariat of the World Summit for Sustainable Development had jointly undertaken a survey of hundreds of local governments and associations in order to compile information on the impact of such local initiatives, obstacles to their implementation and lessons learned. The results of the survey were to be published in February 2002.

16. In response to another question, he said that 50 national assessments had been received. His Department had circulated approximately 122 country profiles, containing information to be verified, corrected and fleshed out by the various countries concerned, but only 20 had been returned. He urged countries to return the profiles since they formed a valuable basis for discussion of the implementation of Agenda 21 at the national level.

17. The appointment of Mr. Jan Pronk as the Special Envoy of the Secretary-General and the creation of a panel of experts to advise the Secretary-General underscored the Secretary-General's commitment to ensuring the success of the World Summit for Sustainable Development. One of the Special Envoy's chief functions would be to gauge the views of senior political leaders and their expectations of the Summit. The advisory panel was gender- and geographically balanced and was composed of experts in various social areas. Advisory panels not infrequently participated in preparations for international

conferences and helped to brief the Secretary-General and to promote awareness of the Conference.

- (b) **International strategy for disaster reduction** (A/56/68 and Corr.1, Corr.2 and 3, A/56/76-E/2001/54, A/56/306, A/C.2/56/2)
- (c) **Implementation of the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification in Those Countries Experiencing Serious Drought and/or Desertification, particularly in Africa** (A/56/175, A/56/306)
- (d) **Convention on Biological Diversity** (A/56/126)
- (e) **Further implementation of the Programme of Action for the Sustainable Development of Small Island Developing States** (A/56/170, A/56/306)
- (g) **Promotion of new and renewable sources of energy, including the implementation of the World Solar Programme 1996-2005** (A/56/129)

18. **Mr. Diallo** (Executive Secretary of the Secretariat of the Convention to Combat Desertification), introducing the report of the Secretary-General on the implementation of the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification in Those Countries Experiencing Serious Drought and/or Desertification, particularly in Africa (A/56/175) said that the secretariat had paid special attention to the formulation and launching of national action programmes to combat desertification (NAPs). It had assisted in the convening of consultative forums aimed at building partnership agreements at the country level and had also helped to organize consultative events to integrate NAPs into national sustainable development frameworks.

19. Briefing the Committee on the fourth and fifth sessions of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention, he said that the fourth session had focused on the review of the reports on implementation of the Convention prepared by affected country parties. The review had revealed a worldwide mobilization of affected country Parties and their development partners in combating desertification. While the fourth session had essentially reviewed the implementation of the Convention, the fifth session had moved the process forward by agreeing on measures concerning the

institutional setting, the financing and implementation of the Convention and the promotion of sustainable development in affected country Parties. With regard to the institutional setting, the Conference had decided to establish a subsidiary body which would review reports on measures to implement the Convention and make recommendations. It had also decided to adopt measures to improve the effectiveness and efficiency of the Committee on Science and Technology with a view to helping countries integrate science and technology into their national, subregional and regional activities.

20. With regard to financing, the Conference had adopted a decision on financing the implementation of the Convention. The parties had welcomed the May 2001 decision of the Global Environmental Facility to make land degradation a focal area of its work, which should generate much-needed new and additional financial support for the national action programmes of affected countries. In that connection, the Conference of the Parties had stressed that a strategy for reducing poverty and combating desertification must be based on a predictable funding mechanism which not only provided new and additional sources of financing but also established a coordinated programmatic approach among the multilateral funding institutions. The Conference of the Parties had also adopted its programme and budget for the biennium 2000-2003 and requested the inclusion of its sessions and those of its subsidiary bodies in the calendar of conferences and meetings for the biennium 2002-2003.

21. The World Summit on Sustainable Development would assess the progress achieved in the implementation of the Convention and was expected to give fresh impetus to addressing difficulties impeding the attainment of the objectives of the Convention. The Conference of the Parties had decided to submit to the World Summit a comprehensive progress report on implementation of the Convention and to stress the need to ensure that the goals of the Convention, particularly those relating to poverty eradication and sustainable development, were duly reflected in the outcome of the Summit.

22. **Mr. Briceño** (Director, International Strategy for Disaster Reduction), speaking on behalf of the Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs, introduced the report of the Secretary-General on the implementation of the International Strategy for Disaster Reduction (A/56/68-E/2001/63). The International Strategy for Disaster Reduction, endorsed

in General Assembly resolution 54/219, was based on a valuable lesson learned since 1994, namely, that disasters resulted not so much from natural hazards but rather from the adverse impact of such hazards on vulnerable economic and social systems. The overriding task of the International Strategy was thus to promote a global “culture of prevention” that would reduce vulnerability. Every effort was being made to promote the integration of disaster reduction into sustainable development, poverty eradication and climate change.

23. The Inter-Agency Task Force on Disaster Reduction, endorsed by the General Assembly in its resolution 54/219, had met three times and provided policy guidance and substantive input for achieving the objectives of the Strategy. It had established four technical Working Groups focusing on climate and disasters; early warning; impact and vulnerability assessment; and wildland fires. The secretariat of the International Strategy for Disaster Reduction worked closely with a broad range of United Nations and non-United Nations stakeholders. It issued a Global Annual Report on disaster reduction, developed guidelines for collaboration with and backstopping of national platforms for disaster reduction, developed and disseminated risk assessment methodologies and lessons learned and organized both global information campaigns to promote disaster reduction and other information exchanges and awareness initiatives.

24. In the past decade, economic losses due to disasters had increased on average by 10 per cent annually. Despite general agreement on the need for disaster reduction, only about 1 per cent of resources provided by the international community for disaster management was allocated to disaster reduction. The Secretary-General had thus come to the conclusion that disaster reduction must be accorded higher priority and that the Inter-Agency Task Force and secretariat were appropriate mechanisms for furthering the goals of the Strategy. He had therefore proposed that the secretariat should not only continue in that role but also strengthen its regional outreach. Indeed, both the Task Force and the secretariat were so vital that consideration should be given to funding them, at least in part, from the regular budget.

25. Introducing the report of the Secretary-General on international cooperation to reduce the impact of the El Niño phenomenon (A/56/76-E/2001/54), he said that, of all abnormal weather and climatic phenomena,

El Niño was perhaps the most likely to lead to extensive and devastating natural events that could affect the entire globe. Its sibling, “La Niña”, had the potential to wreak widespread devastation as well. The floods in Mozambique and the serious drought in the Horn of Africa reflected a pattern consistent with previous El Niño events.

26. In November 1998, an international seminar had been held in Guayaquil, Ecuador, to carry out a scientific and technical analysis of the 1997-1998 El Niño event. That seminar had led to the development of a project to assess the impact of El Niño in 16 developing countries around the world and had laid the groundwork for the establishment of the International Research Centre for the El Niño Southern Oscillation (ENSO) Phenomenon by the Government of Ecuador and the World Meteorological Organization (WMO). The Working Group on Climate and Disasters was expected to serve as an expert forum within the United Nations system to support international cooperation to reduce the impact of El Niño.

27. The international community must be better prepared to mitigate the impact of El Niño. In particular, capacity-building in developing countries must be aimed at improving scientific and technical expertise in order to help them to cope with such climatic extremes, and the organizations of the United Nations system must adapt their programmes to that end. The report of the Secretary-General also presented a number of recommendations on what needed to be done in the areas of information, advocacy, education and institutional cooperation.

28. **Mr. Obermeyer** (Convention on Biological Diversity), introducing the report of the Executive Secretary of the Convention on Biological Diversity (A/56/126), said that the principal activities under the Convention in the past year were outlined in paragraphs 2 and 4.

29. The main theme of the sixth meeting of the Subsidiary Body on Scientific, Technical and Technological Advice had been alien species which, after habitat destruction, constituted the most significant threat to biodiversity. An important outcome of the meeting had been the adoption of recommendation VI/7 on biological diversity and climate change. The Subsidiary Body had agreed to undertake a pilot assessment to prepare scientific advice to integrate biodiversity considerations into the

implementation of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change and its Kyoto Protocol and to that end, it had established an ad hoc technical expert group.

30. The most significant outcome of the first meeting of the Intergovernmental Committee for the Cartagena Protocol on Biosafety had been its recommendations on the establishment of the pilot phase of the Biosafety Clearing House (BCH). A major challenge in implementing the Cartagena Protocol would be to develop the biotechnical capacities of stakeholders in order to enable them to assess and manage risks. That would necessitate transfers from the private sector and from developed Parties to developing Parties.

31. The second meeting of the Panel of Experts on Access and Benefit Sharing, held in Montreal in March 2001, had focused on assessing user and provider experience in access and benefit-sharing and identifying approaches for stakeholder involvement in access and benefit-sharing arrangements. Great emphasis had been placed on capacity-building and strengthening the ability of stakeholders in such areas as the development of adequate legislation, administrative and policy measures and the protection of genetic resources and associated traditional knowledge, innovations and practices of indigenous and local communities. At its fifth meeting, the Conference of the Parties had decided to initiate a process to develop a Strategic Plan for the Convention. A structure and draft elements of a plan had been subsequently agreed at a workshop held in Seychelles (UNEP/CBD/MSP/2).

32. **Mr. Kamyab** (Islamic Republic of Iran), speaking on behalf of the Group of 77 and China, expressed general agreement with the recommendations of the Secretary-General in his report (A/56/68-E/2001/63), but added that particular attention needed to be given to the situation of developing countries and their respective regions. While welcoming the establishment of the Inter-Agency Task Force on Disaster Reduction, he called for greater coordination between the Task Force and the inter-agency secretariat of the International Strategy for Disaster Reduction and with relevant organizations and institutions.

33. Turning to the subject of international cooperation to reduce the impact of the El Niño phenomenon, he welcomed the signing of the

Memorandum of Cooperation between Ecuador and the World Meteorological Organization (A/C.2/56/2) and the results of the meeting of the Working Group on Climate and Disasters which had established two priorities for its work. Reviewing sectorial monitoring and warning systems, both within and outside the United Nations system, and supporting international cooperation to reduce the impact of the El Niño phenomenon were two complementary steps. The experience and lessons learned from implementation of the project entitled "Reducing the impact of environmental emergencies through early warning and preparedness: the case of the 1997/1998 El Niño" should be available to countries, and the continuation of such projects in other developing countries should be encouraged. He agreed with the recommendations in the Secretary-General's report (A/56/76-E/2001/54), particularly the one in paragraph 35.

34. Turning to the Convention on Biological Diversity and the Cartagena Protocol on Biosafety, he noted the results of the second meeting of the Intergovernmental Committee for the Cartagena Protocol, held in Nairobi from 1 to 5 October 2001. Discussion of such issues as compensation, decision-making procedures and capacity-building were very useful. The liability and redress regime should address liability and redress resulting from transboundary movement of Living Modified Organisms. It was also important to share information on such transboundary movements. It was his hope that decisions would be taken at the Sixth Meeting of the Conference of the Parties, to be held in The Hague, Netherlands, in April 2002, on a long-term strategic action plan for implementation of the Convention and on strengthening ways and means of implementing it.

35. Turning to the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification, he expressed satisfaction at the decision of the fifth session of the Conference of the Parties, held at Geneva, on the establishment of a Committee to review the implementation of the Convention. The lack of such a body had hindered implementation of the Convention since its inception. He also welcomed the agreement to establish an expert group on desertification and drought within the Committee on Science and Technology. The agreement to increase the core budget of the Convention was a step forward, but the approved budget for the next biennium was still far from being adequate to meet the Convention's actual needs. The Group strongly

believed that the implementation of the Convention was heavily reliant upon having a permanent financial mechanism, and therefore welcomed the decision of the Council of the Global Environment Facility (GEF), and encouraged GEF to take the next steps on designating land degradation as its new focal area of work.

36. Thanking the Secretary-General for his report on further implementation of the outcome of the Global Conference on the Sustainable Development of Small Island Developing States (A/56/170), he said that although some progress had been made in implementation of the Programme of Action it seemed that there was a need for further work in various areas, including information and communication technology, as well as globalization and trade liberalization.

37. Turning finally to the promotion of new and renewable sources of energy, including implementation of the World Solar Programme 1996-2005, he said that obstacles and constraints impeding the promotion of new and renewable sources of energy must be addressed. The Group welcomed the fact that work had begun, and emphasized its importance. It also welcomed the recommendations made at the ninth session of the Commission on Sustainable Development regarding solar energy, in particular the role of Governments in developing energy services in remote and rural areas and their role in removing barriers to implementation of policies for renewable energy development in such areas. The Group believed that other countries should take greater advantage of the World Solar Programme as one of the means for enhancing the application of solar energy and technology.

38. **Mr. Isakov** (Russian Federation) expressed his delegation's readiness constructively to consider the Secretary-General's recommendation that the Economic and Social Council and the General Assembly should launch a 10-year review of the implementation of the outcome of the Yokohama World Conference on Natural Disaster Reduction. It regarded the main objective of such a review as ensuring a comprehensive and objective assessment of the progress made in reducing natural disasters so as to determine ways of further enhancing the international community's efforts in that regard.

39. His Government regarded the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification as an important instrument for implementing Agenda 21 and as a

component of the comprehensive legal system of multilateral environmental cooperation. It was satisfied with the important decisions taken by the Conference of the Parties, at Geneva, concerning the work of the Convention in 2002-2003. It considered the entry into force of the Fifth Regional Annex for the countries of central and eastern Europe to be of special importance; it strengthened the Convention by making it more universal and created favourable conditions for the inclusion of that particular group of countries in international cooperation for combating desertification and land degradation. In light of that, the Russian Federation had stepped up the process of inter-agency coordination of questions related to accession to the Convention.

40. The Russian Federation supported the results of the fifth session of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity, and confirmed its interest in further active participation in efforts to achieve its goals; at the same time it wished to draw the Committee's attention to the fact that it had vast experience in addressing biodiversity problems which could be used for the benefit of many interested countries. The entry into force of the Cartagena Protocol should contribute to the formation of a universal system of biosafety and to the creation of a mechanism of standardization and a global network in the sphere of the transboundary movement of genetically modified organisms. His Government was actively engaged in preparations for accession to the Protocol.

41. The Russian Federation attached great importance to the further strengthening of cooperation and complementarities among the major environmental conventions, and other environmental instruments and organizations, as well as United Nations bodies and agencies related to sustainable development.

42. New and renewable sources of energy were obviously important, and countries must integrate them more into their national strategies, enhance scientific, including international, research on relevant technologies, and promote investment in the sector. The Russian Federation supported the implementation of the World Solar Programme, and considered that it was important to increase cooperation on the issue between UNESCO and the United Nations Secretariat.

43. **Mr. Kokubu** (Japan) welcomed the outcome of the fifth session of the Conference of the Parties to the

United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification, notably its decision to create a committee to review the implementation of the Convention and one on science and technology.

44. Japan believed that the sustainable use of wildlife, while respecting local traditions, was the key to maintaining biodiversity. His delegation expressed its admiration for the conservation efforts of Cuba, Botswana, Namibia, South Africa, Zimbabwe and Peru. It was important for Governments, international organizations and non-governmental organizations to uphold the concept of the sustainable use of wildlife and to put it into practice for the protection of biological diversity, especially endangered species. For the maintenance of biodiversity, it was also important to protect the ecosystem from Living Modified Organisms; Japan was therefore preparing to ratify the Cartagena Protocol, and hoped other Governments would do likewise.

45. Through its official development assistance, Japan gave active support to Small Island Developing States in their efforts to achieve sustainable development, placing priority on the development of human resources, basic infrastructure and environmental protection.

46. **Mr. Megiddo** (Israel) said that for years his country had been experimenting with dry land development. Israel was deeply committed to sharing its expertise in combating desertification with other countries. The main lesson it could share was the need to use the apparent disadvantages of dry land to generate economic advantages. Its International Program for Aid Land Crops (IPALAC), based on the approach used in the southern, desert part of Israel, namely the introduction and domestication of appropriate plants, involved partnership with scientists and researchers, non-governmental organizations, the United Nations and other agencies. Israel's Center for International Cooperation (MASHAV), had played a key role in IPALAC's development, sponsoring courses and workshops and funding fact-finding and project development missions for IPALAC members to Africa and specialized training for IPALAC collaborators in Israel.

47. The most effective means of intensification of agriculture was probably irrigation. A recently developed system for gravity-fed drip irrigation was being used in the African market garden — a holistic

approach to agriculture which was suitable for a significant portion of that continent's farming community. The advantages of gravity-fed drip irrigation were numerous, and it brought almost all the benefits of high technology systems to the small farmer at a fraction of the cost. There was no doubt that the introduction and dissemination of the African market garden approach would be the springboard for further intensification of agriculture.

48. Since desertification knew no boundaries, Israel believed that regional cooperation was basic to combating it.

49. **Mr. Yahya** (Israel) said that more than 90 per cent of Israeli citizens used solar energy to heat water for domestic use. The potential of solar energy in general and photovoltaic technology in particular was being studied in academic and industrial circles. Photovoltaic technology had several advantages: it was clean, could operate for long periods of time without maintenance, used the free and abundant power of the sun and was quite simple. In Israel it had improved the standard of living for people in far-flung areas and systems. Israel was prepared to offer its experience and knowledge to countries that required training in the use of solar energy.

50. **Ms. Lopez-Camacaro** (Venezuela) said that her Government was reinforcing efforts to predict and mitigate the effects of natural disasters and had created a working group to develop a scientific, multidisciplinary and integrated approach to risk management. In that context, she welcomed the establishment of the International Research Centre for the El Niño Southern Oscillation (ENSO) Phenomenon as well as the International Strategy for Disaster Reduction.

51. With regard to desertification, she noted that 6 per cent of country was classified as arid or semi-arid, her delegation took special interest in the measures for implementation of the Convention adopted at the latest session of the Conference of the Parties.

52. Preservation of biological diversity through the use of science and technology was also a priority and her Government had recently adopted partial regulations for application of the law on biological diversity, in the area of registration, monitoring and taxation of genetically modified organisms, their derivatives and products containing them with a view

to preventing or minimizing risks to the environment, biological diversity, health and agricultural production.

53. Her delegation had also supported the sustainable development of the small island developing States, in particular in the Caribbean, and she stressed that despite progress made towards implementation of the Barbados Programme of Action of 1994, those States still required international support in meeting development objectives. She therefore supported the recognition of the Caribbean as a special region for sustainable development, taking into account its specific characteristics and for the purpose of sustainable management of its resources.

54. Her delegation took great interest in new and renewable energies and supported the World Solar Programme 1996-2005. With assistance from the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC), her Government had prepared a draft law on energy efficiency; a plan had been initiated to replace also generated electricity with renewable energy in rural areas with a view to providing practical solutions which involved the local population and contributed to their well-being.

55. She stressed the importance of the creation of the Intergovernmental Forum on Forests and recalled that Venezuela had been cited by the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) as the country which provided the highest level of official protection through forest reserves.

56. **Mr. Mohammed** (Nigeria) welcomed the establishment of the Inter-Agency Task Force on Disaster Reduction, and stressed that review of institutional arrangements must ensure effective implementation of the International Strategy for Natural Disaster Reduction, special attention must be given to the needs of the developing countries. In order to respond effectively to disasters the international community must also strengthen disaster preparedness and early warning systems at the local, national and regional levels. Local capacity for disaster mitigation and management must also be enhanced. In that connection, he noted that his Government had adopted national plans for disaster reduction and established a National Emergency Management Authority (NEMA).

57. While he welcomed the establishment of a committee to review implementation of the Convention to Combat Desertification and the expert group on desertification and drought within the Committee on

Science and Technology for Development he pointed out that the Convention did not enjoy the same financial and technical resources as other conventions arising out of the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development (UNCED). He commended the Global Environment Facility (GEF) for its decision to fund projects on land degradation as a means of helping to implement the Convention and said that since land resources were vital for the majority of people in developing countries, the Global Environment Facility should be opened up to serve as a funding mechanism for the Convention.

58. The Cartagena Protocol on Biosafety should improve transparency within the international community in matters involving living modified organisms (LMOs) and genetically modified organisms (GMOs) but he stressed that effective implementation would depend on the commitment of the international community to providing the necessary financial mechanism. He also noted the results of the second meeting of the Intergovernmental Committee for the Cartagena Protocol on Biosafety of October 2001 and said that the principle of operator responsibility for clearing of pollution and compensation for damage to the environment should not be undermined by procedural delays or legal difficulties. He therefore looked forward to the sixth meeting of the Conference of the Parties, which should see the development of international rules and procedures for liability and compensation for damage resulting from transboundary movements of living modified organisms.

59. He regretted that to date progress towards implementation of the Programme of Action for the Sustainable Development of Small Island Developing States had failed to resolve the problems caused by climate change and natural disasters. Concerted international action was needed to support the small island developing States in fully implementing the Programme of Action.

60. The promotion and development of new and renewable sources of energy would require the active collaboration of all relevant stakeholders, in particular with regard to the developing countries. He therefore commended the work of the Global Renewable Energy Education and Training Programme (GREET), in particular its work to provide energy services to rural and isolated populations. The Programme should continue to focus on new technologies, especially in the context of the World Solar Programme (1996-

2005). In the developing countries special attention should also be given to capacity-building for human resources development and solar and other energy technologies, technology transfer, and access to financial resources, including private investment in energy infrastructure and related services.

61. **Ms. Clarke** (Barbados) stressed the importance of cooperation between the small island developing States and development partners in integrating sustainable development initiatives into national and regional policies. Her Government's commitment to sustainable development had not wavered despite the fact that the resources promised following the Rio Conference had not materialized. Great progress had been made in implementing the Programme of Action for the Sustainable Development of the Small Island Developing States with regard to hazardous chemicals and substances, disposal and management of solid and liquid wastes and reduction of beach erosion. A workshop would be held in early December to develop a national position with regard to the small island developing States' interregional consultation in preparation for the World Summit on Sustainable Development. She also welcomed efforts by the United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs (UNDESA) to create institutional linkages between Barbados, Costa Rica and the Maldives through twinning arrangements.

62. Unfortunately, sustainable development continued to compete with other national priorities for already scarce resources. Although the Capacity 21 project undertaken with the assistance of UNDP to develop a national council on sustainable development had been beneficial, the trial period had been rather short and some built-in mechanism for sustained collaboration with UNDP was necessary.

63. Regional efforts to implement the Programme of Action had been hampered by the lack of a regional implementation mechanism; a regional mechanism was necessary so that countries could share their experiences and identify best practices. The severe natural disasters to which the Caribbean Regional Economic Conference (CARICOM) countries were prone were likely to be further exacerbated by climate change. The Caribbean Planning for Adaptation to Global Climate Change (CPACC) project had made significant contributions to understanding the effects of climate change. The next step would be to apply the data collected and lessons learned so as to incorporate

climate change issues and initiatives into national and regional policy.

64. She noted concerns that the World Summit on Sustainable Development would take place against the backdrop of a severe economic downturn in the major economies. Continued implementation of the Programme of Action was essential for the environmental and economic viability of small island States and the events of 11 September 2001 had further underscored the vulnerability of island States to external factors. Recalling that the Global Conference on the Sustainable Development of Small Island Developing States and the Barbados Programme of Action had been the first global manifestations of Agenda 21, she said that the substantial cooperative efforts made towards implementation of the results of that Conference and the Programme of Action should serve as an example for the World Summit.

65. **Ms. Jenny** (Observer for Switzerland) expressed her delegation's support for the International Strategy for Disaster Reduction and welcomed the increasingly important role played by the Inter-Agency Task Force. There was growing awareness at all levels of the need to implement a culture of disaster prevention and she encouraged the Inter-Agency Task Force and its four working groups to strengthen their efforts.

66. Her Government continued to support international efforts to combat desertification but, while recognizing progress made towards implementation of the Convention to Combat Desertification, she stressed the need to ensure effective implementation at the local level, where people were most directly affected, and therefore welcomed the creation of an ad hoc working group (AHWG) to systematically review the reports of the Parties. She also supported the new priority given to land degradation within the Global Environment Fund and stressed that the reconstituted Fund must include specific resources for implementation of the Convention to Combat Desertification.

67. With regard to the Convention on Biological Diversity, she stressed the importance of the Cartagena Protocol for the development and safe use of biotechnologies. For the first time in international environmental law, the principle of precautionary measures had been retained and the principle of mutual support between environmental and trade agreements had been reaffirmed. The Protocol also took into

account the specific needs of the developing countries, the economies in transition and the industrialized countries with a large biotechnology sector and would help reinforce standardization of environmental safety procedures relating to biotechnologies. Efforts undertaken within the framework of the Protocol should also lead to the development of a regime for civil liability for damage caused by living modified organisms. Her delegation also attached great importance to the development of international voluntary guidelines on access to genetic resources and sharing of their benefits. The draft guidelines just developed by the Working Group in Bonn should be adopted by the Parties.

68. Her delegation had always advocated greater coherence between the Convention on Biological Diversity and the various conventions dealing with specific aspects of biodiversity. Efforts must also be made to enhance complementarity between the Convention on Biological Diversity and international instruments in other sectors, in particular those of the World Trade Organization (WTO). It was also especially important to continue work under way to ensure greater coherence between the Convention on Biological Diversity and the Framework Convention on Climate Change. Issues relating to the preservation of biological diversity must be integrated into the carbon sink forest projects to be implemented within the framework of the Kyoto Protocol which would require significant financial investment.

69. **Ms. Tsengwa** (South Africa) said that, in Africa, desertification threatened as much as 65 per cent of agricultural land, causing growing numbers of African countries to become net food importers. Effective implementation of the Convention to Combat Desertification and of the decisions taken by the Conference of the Parties, was therefore essential. Adequate financial resources must be made available for that purpose.

70. She stressed the importance of conservation and ecologically sustainable development of biological diversity. Most of the poor in the developing world depended on biological resources and they must benefit from the rewards of a knowledge-based economy, for example through earning intellectual property rights. The continuing decline in biological diversity, caused largely by humans, represented a serious threat to sustainable development, in particular in Africa. Despite efforts made, additional measures such as

research and documentation of indigenous knowledge were necessary as were strategies for sustainable harvesting and trade, wider involvement of all stakeholders and sharing of benefits.

71. South Africa, the world's third most biologically diverse country, fully supported effective implementation of the Convention on Biological Diversity and likewise welcomed the provisions of the Cartagena Protocol relating to living genetically modified organisms, which her Government was in the process of ratifying. The necessary national, legal and administrative framework was also being developed.

72. Her Government's policy included a long-term agenda for biodiversity management and a comprehensive action plan to promote conservation, sustainable use and sharing of the benefits of biodiversity, as well as the sustainable management and use of biodiversity across national boundaries in partnership with neighbouring countries. The World Summit on Sustainable Development in 2002 would provide an opportunity to assess the experiences of the past decade with regard to the contribution of the Convention to the implementation of Agenda 21 and to develop partnerships for further implementation of that Convention and of the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification.

The meeting rose at 6.05 p.m.