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Chairman: Ms. Zubčević (Vice-Chairman) (Croatia)
later: Ms. Cronenberg-Mossberg (Sweden)
(Vice-Chairman)

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In the absence of Mr. Chowdhury, Ms. Zubčević (Croatia), Vice-Chairman took the Chair.

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

Agenda item 95: Implementation of Agenda 21, the Programme for the Further Implementation of Agenda 21 and the outcomes of the World Summit on Sustainable Development (*continued*) (A/58/3 (part 1), A/58/204, A/58/210, A/58/337, A/58/362, A/C.2/58/5 and A/C.2/58/6)

Agenda item 96: United Nations Decade of Education for Sustainable Development (*continued*)

Agenda item 94: Environment and sustainable development (*continued*)

(d) Further implementation of the Programme of Action for the Sustainable Development of Small Island Developing States (*continued*) (A/58/3 (part 1), A/58/170, A/58/303, A/58/304 and A/C.2/58/4)

1. **Mr. Latheef** (Maldives) said that sustainable development and environmental protection were directly linked to his country's very existence. Climate change had caused widespread beach erosion and coral bleaching, threatening the tourism and fisheries industries, both mainstays of the country's economy. Salt water in ground water aquifers was destroying vegetation and affecting the viability of settlements on many of the islands. While confronting those challenges was a top priority for the Maldives, its ability to take action was limited. A global partnership with shared responsibility and commitments at the highest level was required in order to address those challenges.

2. The pledges made under the 1994 Barbados Programme of Action had not been fulfilled. The need to accord special treatment to small island developing States had once again been reaffirmed at the World Summit on Sustainable Development and his delegation hoped that the Mauritius international meeting in 2004 would provide an impetus for the international community to renew its commitment and begin delivering on the promises made at Barbados and Johannesburg.

3. Noting that it was extremely important for small island States to participate in the twelfth session of the

Commission on Sustainable Development — the preparatory meeting for the Mauritius meeting — and in the latter meeting, he called on the international community to contribute generously to the voluntary fund established to assist such States for that purpose. It was particularly important for the Mauritius meeting to address the problems of the small island developing States and consider special treatment for them. The criteria to measure the development of small island States must capture the inherent vulnerabilities and structural handicaps of those islands. The Mauritius meeting would provide an excellent opportunity for the international community to formulate a set of guidelines that could be used by relevant bodies of the United Nations to determine the development status of island countries. Finally, priority attention should be given to addressing the security concerns of small island developing States in order to avert terrorist attacks.

4. **Mr. Saint-Arnaud** (Canada) said that sustainable development remained a challenge for the international community. The linkages between economic, social and environmental sustainability were universally acknowledged to be complex and vitally important and the international community's ability to integrate those pillars still required work. Nonetheless, with Agenda 21, the Millennium Development Goals and the Johannesburg Plan of Implementation, the international community now had an overall policy framework to advance sustainable development. It must continue to focus its efforts on the challenge of implementation.

5. Canada, for its part, had already finalized some of the initiatives announced at the Johannesburg Summit and was in the process of implementing many others in that field. For example it had more than doubled its annual funding for the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) and ratified the Kyoto Protocol in December 2002. It would invest \$3 million in the Health and Environment Linkages Initiative launched at the Johannesburg Summit and had acceded to the Rotterdam Convention on the Prior Informed Consent Procedure for Certain Hazardous Chemicals and Pesticides in International Trade, thus placing tighter controls on exports of designated chemicals and pesticides. Moreover, pursuant to his Government's commitment to protect biodiversity, Canada's new Species at Risk Act had become law in December 2002; in 2003, Canada had confirmed its commitment

to increase its official development assistance (ODA) by 8 per cent a year with a view to doubling it by 2010.

6. Given the breadth of the agenda of the World Summit on Sustainable Development, implementation was the responsibility of national Governments in cooperation with a wide range of specialized agencies and organizations; bilateral and multilateral aid and funding agencies also had a major role to play in support of domestic implementation of commitments arising from the Summit. The Canadian International Development Agency and the Canada-based International Development Research Centre were actively involved in that regard. The United Nations Commission on Sustainable Development also had a special role in promoting the Johannesburg outcomes. The twelfth session of the Commission, focusing on water, sanitation and human settlements, would test its ability to innovate and ensure enhanced implementation of sustainable development in those sectors.

7. At the domestic level, Canadian government departments and agencies had developed and launched implementation plans in their areas of responsibility and an Environment and Sustainable Development Coordinating Committee of deputy ministers and various subcommittees were working on promoting the follow-up agenda of the World Summit on Sustainable Development. His Government was continuing to work with all relevant partners at all levels to ensure that the decisions taken at the World Summit were fully implemented. It would continue to make national policy decisions and seek innovative partnerships to promote sustainable development at home and abroad, since the common future of mankind depended on diligent implementation of the Johannesburg commitments.

8. **Mr. Heng** (Singapore) said that, since the economies and environments of most small island developing States were vulnerable, the international community should support them in their efforts to adapt to the globalized world and achieve sustainable development. Implementation of the Barbados Programme of Action had been mixed. Funding had been hard to mobilize and there had been a general lack of willingness among all actors to fulfil their commitments. Donor countries had been criticized for promoting their own agendas, which were not tied to the realities of small island countries, while recipient countries, because of their small size and lack of

resources, had not been able to adequately deal with the projects comprehensively. His delegation accordingly supported a full and comprehensive review of the implementation of the Barbados Programme of Action and was committed to the preparatory process leading up to the Mauritius international meeting in 2004. To that end, it agreed with the statement made by New Zealand on behalf of the Pacific Islands Forum in calling for the Mauritius international meeting to address the progress and lack of progress made on the Barbados Programme as well as to mobilize political support for the Programme's aims and outcomes.

9. **Mr. Barnwell** (Guyana), noting that Guyana was fully committed to a path of sustainable development, said that its development strategy included key elements of Agenda 21 and the Barbados Programme of Action. Guyana's economic and social programmes focused on reducing the incidence of poverty and unemployment, expanding the delivery of social services to all communities, promoting gender equality and achieving food security. Programmes for the conservation and sustainable use of natural resources had led to massive improvements in environmental conditions in the forestry, mining, agricultural and industrial sectors. Guyana, which had taken seriously its commitments under international conventions and processes, was seeking to create a better standard of living for its citizens while contributing to making the planet a safer place for everyone. However, those efforts were seriously constrained by the shortage of human, material and financial resources.

10. Unfortunately, the international community had failed to keep its promises under the Barbados Declaration to transfer financial resources and environmentally sound technology on concessional and preferential terms to the developing countries. On the contrary, the meagre resources generated by those economically disadvantaged countries were dwindling under the existing unfair and harsh trading arrangements. Indeed, an assessment of the achievements during the first decade of the Barbados Programme of Action revealed the importance of having a common programme of action for small developing States that were ecologically and economically vulnerable because of similar physical features and the hostile international economic environment. Referring to the report on the implementation of the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification in Those Countries

Experiencing Serious Drought and/or Desertification, particularly in Africa, he said that Guyana would take advantage of the new resources available under the Global Environment Facility (GEF) and welcomed the decision by the Conference of the Parties to the Convention at its sixth session to make the Facility a financial mechanism of the Convention.

11. **Mr. Løvald** (Norway) said that the international community must intensify its efforts if the agreed goals and targets set during and after the Johannesburg Summit were to be met. It was the priority of the Norwegian Chairmanship of the Commission on Sustainable Development to maintain the political momentum from Johannesburg, particularly in the area of water, sanitation and human settlements. Progress in those areas would help to reach goals in such important areas as health, education, gender equality and biodiversity, which in turn would contribute to poverty reduction. The new format for the Commission's work was an opportunity to revitalize its role as the high-level body for political dialogue on sustainable development within the United Nations system. With only three main topics on its 2004-2005 agenda, the Commission was expected to become more focused and solution-oriented. The involvement of a broad range of ministers in the Commission's work was crucial, particularly ministers responsible for water, sanitation, human settlements and international development finance. Furthermore, the active participation of all relevant stakeholders was essential. The session must stimulate an interactive dialogue between all categories of participants, encouraging alliances and partnerships between intergovernmental organizations, international financing institutions, governments, civil society and the private sector.

12. Turning to development assistance, he noted that the international community had a special responsibility to provide technical and financial support to developing countries on the basis of their own priorities. There had been a steady decline in levels of ODA in the 1990s. An additional \$50 billion a year was needed if the Millennium Development Goals were to be attained. It was essential for all States to live up to their commitments under the Johannesburg Plan of Implementation and the Monterrey Consensus. His Government had pledged to increase its ODA to 1 per cent of gross national income by 2005. However, development assistance alone could not overcome the obstacles to sustainable development. Governments

must give priority to investment in human resources and policies that reduced poverty and promoted human rights, democracy and local participation in decision-making. There was also a need for a strong, competent United Nations system to cooperate with national and other international partners for sustainable development. The credibility of the multilateral system depended on whether it could change people's daily lives for the better.

13. **Mr. Troost** (United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO)) said that his organization's projects specifically designed to assist small island developing States to implement the Barbados Programme of Action were in the fields of competence of UNESCO — culture, basic and natural sciences, social and human sciences, communication and education. The General Conference of UNESCO had established in 1996 the intersectoral coastal regions and small islands platform whose major areas of focus included sustainable island living, planning for changing coastlines, poverty alleviation and freshwater security and the use of new and existing communication technologies to promote the effective participation of civil society, including young people, in sustainable island development. Over the past 12 months, UNESCO had taken a number of actions pursuant to the World Summit on Sustainable Development, including the designation of a focal point for Barbados +10 and the development and launching of an interactive UNESCO web site on small islands.

14. UNESCO was currently reviewing its small island developing States activities over the past decade and realized that it must do more than merely compiling information on activities already carried out. While it was vital to take stock and learn lessons from the past, it was even more important to make progress in forward-looking discussions. A short discussion document entitled "Small islands: looking forward — beyond 2004" had been prepared and would be revised periodically in the lead-up to the August 2004 meeting in Mauritius.

15. In contributing towards a new vision and commitment for small island developing States, UNESCO action would continue to be rooted in the fields of culture, science, communication and education. Special attention would be given to intersectoral, inter-regional and inter-generational activities. The involvement of youth was likely to

prove vital in the future development of small island developing States.

16. **Ms. Al-Saie** (Bahrain) said that poverty eradication was the key to achieving sustainable development and that the United Nations Decade of Education for Sustainable Development would enhance awareness of the need to improve education worldwide. Greater financing by the international community, as well as greater participation of relevant non-governmental organizations was necessary in order to achieve the Millennium target of universal primary and basic education by 2015. Moreover, her delegation was convinced that national efforts would make it possible to provide education to all social strata in accordance with the Dakar World Declaration on Education for All.

17. Sustainable development required equality between the sexes in the areas of education and training. Bahrain provided education free of charge to all citizens from the elementary level through to the higher education level. Fellowships were offered to young people for further studies abroad at well-known universities so that they might acquire experience and thus contribute to achieving sustainable development. Bahrain had also ratified international protocols and conventions on education and had taken part in regional and international conferences on specialized subjects. Lastly, she appealed to the international community to make more financial resources and new technologies available to developing countries in order to help them in their efforts to achieve sustainable development.

18. **Mr. Fonseca** (Cape Verde) noted that Cape Verde had hosted the preparatory meeting of the Atlantic, Indian Ocean, Mediterranean and South China Seas small island developing States (AIMS) for the international meeting in Mauritius. The preparatory meeting had considered constraints not shared by other regional groups of AOSIS, including the region's diversity and differences in development levels. It had also discussed new issues facing the small island developing States which added to their vulnerability. The preparations for the international meeting were going well.

19. The United Nations system deserved congratulation for maintaining a high degree of international awareness of small island developing States and for addressing their specific disadvantages. But raising awareness was not enough. As a special

category, such States deserved special treatment commensurate with their disadvantages. Much remained to be done in that respect. His Government hoped that the Mauritius meeting would be a landmark in the history of the differentiated treatment of developing countries. All the small island developing States needed to have their market-access preferences preserved as a prerequisite for their economic viability. Their permanent handicaps justified permanent responses. Some of the States did enjoy special treatment owing, for example, to their least-developed status, but there were still areas of international cooperation in which the concept of "islandness" was absent. For example, the small island developing States, as such, had been unable to plead their case in the WTO debate under its work programme on small economies.

20. The island States which were also least developed countries were doubly handicapped, and decisions as to whether a small island developing State should leave the least developed group should be very carefully weighed. The preparatory meeting in Cape Verde had highlighted the importance of the criterion of economic vulnerability for reviewing the list of least developed countries. The removal of the advantages associated with least-developed status could reverse the positive results on which the removal was based.

21. His delegation noted the success of the sixth session of the Conference of the Parties to UNCCD and welcomed the endorsement of GEF as a financial mechanism of the Convention. Cape Verde had always understood the need to combat the negative effects of drought and desertification; it had in fact been the second country to ratify the Convention. In 1998 it had adopted its National Plan to Combat Desertification, the success of which required funding from development partners. One of Cape Verde's approaches was to seek integrated action among the conventions adopted since the Rio Conference, in particular the Convention on Biodiversity and UNFCCC. Important programmes were being implemented with the support of GEF, UNDP, Germany and the Netherlands. The fight against desertification was an important element of sustainable development as well as an environmental problem. It was an area in which ODA and other forms of cooperation were unquestionably justified.

22. **Ms. Kumela** (Ethiopia) said that her delegation was happy to note, where sustainable development was concerned, the gradual shift of emphasis to

implementation. It welcomed General Assembly resolution 57/270 B and the decision of the Economic and Social Council to produce a list of cross-sectoral thematic issues and a multi-year work programme for its coordination segment. It also appreciated the work of the other members of the United Nations system in implementing the outcomes of the Johannesburg Summit.

23. The decisions taken by CSD at its eleventh session concerning its work programme and the organization of its work would facilitate implementation at all levels. Sustainable development had eluded many African countries: the commitments of the international community to support Africa's effort to achieve sustainable development were listed in chapter VIII of the Johannesburg Plan of Implementation. The Commission had rightly decided to maintain the focus on Africa in its new work programme; the decision to invite regional commissions to hold regional implementation meetings was also important. The regional meeting for Africa in December 2003, for example, would conduct a critical review of progress towards the goals set in Johannesburg. The resources available to the Economic Commission for Africa should be strengthened in that connection. The Secretary-General's proposal to use the resources allocated to CSD ad hoc working groups for the regional meetings was welcome.

24. **Mr. Nikitov** (Ukraine) said that in the wake of Johannesburg it was essential for the efforts of Member States to be underpinned by the United Nations system, the Bretton Woods institutions and WTO. His delegation therefore agreed with the Secretary-General that the United Nations System Chief Executives Board for Coordination should continue to promote inter-agency coordination. It appreciated the efforts of United Nations agencies to integrate sustainable development and the agreed targets into their planning instruments and country projects and welcomed the new multi-year programme of work of CSD.

25. In May, Ukraine had hosted the fifth Ministerial Conference of the Economic Commission for Europe on "Environment for Europe". The resulting commitments built on the outcome of the Johannesburg Summit and went substantially further in some areas.

26. The Johannesburg Plan of Implementation had recognized that countries bore the primary responsibility for their own development. The

President of Ukraine was leading the national efforts to secure sustainable development. The recently established National Board on Sustainable Development was to design national strategies and monitor implementation. The Government had also launched a comprehensive national programme on implementation of the outcome of the Johannesburg Summit. The Programme provided a blueprint for building national consensus and promoting economic growth, social development and a healthy environment.

27. Sustained economic growth was a prerequisite for attainment of the Millennium Development Goals. His delegation was therefore happy to note that Ukraine had been regaining economic dynamism over the past four years. The development process was, however, impeded by the persisting consequences of the Chernobyl disaster: total national emergency expenditures so far exceeded \$130 billion. It was disheartening that a number of Chernobyl projects under the new United Nations Strategy on Chernobyl lacked funding. His delegation called on the donor community to support Ukraine's efforts to mitigate the consequences of Chernobyl.

28. Since increased access to world markets facilitated attainment of the goals of sustainable development, WTO should be transformed into a truly universal institution; in that context Ukraine hoped for broad support for its application to join WTO. Reducing the debt problems of the developing and transition countries would also help to build national capacities and facilitate sustainable development. The debt-for-sustainable-development swaps proposed by the President of Ukraine at the Johannesburg Summit were reflected in the Plan of Implementation; if used more actively, they would have a positive impact on economic growth and environmental improvement in the indebted countries.

29. **Ms. Gebre-Egziabher** (United Nations Human Settlements Programme) said that the capacity-building programme developed by UN-HABITAT in response to chapter 28 of Agenda 21 called on local authorities to introduce a "local agenda 21" in their community. The programme was supporting priority towns in Kenya, Morocco and Viet Nam with the aim of promoting good urban governance, in particular by implementing environmental action plans, which had a tangible impact on low-income communities. With the support of the Belgian Government and other Belgian

institutions UN-HABITAT was promoting similar action plans in other countries.

30. UN-HABITAT was working hard to carry out the mandate entrusted to it by the Johannesburg Summit, particularly in the area of water and sanitation. There was now a better understanding of the key urban governance issues involved in the delivery of basic services, as well as of the need for decentralization of government functions and involvement of local communities. The emphasis should now be shifted to mainstreaming those concepts into national policies and demonstrating their validity at the local level.

31. UN-HABITAT had established a Water, Sanitation and Infrastructure Branch to tackle the targets agreed in Johannesburg and a Water and Sanitation Trust Fund, into which it had put an initial investment of \$1 million. Water, sanitation and human settlements had been adopted as a thematic cluster by CSD and the linkages between those three themes must be kept in view, since there were important implications for the reporting process and effective implementation.

32. Where partnerships were concerned, 11 proposals for development of a "coalition for sustainable urbanization" had been endorsed and most of them were being carried out by UN-HABITAT and its partners; two examples were the initiatives on "Water for Asian Cities" and "Partnership for Sustainable African Cities".

33. UN-HABITAT believed that other implementation agencies should be brought into the CSD process, currently heavily oriented towards national Governments and the environmental sector. Focal ministries for water, sanitation and human settlements, together with local authorities, should be included in the preparations for the twelfth session of CSD.

34. *Ms. Cronenberg-Mossberg (Sweden), Vice-Chairman, took the Chair.*

Agenda item 97: Operational activities for development (*continued*)

(b) Economic and technical cooperation among developing countries (*continued*) (A/58/39 (Suppl.), A/58/204, 319 and 345)

35. **Mr. Anwarul Chowdhury** (Under-Secretary-General and High Representative for the Least

Developed Countries, Landlocked Developing Countries and Small Island Developing States) highlighted the fact that both the Barbados Programme of Action for small islands and the recently adopted Almaty Programme of Action for landlocked developing States underscored the importance of South-South cooperation to their implementation. With reference to South-South cooperation in the implementation of the Brussels Programme of Action, he said that the potential cited for least developed countries applied equally to small island and landlocked developing States. He also pointed out that increased concentration in the area of social development had brought tremendous benefit to the most vulnerable countries.

36. Document A/58/319 outlined the contributions made by regional and subregional organizations in promoting South-South cooperation in many areas. Over the past 25 years, international trade had represented 40 per cent of the total trade of developing countries; nonetheless, there were many discrepancies in the performance of various regions and among the most vulnerable groups.

37. The potential for increasing development assistance, trade and investment from the traditional donor community needed to be explored with vigour and determination. The role of countries such as Brazil, China, India and South Africa would continue to be decisive.

38. Gauging the extent of South-South cooperation was difficult because of the lack of comprehensive official data on support provided for economic and technical cooperation. He urged Governments to create national databases on cooperation with developing countries, regionally and further afield, and to disseminate information on the nature and scope of cooperation they wished to promote. The Special Unit for Technical Cooperation among Developing Countries of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) should create a database where the most vulnerable countries could identify offers of cooperation and support.

39. The United Nations system had played the key role in promoting South-South cooperation, along with non-governmental organizations and civil society, which were the true promoters of South-South cooperation. In many instances they had encouraged the involvement of Governments and other

stakeholders. The private sector could play a meaningful role in specific areas, and the relationship between donors, non-governmental organizations and the private sector in South-South cooperation exponentially increased the potential for such cooperation. Opportunities for marginalized countries would open, and would allow their integration into the global economy. It was therefore important to regard South-South cooperation as a strategic opportunity for the full and effective implementation of the international Programmes of Action.

40. In conclusion, he welcomed the proposal contained in document A/58/345 for the declaration of an international decade for South-South cooperation to coincide with the time frame for the Millennium Development Goals, focusing on the needs of the least developed, landlocked and small island developing States.

41. **Mr. Ekoko** (UNDP Special Unit for Technical Cooperation among Developing Countries) said that the report on the latest session of the High-level Committee on the Review of Technical Cooperation among Developing Countries (A/58/39) placed emphasis on the need for renewed international commitment to South-South cooperation. It also presented the lessons learned over the past 25 years and pointed out that traditional bilateral alliances should be reinforced with broader partnerships that involved the private sector, non-governmental organizations and civil society.

42. The report of the Secretary-General in document A/58/345 highlighted the need to sensitize the public in the developing world and development partners to the importance of collective self-reliance, through which they could make a significant contribution to the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals. Referring to the proposed United Nations day and/or the international decade for South-South cooperation, he said that commemorative years or decades had in the past helped to focus the attention of policy makers at various levels on issues of economic, social and political importance.

43. The report of the Secretary-General on the State of South-South cooperation (A/58/319) focused on monetary, financial, investment and trade arrangements during the 2001-2002 biennium. Among the encouraging developments noted by the Secretary-General was the growing participation of the private

sector and civil society in South-South cooperation. The report also noted that South-South cooperation remained central to the work of UNDP and other organizations of the United Nations system. He underscored the fact, as stated in paragraph 53, that over the past two years UNDP had encouraged Internet-based networking, which had energized daily exchange of information among development practitioners, mostly in the South.

44. **Mr. Aboutahir** (Morocco), speaking on behalf of the Group of 77 and China, said that the Group of 77 and China had always attached fundamental importance to promoting economic and technical cooperation among developing countries. The adoption of the 1978 Buenos Aires Plan of Action for Promoting and Implementing Technical Cooperation among Developing Countries had been a reflection of the desire of States to promote economic cooperation among developing States as a complement to traditional North-South cooperation. It had marked the beginning of a new phase of cooperation, providing a well-defined mechanism for implementation and follow-up.

45. As the Group of 77 and China had pointed out on previous occasions, the Buenos Aires Plan of Action and the Havana Programme of Action were unique in concept. Both contained clear mechanisms for support, follow-up and review, with a precise timetable for implementation. The experience of the past 25 years had raised certain questions relating, among other things, to the financing of South-South cooperation. There was now a need to find appropriate organizational modalities to effectively tap resources from international organizations and financial institutions for the support of cooperation activities and programmes, and to outline a common strategy for regional and subregional economic cooperation.

46. The Group of 77 and China was pleased that the Special Unit had successfully discharged its mandate by responding appropriately to the new needs and challenges of development. The Group of 77 and China welcomed the decision of the High-level Committee on the Review of Technical Cooperation among Developing Countries to introduce an intersessional meeting of the Bureau of the High-level Committee to facilitate coordination. That decision reflected a political will and commitment to maintain support for the objectives of South-South cooperation.

47. A new vision for South-South cooperation could stimulate more substantial responses to the specific needs of developing countries, and especially the most vulnerable groups. With increased complementarities among developing countries, the enhancement of technical cooperation was more urgent today than it had been 25 years previously. Much more needed to be done in terms of triangular mechanisms, increased momentum, and assessment of potential cooperation efforts before they were undertaken. Projects must provide mutual benefits and should be economically viable. Furthermore, the allocation of resources by pivotal countries should be leveraged by more assistance from donors to expand the scope and impact of relevant programmes. Triangular cooperation enhanced the sense of ownership, lowered the costs of development programmes and strengthened partnership among developing countries, on one hand, and developed countries on the other.

48. In that regard, the role of UNDP and the Special Unit had been outstanding. The focus by organizations and agencies of the United Nations system on a number of strategic issues of concern to a large number of developing countries was commendable. While stressing the need to strengthen the Special Unit as the focal point for South-South cooperation, the Group of 77 and China believed that its activities and programmes should be perceived as an integral component of the overall development policy of UNDP and the United Nations system. Addressing the constraints imposed by a lack of resources, he expressed the hope that additional financial resources could be mobilized, including through new and innovative mechanisms.

49. The Group of 77 and China was confident that the deliberations of the High-level Conference on South-South cooperation, scheduled for December 2003, would advance cooperation objectives and initiatives as an indispensable part of a broader strategy of international development cooperation. The Conference was expected to focus on the implementation of identified priorities and to extract a number of specific elements for implementation. It should be seen as an opportunity for developing countries to realize the operationalization of decisions already taken during the major conferences and summits. In that context, the Group of 77 and China relied on the invaluable input and contribution of developed countries.

50. He reiterated the need for the celebration of a decade on South-South cooperation to enhance awareness of the importance of such cooperation in the context of globalization and interdependence. The Group of 77 and China accorded much priority to further integration of ECDC and TCDC and to the strengthening of regional and subregional cooperation mechanisms. It also sought increased involvement of private sector partners. Conscious of the enormous potential of South-South cooperation as an engine of global economic growth and social progress, the Group was determined to fully exploit its advantages for universal benefit.

51. The High-level Conference would provide new impetus and dynamism in sectors of strategic importance and the Group of 77 and China looked forward to engaging partners from the developed world in a new partnership.

52. **Mr. Bernardini** (Italy), speaking of behalf of the States members of the European Union, the acceding countries Cyprus, the Czech Republic, Estonia, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Malta, Poland, Slovakia and Slovenia, as well as the associated countries Bulgaria, Romania and Turkey and the EFTA country Liechtenstein, said that closer cooperation between the European Union and the United Nations system would help to attain the Millennium Development Goals. Support for South-South cooperation ranked high in that regard, for greater cooperation among developing countries could provide an essential prop in many areas of development. The Secretary-General's report showed that a number of developing countries were already carrying out strong South-South programmes. Regional integration among developing countries also offered crucial support for national development agendas by helping to overcome the difficulties faced by small-scale economies and accelerating development and participation in the global economy.

53. The European Union had provided substantial and increased support for South-South cooperation in the form of operational activities, but the main responsibility rested with the developing countries themselves; the international community could play an important complementary role, and the European Union would remain a reliable partner in that respect. It welcomed the Marrakesh Conference and would pay close attention to its outcome. However, it would not take part in the Pledging Conference for Development Activities: since United Nations funds and programmes

had a multi-year funding framework, the practice of holding such conferences should be ended.

54. **Mr. Chidyausiku** (Zimbabwe), speaking as President of the High-level Committee on the Review of Technical Cooperation among Developing Countries, said that the Bureau of the Committee had continued to work with the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and the Special Unit for Technical Cooperation among Developing Countries. Even though the resolutions adopted at the previous session of the High-level Committee might require adjustments in the work plans, they would be followed up without delay.

55. South-South cooperation could become a viable complement to traditional North-South cooperation. It was heartening to note that developed countries were increasingly willing to consider triangular cooperation, combining skills developed in the South with northern resources. In order for South-South cooperation to expand, there was a need for financial commitments from developing countries themselves and he expressed the hope that further pledges of funds from developing countries would be forthcoming.

56. **Mr. Gong Tingrong** (China) said that his delegation was pleased that economic and technical cooperation among developing countries had attracted the interest of a growing number of countries and international organizations. No effort should be spared in promoting advocacy to raise public awareness and to support South-South cooperation. He expressed the hope that all parties would continue to pursue measures to resolve urgent issues, such as the provision of financial resources, and to strengthen triangular cooperation.

57. China had always attached great importance to economic and technical cooperation among developing countries, and had been an active participant in such activities. It had allocated special funds each year for bilateral and multilateral cooperation with developing countries. Priority had been accorded to trade and investment, particularly with developing countries in the region. He therefore took the opportunity to outline China's involvement at the international level, including its extensive economic, trade and investment activity with other developing countries, particularly in Africa.

58. **Ms. Navarro Barro** (Cuba) said that cooperation among developing countries had become necessary

because their economic and social development had been hindered as a result of the exclusion and marginalization caused by neoliberal globalization. Nevertheless, economic and technical cooperation among developing countries could never take the place of North-South cooperation based on common but differentiated responsibilities, which benefited both the industrialized and the developing countries.

59. In the Declaration adopted at the South Summit held in Havana in 2000 (A/55/74), the Heads of State and Government of the developing countries had stressed the importance of South-South cooperation as a key mechanism for promoting sustained economic growth and sustainable development, and they had undertaken to overcome the obstacles to such cooperation. Accordingly, they had adopted a Programme of Action and set up cooperation projects in several different fields. The outcome of the Havana Summit would be reviewed at the forthcoming High-Level Conference on South-South Cooperation to be held in Marrakesh in December 2003. Despite the lack of resources and of financial support from donors, the developing countries had implemented a number of successful initiatives.

60. In a show of solidarity with the Third World and despite its poverty and the economic, commercial and financial war to which it had been subjected for over four decades, Cuba had continued to offer assistance to developing countries. At present, there were 6,836 Cubans serving in 103 countries, mainly in the fields of health, sport and education. Twenty-five thousand Cuban doctors had offered their services in a large number of developing countries. Most recently, Cuba had been cooperating with countries in Asia, Africa, Latin America and the Caribbean through a comprehensive health-care programme which included human resources training and development, HIV/AIDS prevention and technical advisory services. Cuba attached great importance to human resources development in the developing countries, as evidenced by the large number of youths from different regions who had graduated from courses in Cuba since 1961. The recently established Latin American School of Medical Sciences was currently training over 6,000 young people from 24 countries, mainly in Latin America.

61. Cuba was also cooperating with multilateral programmes, including those carried out by the United Nations Volunteers (UNV), the Food and Agriculture

Organization of the United Nations (FAO) and the World Health Organization/Pan American Health Organization (WHO/PAHO). It was cooperating in the fight against HIV/AIDS by sending doctors, professors, teachers, psychologists and other specialists, as well as equipment, diagnostic kits and antiretroviral medication, to needy areas. The support of the international community was needed to help mobilize the necessary resources.

62. The United Nations provided an appropriate multilateral framework for promoting South-South cooperation. It should therefore direct its operational activities towards that end, with due respect for established principles and procedures and without affecting the scant resources that had been allocated for such activities. An effort should be made to disseminate information about the resources available in and the needs of the countries of the South, as well as about opportunities for cooperation. The Special Unit for Technical Cooperation among Developing Countries had a key role to play in that regard. Much more could be achieved through a concerted and determined effort on the part of the international community and a strong financial commitment on the part of donors.

63. **Mr. Kenyora** (Kenya) said that the strengthening and utilization of an adequate information-sharing mechanism was essential for the effective promotion of cooperation among developing countries. In that regard, he commended the efforts of the Special Unit for Technical Cooperation among Developing Countries to provide information through the Web Information for Development (WIDE) programme.

64. Developing countries continued to be marginalized in the areas of trade, finance and technological advancement. However, those countries had many types of resources and experiences that could be shared cost-effectively. The pivotal developing countries had played an important role in promoting technical cooperation among developing countries (TCDC). South-South cooperation could be greatly enhanced if the efforts of the pivotal countries were supplemented with increased resource support from development partners. Triangular cooperation within the context of South-South cooperation had also been a positive development and should be encouraged.

65. Regional and subregional integration efforts had contributed significantly to the promotion of South-

South cooperation. Given that developing countries were finding it increasingly difficult to access the markets of developed countries, it was necessary to strengthen subregional, regional and intraregional cooperation. In particular, initiatives such as the East African Community (EAC) and the Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa (COMESA) had enhanced economic and technical cooperation among member countries. The launching in 2002 of the African Union and the implementation of the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD) would further enhance cooperation among African countries.

66. Kenya had both contributed to and benefited from the TCDC modality. It also recognized the importance of involving the private sector and civil society in the development of TCDC policies at both the conceptual and the operational levels.

67. **Mr. Al-Haddad** (Yemen) said that Yemen attached great importance to the High-level Conference on South-South cooperation to be held at Marrakesh, in particular because it would draw on the conclusions reached at the International Conference on Financing for Development and the World Summit on Sustainable Development, including the proposals concerning official development assistance and the commitments undertaken with regard to economic and technical cooperation arrangements in developing countries. The South had turned to the North in an effort to enhance joint action and increase cooperation between North and South. However, the response of the North had fallen short of expectations and should be strengthened.

68. South-South cooperation was not yet at a level commensurate with the commitments and declarations adopted at the various international summits and conferences. The stronger and more advanced developing countries had a greater responsibility to make a material contribution to such cooperation. The private sector should also be encouraged to play a greater role.

69. The United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and the specialized agencies, as well as the regional commissions, had played a positive role in promoting technical cooperation among developing countries. Nevertheless, much remained to be done to ensure that such cooperation was reflected in projects actually adopted by the United Nations. The United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD) had also played a significant role, through

its databases and surveys on trade relations and economic integration in developing countries.

70. As stressed in the report of the Secretary-General on raising public awareness of and support for South-South cooperation (A/58/345), it was indeed important to increase public awareness about such cooperation. His delegation supported the Secretary-General's proposal to declare a United Nations day for South-South cooperation and an international decade on South-South cooperation.

71. **Mr. Belkas** (Algeria) said that the Organization's operational activities for development had played an important role in promoting South-South cooperation. The position of the Group of 77 and China on that subject had been bolstered by the outcomes of the World Trade Organization's Ministerial Conference in Doha, the International Conference on Financing for Development, the World Summit on Sustainable Development and the Third United Nations Conference on the Least Developed Countries, as well as the South-South Summit held in Havana in April 2000. The High-level Conference on South-South Cooperation to be held at Marrakesh would further strengthen South-South cooperation.

72. His delegation noted with satisfaction the efforts made by the various programmes, funds and specialized agencies of the United Nations to promote South-South cooperation while ensuring the multilateral, impartial and universal scope of such activities and respecting the sovereignty of the States concerned. The UNDP Special Unit for Technical Cooperation Among Developing Countries should be strengthened and provided with adequate resources.

73. Although South-South cooperation was global in scope, regional and subregional programmes were particularly important for the Group of 77 and China. There were many instances of regional integration arrangements in Asia, Latin America and Africa. In Africa, for example, the African Union would eventually open up a large market for the continent. The New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD) was an excellent example of South-South cooperation, including triangular cooperation between African countries and other regional groups in other continents.

74. The developing countries had made significant progress in promoting South-South cooperation in the areas of international trade, investment flows and

technical assistance. However, they still needed bilateral and multilateral assistance in the form of financial aid, technical expertise and human resources development. Additional resources should be provided for the Voluntary Trust Fund for South-South Cooperation and the Perez-Guerrero Trust Fund for Economic and Technical Cooperation among Developing Countries.

75. His delegation supported the Secretary-General's proposal to consider declaring a United Nations day and/or an international decade on South-South cooperation (A/58/345, para. 29).

76. **Mr. Omene** (Nigeria) said that his delegation agreed with the call for the strengthening of the UNDP Special Unit for Technical Cooperation Among Developing Countries (A/58/204, para. 10). The establishment of the African Union and the launching of the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD) would further the effective integration of Africa into the international system. At the subregional level, the various groupings in Africa had continued to pursue cooperation and integration. In West Africa, efforts had been intensified among member States of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) and in the context of the EU-ECOWAS Economic Partnership Agreement, on which negotiations would commence soon. Nigeria was contributing to those efforts at both the subregional level, through the ECOWAS Fast Track approach to integration, and the regional level, through its active involvement in and promotion of NEPAD.

77. In addition, Nigeria had continued to execute its Technical Aid Corps programme by which Nigerian nationals with special skills in medicine, law, teaching, engineering and other fields had been seconded to several African, Caribbean and Pacific countries, in furtherance of South-South cooperation. Furthermore, Nigeria had set up bilateral joint commissions with many developing countries to provide and receive technical assistance.

78. The establishment of the Nigeria Technical Cooperation Fund in 2001 and the corresponding reduction in the interest rate from 4 per cent to 2 per cent on loans from the Fund administered by the African Development Bank were a clear manifestation of Nigeria's commitment to South-South cooperation.

79. Nigeria appreciated the assistance provided by UNDP and other organizations within and outside the

United Nations system, as well as by developed countries, especially in the areas of human resource development, research and institutional capacity-building. However, there was an urgent need for the international community to seriously address the developing countries' paltry share of international trade, particularly in view of the fact that developing countries outside Asia accounted for only 8 per cent of world exports. Attention must also be given to promoting more trade between developing countries.

80. Cancún was a sad reminder of the intricacies and difficulties associated with international trade. While resumption of negotiations on the Doha Round in Geneva was desirable, Nigeria firmly believed that the solution must be political, considering the stalemate in Cancún.

81. The picture regarding investment and capital flows was perhaps even more frightening, given the downward trend in capital flows to developing countries noted in the report of the Secretary-General on the state of South-South cooperation (A/58/319). Investment and capital flows from the North would continue to be needed by the South for its development and would in turn enable the South to enhance cooperation among developing countries.

82. Priority attention also needed to be given to bridging the digital divide between the developed and developing countries. Efforts in that area should be increased, with particular attention to Africa. South-South cooperation would receive a tremendous boost if the developing countries' capacities in the field of information and communication technologies (ICT) were enhanced. In that regard, his delegation acknowledged the achievement by the Regional Cooperation Centre for City Informatization in Shanghai, China, as reported by the Secretary-General (A/58/319, para. 62).

83. Nigeria strongly supported the recommendations made by the Secretary-General with regard to the declaration of a United Nations day for South-South cooperation, to be held each year on 12 September, and declaration of an international decade on South-South cooperation, beginning in 2005 and ending in 2015.

84. **Mr. Chaimongkol** (Thailand) said that Thailand attached great importance to South-South cooperation and was active in various regional and subregional cooperation mechanisms in Asia. Thailand had recently launched a new initiative, the Economic Cooperation

Strategy, with its immediate neighbours, Cambodia, Laos and Myanmar, to promote sustainable development in the subregion. The agriculture Internet hub launched by the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) in Indonesia was a good example of cooperation that involved the private sector of developed countries.

85. Thailand wished to encourage the United Nations system to assist developing countries in the area of monetary and financial cooperation, especially since globalization had made them especially vulnerable. Thailand and many Asian countries had actively participated in the Asian Bond Market Development Initiative. The Asian Bond Fund had been launched in Bangkok on 2 June 2003; that initiative should provide an alternative source of investment for partners beyond Asia and contribute to the stability of the world financial market.

86. Thailand also wished to encourage the full use of advanced information and communication technology in support of South-South cooperation. In that regard, it commended the UNDP Special Unit for Technical Cooperation Among Developing Countries on its initiative in setting up the Web of Information for Development (WIDE). Thailand hoped to see the full utilization of the web site by all concerned.

87. Thailand fully supported the recommendation of the Secretary-General to declare a United Nations day for South-South cooperation and an international decade on South-South cooperation.

88. **Ms. Freudenschüss-Reichl** (United Nations Industrial Development Organization) said that the United Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO) was helping to strengthen South-South cooperation by promoting activities such as strengthening and enhancing industrial capacities; increasing and improving communications and information networking; improving the capacity for absorption, adaptation and diffusion of technology and skills; improving the productive capacity of the manufacturing sector; introducing environmental standards and norms in the productive sector; introducing quality and standardization systems in the productive sector; assisting in promotion of exports, and assisting in regional cooperation and integration and in building partnerships.

89. All UNIDO projects relating to technical cooperation among developing countries assumed that

technical expertise and/or know-how should originate or be available in a developing country; that projects should include at least two developing countries, with at least one component being aimed at promoting South-South cooperation; and that countries in the South benefiting from the projects should become familiar with the experience and technology applied in another country of the South.

90. The Global Forum on Biotechnology to be held in Chile in 2004 was a UNIDO initiative. The Organization had started a series of regional meetings in preparation for the Forum and looked forward to the event itself.

91. In conclusion, she stressed that UNIDO firmly believed that South-South cooperation at the subregional, regional and interregional levels was essential for promoting sustainable industrial development. Such cooperation built bridges between and among individuals and enterprises in the developing countries and helped to attract domestic and foreign investment for productive capacity-building and modernization, thus enhancing the competitiveness of the manufacturing sectors of developing countries.

The meeting rose at 6.15 p.m.