



Economic and Social Council

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Provisional summary record of the 32nd meeting

Held at Headquarters, New York, on Wednesday, 20 July 2005, at 10 a.m.

President: Mr. Nesho (Vice-President)..... (Albania)

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In the absence of Mr. Akram (Pakistan), Mr. Nesho (Albania), Vice-President, took the Chair.

The meeting was called to order at 10.20 a.m.

Economic and environmental questions

- (a) **Sustainable development** (E/2005/29 and 33)
- (b) **Science and technology for development** (E/2005/31)
- (d) **Human settlements** (E/2005/60 and A/60/8)
- (e) **Environment** (A/60/25)
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1. **Mr. Blake** (Jamaica), speaking on behalf of the Group of 77 and China, said that while the report (E/2005/31) was clear about the importance of the appropriate and extensive use of science and technology for achievement of the Millennium Development Goals, the situation was more dire than was suggested, in that the gaps in knowledge, income and competitiveness between developed and developing countries were likely to widen exponentially.

2. Measures had to be taken not only to address the costs of improved access to and use of efficient technologies, but also to enhance the absorptive capacity of developing countries, particularly through the networking of scientific institutions, to build national capacity in science and engineering education, research and development, and to focus the national and international scientific and technological research effort on issues of vital interest to developing countries.

3. The recommendation of the Commission on Science and Technology for Development that case studies on successful experiences and best practices in science, technology and innovation should be collected was consistent with the policy position of the Group of 77 and China. The Commission's call to Governments to make maximum use of local research and expertise was important, but it had not indicated how that could be achieved without overstepping the rules set by the World Trade Organization.

4. He encouraged the Commission to continue to examine practical issues, as it had in respect of Iran, at the request of Governments, and urged the international community to support developing countries in implementing the Commission's recommendations.

5. **Mr. Khan** (Director of the Office of Economic and Social Council Support and Coordination), introducing the consolidated report on the work of the functional commissions of the Council in 2005 (E/2005/74), said that the aim of the report was to assist the Council in providing broad policy guidance to its functional commissions. The Council rarely had the opportunity to review the substantive aspects of their separate reports, hence policy issues were not given in-depth consideration. Considering the integrated nature of the United Nations development agenda, the Council's subsidiary bodies needed to work in a more coordinated manner.

6. The main objectives of the report were more coherent and coordinated guidance by the Council and greater synergies among the subsidiary bodies, leading to a greater contribution to the work of the Council. The report gave an overview of substantive issues and highlighted the contribution to the implementation of the development agenda and the Millennium Development Goals. Since the 1990s, the functional commissions had played a key role by acting as preparatory committees for international conferences and summits, and as forums for their review and follow-up. Projecting the lessons learned in a coherent fashion was key to the Council's effort to implement the development agenda. On an exceptional basis, the report covered the work since the Millennium Summit in 2000 so as to provide a more representative picture of the issues addressed.

7. For reporting purposes, the analytical part of the report used the common themes of the development agenda to review the work of the functional commissions in order to deal more systematically with cross-cutting issues. The immediate challenge was to ensure that the functional commissions contributed to the preparation for the World Summit in September 2005, by injecting themes like employment or social integration into a broader development agenda. The Council should continue to focus the work of the coordination segment on the broad themes of the development agenda as a way to bring more predictability and certainty to its work. It should

promote greater synergies through the clustering of dialogue among such bodies as the Commission on Sustainable Development, the Commission for Social Development and the Commission on Science and Technology for Development, which would help to prepare for the substantive session of the Council and reinforce the subsidiary principle whereby the Council relied as much as possible on the substantive commissions while preparing its session.

8. Implementation of the development agenda implied strong linkages between normative and operational bodies. The consolidated report contained additional recommendations for preparation of resolutions and provided an opportunity to reflect on practical aspects of reform. The Secretariat, for its part, was emphasizing linkages and had set up a task force among the commissions to reinforce the collective approach. It was regrettable that consideration of the work of the commissions was relegated to the end of the substantive session, as it warranted more attention. Finally, he noted that the Secretary-General had made four proposals on reform of the Council for its consideration.

9. **Ms. Punyaratabandhu** (Chairman of the Committee for Development Policy), introducing the report of the Committee for Development Policy on its seventh session (E/2005/33), said that, at its March 2005 session, the Committee had addressed three themes: achieving the internationally agreed development goals; reconstruction, development and peace in post-conflict countries; and, in preparation for the 2006 triennial review, improvements in the criteria for identification of the least developed countries.

10. The first chapter of the report focused on achieving the Millennium Development Goals in sub-Saharan Africa. Its findings and recommendations had been reported to the high-level segment earlier in the substantive session. The second chapter focused on the linkages between poverty and violent conflict. Over the past 15 years, conflicts had occurred in half of the least developed countries, and half of the States in the bottom quartile of the UNDP Human Development Index experienced conflict. Poverty created a risk environment; with high unemployment and low income and job security, the poor in many countries lacked confidence in peaceful development. To have any chance of success, post-conflict strategies must concentrate on institutional changes and policies that

promoted reconciliation, reconstruction and reduction in absolute poverty.

11. The third chapter of the report focused on improving criteria for identifying the least developed countries and the importance of a smooth transition strategy for graduating countries. The Committee was of the view that, when a least developed country graduating from the list was affected by a natural disaster, for example Maldives, the international community should facilitate and support reconstruction efforts in the framework of the transition strategy. The Committee had also formulated a number of proposed improvements in the criteria to be used in the triennial review of the list in 2006, and welcomed comments from the Council on those criteria.

12. **Ms. Gebre-Egziabher** (Director of the New York Office, United Nations Human Settlements Programme (Habitat)), said that the report on the coordinated implementation of the Habitat Agenda (E/2005/60) and the report of the Habitat Governing Council on its twentieth session (A/60/8) complemented each other through their common focus on achieving Goal 7, ensuring environmental sustainability, targets 10 and 11, which had to do with improved access to safe drinking water and improvements in the lives of slum dwellers. By 2015, close to 1.5 billion people would be living in slums, the single largest concentration of people targeted by the Millennium Development Goals.

13. The Executive Director had placed priority on aligning the Habitat Agenda with the Goals and on focusing limited resources on areas common to both. That had resulted in the strategic vision of “cities without slums”. The work had been organized around four subprogrammes: shelter and sustainable human settlements; monitoring the Habitat Agenda; regional and technical cooperation; and human settlements financing. The four-pillar strategy in support of the Agenda and Goals was based on global norm-setting and advocacy for efforts to implement the goal of shelter for all and sustainable human settlements, analysis of key social, economic and environmental trends and emerging issues, field-testing of practical solutions and lessons learned, including from South-South cooperation, and new tools to finance housing and urban development for the urban poor.

14. **Mr. Al-Bassam** (Chief of the Regional Commissions New York Office), introducing the report of the Secretary-General on the work of the Committee

of Experts on the Transport of Dangerous Goods and on the Globally Harmonized System of Classification and Labelling of Chemicals (E/2005/53), said that the report contained a draft resolution recommended by the Committee for adoption by the Council. It reviewed the implementation of the previous resolutions on the subject (resolution 2003/64) and the work of the Committee for the 2003-2004 period, as well as the programme of work and schedule of meetings for 2005-2006.

15. **Ms. Gordon** (Jamaica), speaking on behalf of the Group of 77 and China, welcomed the number of commitments, goals and targets agreed by the international community in the area of sustainable development, which, she emphasized, could not be achieved without the means of implementation. Those means included official development assistance, technology transfer and access to environmentally sound technologies. The Group of 77 and China had accordingly addressed that concern as a cross-cutting issue in every cycle of the Commission on Sustainable Development.

16. The Commission had an important role as the high-level forum for follow-up to Agenda 21 and the Johannesburg Plan of Implementation, which, together with the three "Rio Conventions", were the basic framework for its work. She highlighted, in that connection, the importance of multilateralism and a more focused practical approach, and the relevance of the Commission's long-term programme of work, while urging the Council to take detailed stock of the outcomes of the Commission's thirtieth session, with a view to finding guidance therein for its future deliberations.

17. Turning to the question of sustainable human settlements and adequate shelter for all, she said that it could only be successfully addressed through a comprehensive, holistic strategy taking fully into account the commitments made at Istanbul+5, the Millennium Summit and the World Summit on Sustainable Development. The international community must give due attention, in that context, to provision of the necessary means, entailing improved official development assistance, technology transfer, capacity building, free and fair trade and increased foreign direct investments for developing countries, and solution of the external debt problem.

18. Notable efforts were already under way, including several key programmes being implemented by Habitat, which, along with other actors in that field, had a key role to play, given that the provision of shelter was a major factor in poverty reduction, achievement of the Goals and sustainable development.

19. If current trends continued, there would be some 1.4 billion slum dwellers by 2020. Priority must therefore be given to halting those trends, in particular through support for Habitat's monitoring efforts, which should be complemented at the national and regional levels. Capacity-building offered a shortcut in that regard and could involve sharing of experience and common regional policy formulation and implementation, within the context of the Habitat Agenda and the Millennium Goals.

20. A critical factor was financing. The programmes supported by some partners remained on track while others were progressing too slowly. There was also a persistent imbalance between earmarked and non-earmarked contributions to the United Nations Human Settlements Foundation: the former remained higher, while the donor base was still too narrow. He urged all Member States to contribute to the Foundation, as well as to Habitat's proposed slum upgrading facility.

21. **Ms. Walpole** (United Kingdom), speaking on behalf of the States members of the European Union, said that the acceding countries Bulgaria and Romania, the candidate countries Turkey and Croatia, the countries of the stabilization and association process and potential candidates Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Serbia and Montenegro, and the EFTA countries Iceland and Norway, members of the European Economic Area, as well as Ukraine and the Republic of Moldova, aligned themselves with her statement.

22. The Council had a central role to play in the follow-up to and implementation of the outcomes of the major United Nations conferences in the economic, social, environmental and related fields, and should provide guidance to the system on those issues, as well as being an institutional framework for their integrated analysis and mainstreaming.

23. The European Union was concerned that the consolidated report on the work of the functional commissions (E/2005/74) had too economic a focus and was not sufficiently concerned with social, human

rights or environmental aspects. The functional commissions needed to pay due attention to all aspects of sustainable development and promote further synergy between them. The three components of sustainable development — economic development, social progress and environmental protection — were necessary to achieve the internationally agreed development goals, and the European Union remained committed to promoting their integration as interdependent and mutually reinforcing pillars.

24. The Council should provide overall policy guidance to the functional commissions and subsidiary bodies, promoting coherence and coordination. It should encourage implementation of existing agreements and commitments, rather than seeking to reopen them. Such expert bodies as the functional commissions should not be politicized. She noted that the European Union, while endorsing the outcomes of such subsidiary bodies, would have preferred to have seen the work of the Statistical Commission approved by consensus. Lastly, the European Union welcomed the establishment of the Committee of Experts on International Cooperation in Tax Matters and took note of the list of experts to be appointed by the Secretary-General.

25. **Mr. Liu Ligun** (China) said that his country associated itself with the statement made by Jamaica. Since the Johannesburg World Summit in 2002, China had taken measures to direct its economy towards sustainable development, which remained a huge challenge for the world. However, many developing countries were prevented from taking similar action because of their lack of resources and capacity. Each Government needed to frame its own strategy for sustainable development based on its own situation, while timely support needed to be forthcoming from the international community, in particular through technology transfer and capacity-building. Monitoring mechanisms should be put in place.

26. China's goal, in the pursuit of which it was guided by Agenda 21 and the Johannesburg Plan of Implementation, was to ensure a good standard of living for its people within a harmonious, environment-friendly society. To that end, it was making increasing use of its resources, restructuring its economy and implementing a clean technology policy.

27. **Mr. Fedorchenko** (Russian Federation) said that significant efforts had been made in the United Nations

system towards the goal of sustainable development. The results of the most recent session of the Commission on Sustainable Development were satisfactory overall, although improvements were needed in its organization of work.

28. Turning to human settlements, his delegation wished to highlight the Habitat global campaign to ensure the right to housing, especially in the light of disaster mitigation efforts. The Habitat Governing Council had made a significant contribution to the work of the Commission on Sustainable Development, as had the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), and his delegation agreed with the recommendations of the Secretary-General aimed at ensuring full compliance with their mandates and avoiding duplication of work.

29. An effective global forest policy would be based on the outcome of the Earth Summit and the World Summit on Sustainable Development. His delegation supported the work of the United Nations Forum on Forests and its secretariat. Efforts should be intensified at all levels to implement the forest agenda by strengthening its coordination and policy functions. Forests should be promoted as a pillar of the global agenda on sustainable development. The fifth session of the International Forum on Forests had shown the strategic importance of its work and the links to the implementation of the Millennium Development Goals.

30. His delegation believed that the Committee of Experts on the Transport of Dangerous Goods did important and useful work, and would support the draft resolution. It appealed for the publication of the updated practical recommendations and the system of classification, and supported the requests for staff and increased funding.

31. **Mr. Hannesson** (Iceland), referring to the report of the thirteenth session of the Commission on Sustainable Development (E/2005/29), stressed that water and sanitation were the basic foundations of human life and health, and that no measures gave higher returns than investments aimed at their improvement. Water was crucial for preserving biological diversity, including in coastal zones, which were the most productive ecosystems in the world and were particularly at risk from pollution. He drew attention, in that connection, to the Global Programme of Action for Protection of the Marine Environment from Land-based Activities, adopted by 108

Governments and the European Commission in 1995, which was the only global mechanism explicitly addressing the linkages between freshwater and coastal and marine environments. He urged Governments to strengthen further its effective implementation.

32. Effective poverty reduction required improved access to energy, in particular through more efficient use of energy resources, development of new technologies, an increased share of renewable energy resources, and the development of new uses of hydrogen. Technological innovations in that sector deserved the backing of the international community.

33. Geothermal energy was fundamental to the economy of Iceland, which had sought to share its experience in that regard with other countries, in particular through the United Nations University's Geothermal Training Programme, thereby contributing to the development of renewable energy in the world.

34. **Mr. Toscano** (Switzerland) emphasized that Millennium Goal 7 (ensuring environmental sustainability) could not be dissociated from the other Goals, since poverty could not be reduced nor sustainable development achieved unless there was a halt to environmental degradation and natural resource depletion. That being so, Switzerland looked forward to a strengthening of the position of UNEP in the system and to increased attention by the functional commissions to environmental questions. UNEP had recently taken a number of significant steps in water protection and management, and, generally, in strengthening international environmental governance, for which it was to be commended. It was also doing very useful work in the management of chemicals and heavy metals.

35. He welcomed the emphasis laid by the Commission on Sustainable Development on the essential link between access to drinking water and the protection of water-related ecosystems, but regretted that the United Nations Forum on Forests had not been able to achieve a consensus on a strengthened international regime on forests. Concrete and quantifiable objectives had to be adopted for managing forests. Such objectives would give impetus to the process of ensuring sustainable forest management, to which Switzerland remained committed, as it was to all steps towards the continuing further integration of environmental aspects in development policies and poverty reduction strategies.

36. **Mr. Nimac** (Observer for Croatia) recalled his country's proposal for an international year of forests with a view to achieving internationally agreed goals and targets for forests. The proclamation of an international year of forests would be an additional measure towards ensuring forest sustainability, providing an opportunity to review the results achieved following the Earth Summit and the World Summit on Sustainable Development. It would also highlight the importance of the international community's common responsibility for forests and raise its awareness of forest issues by means of multi-stakeholder dialogue, policy and programme coordination, and the promotion of public advocacy. The Council should support and continue to discuss the initiative so that a broad-based agreement could be reached on the year of forests and so that activities might be undertaken for the benefit of the world's forests.

37. **Mr. Latheef** (Maldives) said that Maldives had been hit by the Indian Ocean tsunami only six days following the decision by the General Assembly to graduate it from least-developed-country status. The tsunami had wiped out 62 per cent of the country's gross domestic product on the spot, and the prospects for the recovery of its economy, based heavily on tourism, did not look good. The situation was being compounded by a major funding gap for recovery and reconstruction plans. As noted by the United Nations Special Envoy for Tsunami Recovery, a real effort was still needed to close the shortfall: \$100-200 million. The Special Envoy had also urged the Council to delay the graduation process for Maldives until its economy had been restored to pre-tsunami levels. The Committee for Development Policy had also recommended to the Council that the consultative mechanism should take the exceptional circumstances into account. However, that mechanism did not have a mandate to defer the mandatory three-year period of transition to a later date. Under the circumstances, the Council absolutely must recommend to the General Assembly the deferral of the graduation process until such time as the Maldives economy was fully restored to pre-tsunami levels.

38. **Mr. Nyamiobo** (Kenya), recalled that the twentieth session of the Governing Council of Habitat and the thirteenth session of the Committee on Sustainable Development had recently addressed policy issues related to water, sanitation and human settlements. It was important to implement the

decisions of those sessions, as human settlements problems would only be resolved when given due attention and the necessary resources.

39. His delegation welcomed the increase in contributions to Habitat and the Human Settlements Foundation over the past two years and commended those countries that had continued to support them both. However, it also noted there was a persistent imbalance between earmarked and non-earmarked contributions. Earmarked contributions to the Foundation had remained higher while the donor base had remained low, leading to over-reliance on a few contributors. All Member States and other partners were therefore urged to contribute to the Foundation with due emphasis on non-earmarked resources and on a multi-year basis.

40. Slum upgrading was critical to sustainable human settlements, and there was thus an urgent need to address the challenge of slums at the national, regional and international levels. The initiative for Habitat to establish a slum upgrading facility was welcome and all Member States were encouraged to support it. His delegation also wished to express its appreciation to Habitat, the Government of Finland and other partners for their contribution to the Kenyan slum-upgrading programme. It looked forward to the successful completion of that landmark project.

41. His delegation welcomed the report of the Governing Council of UNEP on its twenty-third session (A/60/25), and also the endorsement by the Governing Council of the Bali Strategic Plan for Technology Transfer and Capacity Building (UNEP/GC.23/6/Add.1). His delegation looked forward to the speedy implementation of that Plan. It also stressed the imperative of providing UNEP with stable and predictable financial resources, particularly from within the United Nations regular budget.

42. It was the international community's responsibility to ensure that the benefits forests provided were exploited without endangering their long-term sustainability. Poverty eradication and sustainable development were at the heart of the challenge of sustainable forest management, and the alleviation of poverty would be crucial both for achieving the Millennium Development Goals and for the sustainable management of all types of forests. In that light, the international community and especially the United Nations must continue to give forests the

attention they deserved. The sixth session of the Forum on Forests would be of paramount importance to the future of forest issues. He therefore called on all Member States to make a positive contribution to the success of the session.

43. **Ms. Low** (United States of America) said that her delegation was happy to take note of the report of the Committee for Development Policy (E/2005/33), but not of all the recommendations contained in it, particularly regarding the principles that should guide the criteria for admission to least-developed-country status and for graduation from that status. Her delegation saw no merit in a principle that would maintain the "consistency of the list over time". The list of least developed countries should evolve at the same pace as countries' economic situations; otherwise it would not serve its purpose of focusing resources on those countries most in need. Furthermore, all nations in similar circumstances should receive similar treatment and the aforementioned criteria should reflect that principle. As the Committee had pointed out, that was not currently the case, owing to the very substantial differences between the criteria applying to new candidates for least-developed-country status and the criteria applying to potential graduates. As a result of those discrepancies, it was possible to have two countries with exactly the same readings for all indicators, one of which would never graduate from least-developed-country status while the other would never qualify for that status. Those situations undermined the objective criteria that the Committee was supposed to apply in formulating the list of least developed countries. As soon as possible, the Committee should therefore develop one consistent set of criteria that could be applied to all decisions regarding countries' admission to and graduation from the list of least developed countries. Technically, that would not be difficult to accomplish. However, it would require the Committee to set aside the bias in favour of incumbents now distorting its recommendations.

44. The second recommendation proposed by the Committee in the report presumed that the Council had the right to organize the consultative mechanisms that countries would use to develop their transition strategies, even though the relevant General Assembly and Council resolutions clearly gave the graduating countries the responsibility for establishing those mechanisms. Maldives had the responsibility for

establishing its consultative mechanism, and that right should be respected. The Council should not presume that it had the power to dictate to any State how its consultative mechanism should be organized.

45. **Mr. Tharyat** (Indonesia) emphasized the importance of the international community devoting its efforts to the full implementation of the Johannesburg Plan of Implementation as determined under the Monterrey Consensus. In that connection, the twelfth and thirteenth sessions of the Commission on Sustainable Development had set a positive precedent for the future deliberations of the Commission, ensuring that outcomes would lead to practical measures without the need for new targets and commitments.

46. His delegation was pleased to note the adoption by UNEP of the Bali Strategic Plan for Technology Transfer and Capacity Building (UNEP/GC.23/6/Add.1). The Plan would serve as one of the guiding principles for environmental protection and the achievement of sustainable development, particularly in developing countries. Furthermore, Indonesia would have the privilege of hosting the global celebration of World Habitat Day on 3 October 2005, the theme of which would be "The Millennium Development Goals and the City".

47. At the forthcoming sixth session of the Forum on Forests, the international community should be able to agree on the need to address global deforestation and forest degradation. In that connection, the agreed date for convening that session, namely from 13 to 24 February 2006, should be included in the provisional calendar of conferences and meetings (E/2005/L.12).

48. **Ms. Mammadova** (Azerbaijan) said that the policy options and practical measures adopted in Commission on Sustainable Development resolution 13/1 were critical to the future implementation of Agenda 21, the Johannesburg Plan of Implementation and the development goals. In particular, the options and measures would help clarify the area of responsibility of each stakeholder.

49. International response should be demand-driven and should focus primarily on the implementation of actions prioritized in the outcome document. Greater involvement and coordination of regional commissions and other relevant actors was also required.

50. Azerbaijan valued the Commission's role in fostering sustainable development partnerships. The Government particularly appreciated the creation of a common database on partnerships, as sharing "on the ground" experience was a vital part of the implementation process.

51. Azerbaijan was currently working in collaboration with the United Nations Country Team on a new poverty reduction strategy for the period 2006-2015, which would be structured around the development goals. The strategy would place greater emphasis on environmental issues, especially on those which had not been addressed during the implementation of the poverty reduction strategy paper. Water, sanitation and human settlement goals had been mainstreamed into various other development strategies.

52. With respect to human settlements in particular, adequate emphasis should be placed on land-use efficiency, waste management, the development of infrastructures, a sound regulatory framework, and enhanced access of the poor to financial services. Support for Habitat, the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees and refugee host countries should also be strengthened.

53. The private sector was a prospective partner in tackling human settlements and sanitation problems. However, the Government's efforts to support the private sector should be complemented by those of international financial institutions.

54. Future challenges included the development of a strong statistical base for setting baselines for targets and defining sensible monitoring indicators. More seriously, Azerbaijan needed to mitigate the economic, social and environmental consequences of the conflict with neighbouring Armenia. Resulting problems such as loss of biodiversity, deforestation, transboundary water and air pollution, and land degradation had placed a heavy burden on her Government and had had a negative impact on its efforts to achieve sustainable development.

55. Azerbaijan attached great importance to the Commission's work on energy for sustainable development, and had recently adopted a State programme on the use of alternative and renewable energy sources.

56. Her Government believed that the forthcoming review process would be useful in establishing policy options and practical measures. It also wished to stress the importance of streamlined reporting and the provision of relevant technical assistance.

57. **Mr. Khan** (Director, of the Office of the Economic and Social Council Support and Coordination) said that he was surprised at the comment by the delegate from the United Kingdom that the report focused too heavily on economic aspects and not enough on social and environmental dimensions. On the contrary, the report covered 14 cross-cutting themes that had emerged from United Nations conferences and summits and was based on the framework of the eight development goals. The report focused on integrating the 14 themes and on enhancing coordination among Ministries of Foreign Affairs, Finance, and Development Cooperation, with a view to strengthening policy coherence. In that regard, Mr. Khan drew attention to paragraphs 38-45 and 50-53.

58. **The President** drew attention to two draft resolutions in Chapter I, Section A, of document E/2005/29.

Draft resolution I: Support to the Bureau in preparing for future sessions of the Commission on Sustainable Development

59. *Draft resolution I was adopted.*

Draft resolution II: Support for the travel of representatives from developing countries and countries with economies in transition to future sessions of the Commission on Sustainable Development

60. *Draft resolution II was adopted.*

61. **The President** drew attention to three draft resolutions in Chapter I, Section B, of document E/2005/29.

Draft resolution I: Term of the Bureau of the Commission on Sustainable Development

62. *Draft resolution I was adopted.*

Draft resolution II: Dates of the meetings of the Commission on Sustainable Development during its 2006/2007 cycle

63. *Draft resolution II was adopted.*

Draft resolution III: Report of the Commission on Sustainable Development on its thirteenth session and provisional agenda for the fourteenth session of the Commission

64. *Draft resolution III was adopted.*

65. **The President** drew attention to the report of the United Nations Forum on Forests on its fifth session (E/2005/42).

66. **Ms. Walpole** (United Kingdom), speaking on behalf of the European Union, said it was deeply disappointing that at its fifth session, the Forum had failed to agree on a text on the future international arrangement on forests. It was equally disappointing that it had failed to agree on a ministerial statement during the high-level segment. As a result, the positive statements underlying the global importance of forests and their substantive contribution to the achievement of the development goals had not had the desired effect.

67. Significant changes to the current international arrangement on forests were necessary to reverse deforestation and forest degradation worldwide. The European Union had come to the fifth session in the hope that it would help to enhance the effectiveness of the future international arrangement on forests, and had clearly stated its support for a legally binding instrument and the establishment of clear goals and targets. In spite of the disappointing results, the European Union continued to attach great importance to forest issues and maintained its commitment to sustainable forest management.

The meeting rose at 12.40 p.m.