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Official Records

President: Mr. Kerim (The former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia)

*In the absence of the President, Mr. Jallow
(Gambia), Vice-President, took the Chair.*

The meeting was called to order at 3.10 p.m.

Thematic debate entitled “Addressing climate change: The United Nations and the world at work”

Agenda items 48, 54 and 116 (continued)

Integrated and coordinated implementation of and follow-up to the outcomes of the major United Nations conferences and summits in the economic, social and related fields

Sustainable development

Follow-up to the outcome of the Millennium Summit

Report of the Secretary-General (A/62/644)

The Acting President: I now call on Mr. Thomas Matussek, Permanent Representative of Germany.

Mr. Matussek (Germany): Let me start by expressing our great appreciation for the fact that President Srgjan Kerim convened this very timely discussion in the General Assembly. We must maintain the high level of attention and awareness that we managed to build up during the course of last year.

Germany fully aligns itself with the statement made at the 80th meeting by Slovenian Environment Minister Janez Podobnik on behalf of the European Union (EU).

2007 was a year of unprecedented political momentum to fight climate change. The findings of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) have made it crystal-clear: the impact of climate change will be dramatic until and unless we take resolute action.

Germany is proud to have taken the lead during our EU Presidency, in spring 2007, to prepare groundbreaking decisions at the EU level on the reduction of greenhouse gas emissions. As host of the Group of Eight (G-8) Summit held in Heiligendamm, we set further milestones, in particular a clear commitment to the United Nations climate process. Our leaders confirmed that commitment almost uniformly at the Secretary-General’s High-level Event on 24 September. And in Bali, we successfully launched a negotiating process to be completed by 2009 with a new global and comprehensive post-2012 agreement. One thing was clear: the United Nations system is the appropriate multilateral framework through which the necessary future climate change regime can be established.

We industrialized countries have to remain the driving force. This is a question of both fairness and credibility. We, the industrialized countries, have to reduce our greenhouse gas emissions by between 25 and 40 per cent from 1990 levels, as stipulated by the IPCC.

The European Union is willing to reduce its greenhouse emissions by 30 per cent from 1990 levels by 2020, within the framework of an international agreement. In this case, we, Germany, will even

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commit to a 40 per cent reduction. The German Government adopted an integrated climate and energy policy plan in 2007. Its key elements are energy efficiency and renewables. Let me just highlight the following aspects.

We will massively expand renewable sources of energy. In the electricity sector, we will double the share of renewables by 2020 from the current level of 14 per cent, and we are aiming at a 14 per cent share in the heat sector. We will raise standards for energy efficiency in buildings by 30 per cent by 2009 and by another 30 per cent after 2012. More than \$2.3 billion per year will be made available for the modernization of energy systems in buildings.

We remain convinced that a climate-friendly restructuring of our economies is both possible and affordable. Ambitious climate policy does not constitute an obstacle to economic and sustainable growth. On the contrary, climate protection makes sound economic sense. It is a driving force for innovation and employment. In Germany, every billion euros spent on energy-saving modernization of existing buildings secures or creates approximately 25,000 jobs in the building and crafts sector. Over the past 10 years, approximately 214,000 jobs have been created in the renewables sector, with 60,000 of them in the wind-energy sector alone.

In the global efforts to address climate change, the role of the private sector is universally recognized. The question of public-private partnerships, which has been raised in our panel discussions, is crucial. Global action makes climate efforts more cost-efficient, and more can be achieved with the same levels of investment.

Climate change is, first and foremost, a sustainable development challenge. Without a stable climate and adequate knowledge of future climate change trends, we may not achieve the Millennium Development Goals. But climate change is even more than that: it is the most universal and most comprehensive of problems. For some countries, as we have heard, it is a matter of sheer existence; it affects areas such as health, security, migration and nutrition.

Germany will continue to support all international efforts to counter the adverse effects of climate change and to reach a global agreement. But only a United Nations-based framework can make it possible for the voices of all countries to be heard and

considered. Only the United Nations system can address the complementary challenges of development and climate change in a coherent manner.

The United Nations system needs to respond on the basis of a coherent strategic vision, setting out common goals and priorities and clearly showing the comparative advantage of United Nations entities in tackling climate change. The report of the Secretary-General (A/62/644) serves as a useful beginning for that process. It clearly states that the United Nations needs to be more than merely the sum of its parts. The real challenge is to efficiently and effectively develop and implement integrated policies. The whole United Nations system must strengthen its response to global challenges and must ensure that that response comes in a united voice.

In the future, the financing of mitigation and adaptation efforts as well as technology transfer will be the key issue. Those areas require new and innovative concepts. As the interactive panel discussions have shown, the United Nations should serve as the key forum by bringing together various stakeholders from private and public sectors. The United Nations system needs to enhance networking capacities and coordination for joint international action. Therefore, if the United Nations is best suited to tackle the pressing issue of climate change, it must intensify cooperation across the system in order to meet that challenge.

As Chancellor Merkel pointed out here in New York last September (see A/62/PV.5), climate change will be the litmus test of the international community's ability to act efficiently and effectively in the twenty-first century. The United Nations is at the heart of that process. Germany is willing to do its share. We are looking forward to cooperating with all partners within the United Nations.

The Acting President: I now call on Mr. Aysar Tayeb, representative of Saudi Arabia.

Mr. Tayeb (Saudi Arabia): I should like to thank you, Sir, and through you to thank Mr. Srgjan Kerim, President of the General Assembly, for convening this meeting and for the continuous attention that the United Nations is devoting to the issue of climate change.

I would like to associate myself with the statements made by the Permanent Representative of Antigua and Barbuda on behalf of the Group of 77 and

China at the 80th meeting and by the Permanent Representative of Algeria on behalf of the Arab Group at the 81st.

Saudi Arabia shares the world's concern about climate change and the challenges it poses, and we are committed to working together towards finding the right solutions.

At the summit of the Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC) held in Riyadh a couple of months ago, Saudi Arabia pledged \$300 million to a new fund that will support research on energy, the environment and climate change. That pledge was complemented by pledges from Kuwait, Qatar and the United Arab Emirates, bringing the sum to \$750 million. Many other efforts have been made at the national level, but time does not permit going into greater detail here. I will just say, however, that we are committed to doing our fair share.

On Monday, we heard very useful presentations and discussions from experts. The ideas that have been crystallizing from the discussion include the important role of partnerships and the full engagement of the private sector and civil society. Another idea has to do with the great connections between climate change and development. Development and climate change are linked and need to be viewed together.

Less than a year ago, here in New York the Commission on Sustainable Development was deliberating on climate change and on energy for sustainable development. An obvious fact that became crystal clear was that energy is a main prerequisite for development.

In order to meet the objectives of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change in addressing the challenges of climate change without hindering the development process, we must find practical solutions that achieve the required emission reductions while keeping the energy cycle on its steady path, in order to meet the growing energy needs required for development. In that regard, we need to be careful to ensure that mitigation actions do not create market distortions that would lead to instability of energy supplies and disrupt the development process. Technological solutions such as carbon capture and storage provide win-win solutions and a positive way forward.

I would like now to address the Bali Road Map. In Bali, we reached an important agreement, which did not in any way imply that Kyoto is dead or over, or that the Climate Change Convention is no longer any good. That is why I am surprised by some of the statements I have heard alluding to such a notion. Yes, action to address climate change is lagging. But that is not because there is a deficiency in the Convention or in the Kyoto Protocol; the deficiency has been in the implementation of the commitments made under these agreements.

In Bali, we have reached an agreement on a detailed timetable for the remaining work of the Ad Hoc Working Group under the Kyoto Protocol, which will agree on ambitious new targets for industrial countries for the Kyoto Protocol's second commitment period, targets that will hopefully be met this time.

In Bali, we also reached an agreement "to launch a comprehensive process to enable the full, effective and sustained implementation of the Convention through long-term cooperative action, now, up to and beyond 2012". It is not an agreement to replace or supersede the Convention or any of its existing principles.

We have agreed to step up contributions from developing countries with actions to be taken in the context of sustainable development. These actions will be measurable, reportable and verifiable. They will also have to be enabled and supported by measurable, reportable and verifiable technology and by financing and capacity-building. And it is not as if developing countries were incapable of taking those actions without the Bali agreement or any other subsequent agreement; the problem is that the tools to enable developing countries to do so were never made available to them.

This is the real challenge. It is the core of the climate change challenge and has always been. Our success through this year and next year will not lie in merely finding some consensus language and a text that we can all agree to. Our success will be in making breakthroughs in unlocking the toolbox and in obtaining the financing and technology required to really make a difference.

Almost all speakers here touched upon the risks of climate change and its negative impact. With the release of the Fourth Assessment Report of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change, I think

this issue is no longer up for debate. However, in a few decades, when our children and grandchildren are reflecting on how successful the world was in facing the challenges of climate change, success will not be measured by agreements or treaties. It will be measured only by the tangible difference that we are able to make together.

The Acting President: I now give the floor to Mr. Stuart Beck, Permanent Representative of Palau.

Mr. Beck (Palau): The waters continue to rise in Palau and everywhere else. Salinization of fresh water and formerly productive lands continues apace. The reefs, the foundation of our food chain, experience periodic bleaching and death. Throughout the Pacific, sea-level rise has not only generated plans for the relocation of populations; those relocations are actually in progress now. Although this litany of disasters has become well known in these halls, no remedial action has been taken. The Alliance of Small Island States (AOSIS) raised this issue 20 years ago. Larger countries can build dikes and move to higher ground, but that is not feasible for the small island States, which must simply stand by and watch their cultures vanish.

We have to ask ourselves whether the United Nations is powerless to act in the face of this threat to the very existence of many of its Member States. Palau suggests that it is not.

The Assembly will recall that last April, under the presidency of the United Kingdom, the Security Council took up the issue of climate change. At that time, while there were some expressions of discomfort with the venue of that debate — a discomfort that we decidedly did not share, I should say — there was general agreement with the notion expressed by the then-President of the Council, United Kingdom Minister for Foreign Affairs Ms. Margaret Beckett, that climate change is a threat to “our collective security in a fragile and increasingly interdependent world” (S/PV.5663, p. 19).

Obviously, island States are not the only countries whose existence is threatened. At that very same debate, Ambassador Mbuende of Namibia characterized climate change as “a matter of life or death” for his country, and he observed that

“the developing countries in particular, have been subjected to what could be described as low-

intensity biological or chemical warfare. Greenhouse gases are slowly destroying plants, animals and human beings” (S/PV.5663, p. 31).

Speaking on behalf of the Pacific Island Forum at that Security Council debate, Ambassador Robert Aisi of Papua New Guinea, whom we heard this morning, observed that climate change is no less a threat to small island States than guns and bombs are to larger countries. Pacific Island countries are likely to face massive dislocations of people, similar to flows sparked by conflict. Such circumstances will generate as much resentment, hatred and alienation as any refugee crisis.

Ambassador Aisi observed then, and we reiterate now, that it is the Security Council that is charged with protecting human rights and the integrity and security of the Member States. The Security Council is empowered to make decisions on behalf of all States to take action on threats to international peace and security. While we heartily applaud the efforts of the President of the General Assembly and the Secretary-General to shine a light on this awful problem, we take this opportunity to respectfully call upon the Security Council to react to the threat that we describe. Would any nation facing an invading army not do the same? Under Article 39 of the Charter, it is the Security Council’s obligation to determine the existence of any threat to peace and to make recommendations to maintain or restore international peace and security. We call upon the Security Council to do so in the context of climate change.

Under Articles 40 and 41 of the Charter, it is the obligation of the Security Council to prevent an aggravation of the situation and to devise appropriate measures to be carried out by all States to that end. While we small island States do not have all the answers, we are not unmindful of the obvious scientific certainty that excessive greenhouse gas emissions by States are the cause of this threat to international security and to the existence of many Member States. We therefore suggest that the Security Council consider the imposition of mandatory emissions caps on all States and use its power to sanction in order to encourage compliance.

We recall that, under Article 11 of the Charter, the General Assembly is empowered to call to the attention of the Security Council “situations which are likely to endanger international peace and security”. At the

appropriate time, we will call upon the Assembly to do so. In the event that the General Assembly chooses not to exercise the right to refer the matter to the Security Council, we will humbly call upon the countries whose very existence is threatened to utilize Article 34 of the Charter, which empowers every Member State to bring to the attention of the Security Council any issue “which might lead to international friction”. I think we can all agree that “international friction” is a very mild term to describe the terrible plight in which the island nations now find themselves.

Our Charter provides a way forward. Our Security Council has the wisdom and the tools to address this situation. And while we debate, the waters are rising.

The Acting President: I now call on the Permanent Representative of Cuba, Mr. Rodrigo Malmierca Díaz.

Mr. Malmierca Díaz (Cuba) (*spoke in Spanish*): Cuba associates itself with the statements made on behalf of the Alliance of Small Island States and the Group of 77 and China.

For Cuba, this debate is very timely following the world Conference held in Bali, in which the Cuban delegation participated with a mixture of concern, optimism and confidence. We participated with concern because it is becoming increasingly evident, as Cuban President Fidel Castro stated in 1992, that an important biological species, namely, man, is at risk of disappearing as a result of the swift and progressive elimination of its natural habitat.

Indisputable scientific evidence proves that the threat of devastating climate change exists. The past 10 years have been the warmest ever. The Arctic ice is thinning. Glaciers are receding. The sea level is rising. The frequency and intensity of hurricanes are increasing, and 30 per cent of all species will disappear if the global temperature increases by a couple of degrees Celsius. Small island States run the risk of disappearing underwater, despite the fact that they, together with other very vulnerable countries, have contributed least to global warming.

However, we are optimistic and confident, because we still have time to act and the majority of countries have expressed their political will to contribute, in keeping with their respective responsibilities and capacities, to the implementation

of an appropriate international framework to address this problem.

The Fourth Assessment Report on Climate Change submitted by the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change urges us to consider this issue in depth and to take action. However, it is disappointing and unfortunate that the country that pollutes the most and is responsible for more than 25 per cent of the world’s greenhouse gas emissions — a country that has only 4.7 per cent of the global population — has ignored the Kyoto Protocol and stands by impassively as more than 190 nations strive to update it.

Furthermore, industrialized countries are not achieving the almost symbolic goals set for Kyoto’s so-called first commitment period. Nor are they attaining the objectives of the Convention and the Protocol with regard to sufficient and predictable financial resources, technology transfer and capacity-building.

We have agreed to implement strategies such as mitigation and adaptation. However, this dramatic situation cannot be addressed without a change in the current, unsustainable patterns of production and consumption.

We have common but differentiated responsibilities. The developed countries, which are responsible for 76 per cent of all greenhouse gas emissions, must bear the principal burden of mitigation and set an example. Worse yet, their emissions increased by more than 12 per cent between 1990 and 2003, and those of the United States in particular grew by more than 20 per cent.

On the other hand, we cannot now prevent the development of the more than 100 countries that have yet to achieve it — countries that, moreover, are not responsible in historical terms for what has occurred. We reject the pressures applied on underdeveloped countries to adopt binding commitments to reduce emissions.

The developed countries, which have monopolies on patents, technologies and money, must ensure that the countries of the third world have access to substantial amounts of new financing in addition to the current, paltry levels of official development assistance, and that they receive free technologies and training for their human resources.

Cuba has been striving to implement adaptation programmes and measures on the basis of a solid scientific community, efficient disaster prevention systems and coordinated activities at the national and local levels, despite the fact that Cuban greenhouse gas emissions are insignificant.

Cuba also contributes to climate change mitigation through a set of national programmes — which we call the “energy revolution” — based on energy savings, energy efficiency and the development of renewable energy sources. Over the past three years, Cuba has replaced more than 9 million incandescent light bulbs and more than 3 million energy-efficient household appliances. That has led to a decrease of approximately 360 megawatts in peak electric demand — amounting to a savings of nearly \$400 million — and a 680,000-ton reduction in petroleum usage per year, resulting in a reduction of approximately 1.2 million tons of carbon dioxide emissions per year. Likewise, intense efforts are under way to develop and apply renewable energy sources, and Cuba participates in regional cooperation activities in the Caribbean to address vulnerability to climate change.

In pursuing our aims, we have had to cope with the ongoing effects of a criminal blockade imposed on us for nearly half a century by the major military and economic Power, which have had severe implications for our development goals.

If we are to address climate change, the following actions are essential. The developed countries must show clear resolve and take concrete actions to fulfil their commitments under the Kyoto Protocol. Those countries must make firm commitments to reduce emissions from 1990 levels by approximately 40 per cent by 2020 and by no less than 60 to 70 per cent by 2050. Renewable energy sources must be developed and utilized, and their share in the world energy matrix must be significantly increased by 2025. New, additional and sufficient financial resources must be allocated to meet adaptation needs in developing countries. It is imperative that the Adaptation Fund be made fully operational. The effective transfer of clean technologies must take into account the specific needs of developing countries.

The challenge is great, but we still have the opportunity to leave to our descendants a planet that is

not only cleaner, but also more just and equitable in the distribution of its wealth.

The Acting President: I now call on the Permanent Representative of El Salvador, Mrs. Carmen María Gallardo Hernández.

Mrs. Gallardo Hernández (El Salvador) (*spoke in Spanish*): The delegation of El Salvador is grateful for the convening of this high-level meeting.

We wish to acknowledge the timely decision to involve the various sectors of government and civil society in this debate. Indeed, the participation of all of those players is crucial in strengthening the decision-making process in an area of particular significance for our community of nations. Only if we are united will we be able to address the reality imposed on us as a result of climate change.

The delegation of El Salvador reiterates the importance of ensuring that deliberations on this issue occur within a multilateral context, especially in the framework of the United Nations. We underscore that the effects of climate change are now global in nature. That is why we must address those effects on the basis of a universal consensus.

In that regard, we would like to express our satisfaction at the results obtained at the Bali conference held in December 2007. The Action Plan and the Road Map that were the result of that conference pave the way towards making progress towards an intergovernmental dialogue. Our basic focus must be on achieving a global agreement in order to avoid the dangers that result from climate change and an effective reduction of greenhouse gas emissions, in addition to addressing such issues as mitigation, adaptation, technology transfer and financing for developing countries.

El Salvador commits itself to participating in that process. However, we must be able to rely on the active participation and resolute political commitment of all countries, in particular of the developed countries, in order to jointly achieve substantial agreements in the fight against climate change. We know that this struggle is not the exclusive responsibility of certain countries or groups of countries. Rather, it is the responsibility of the entire international community, with no exceptions whatsoever.

As has been affirmed by experts in the field, and as we have unfortunately seen for ourselves in some of our own countries, if we do not manage to right the current environmental imbalance, we will find ourselves on the brink of unforeseen dangers. Among other things, we must note how this issue has had an impact on the procurement and use of natural resources, and thus its impact on the international economy and the very existence of biodiversity, including human life.

In that regard, we are of the view that the issue of climate change, given its own effects and multidimensional implications, poses a serious threat to international security. Our delegation believes that we cannot address such a threat to international security merely from the traditional point of view, as has been the case throughout the 62 years of the existence of this Organization, by linking these threats to issues of war and peace.

We must recall that the former Secretary-General, Kofi Annan, referred to such an approach in his report entitled "A more secure world: our shared responsibility" (A/59/565) to the General Assembly on 2 December 2004. The report indicated that the greatest threats to security now range far beyond wars of aggression between States. The international community now faces new threats, such as climate change, as this current debate in the General Assembly shows. We should recall that the current Secretary-General, Ban Ki-moon, has also set out the collateral effects that climate change can have by indicating that shortages of water and arable land are becoming sources of conflict in certain parts of Africa.

For those reasons, and bearing that new outlook in mind, both developed and developing countries must do our utmost to halt the impact of climate change. Our actions must serve to reverse the negative effects of climate change, and global changes in the economic, scientific and technological spheres must be compatible with an environment that is sustainable in its duration and scope.

Clearly, that requires collective efforts based on the criteria of common but differentiated responsibilities. We cannot lose sight of the fact that developed and developing countries have different capacities for action. That was made clear in the report of the former Secretary-General of 21 March 2005 (A/59/2005) and was reflected recently in the report of

Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon on the overview of United Nations activities in relation to climate change (A/62/644).

With that perspective, we attach great importance to the role that the private sector can play through getting directly involved in support for the technological assistance and cooperation policies of the Governments of developed countries. It is crucial that the developed countries contribute with technology transfer in order to change traditional energy consumption patterns and thus help efforts to mitigate and adapt to the effects of climate change.

To conclude, my delegation would like to express its hope that the statements of each and every delegation become concrete initiatives that will make it possible to collectively address the problems that climate change presents us with, in line with the political commitments undertaken by our heads of State and Government at the high-level meeting on climate change held here at Headquarters on 24 September 2007.

The Acting President: I next call on Mr. Alisher Vohidov, Permanent Representative of Uzbekistan.

Mr. Vohidov (Uzbekistan) (*spoke in Russian*): Allow me, first of all, to express particular gratitude to His Excellency Mr. Ban Ki-moon, the Secretary-General, who has made tireless efforts to consolidate the efforts of the international community to combat climate change, and also His Excellency Mr. Srgjan Kerim, the President of the General Assembly at its sixty-second session, for his initiative in holding this thematic debate on this topic.

It is increasingly obvious today that climate change is a multifaceted problem that requires an equally multifaceted international approach to its resolution. In that connection, we welcome the comprehensive approach taken in the report of the Secretary-General in overview of United Nations activities on climate change (A/62/644). We are convinced that the United Nations has a unique role to play in creating a multilateral and universal mechanism for the effective prevention and resolution of the problem of climate change and its consequences.

Uzbekistan is a party to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) and the Kyoto Protocol and has been taking consistent steps to implement the international obligations it has

entered into. Uzbekistan is carrying out concrete steps to take into account factors allowing for adaptation to climate change in its national energy development programmes, paying particular attention to reducing greenhouse emissions and carrying out programmes on energy savings, the Kyoto Protocol clean development mechanism and other steps.

In that context, we would like to emphasize that we share the view of many of the Member States of the United Nations that climate change is an integral part of the broader international debates on sustainable development. We believe that in combating climate change, it is particularly important to ensure effective partnerships between developing and developed States. As a matter of priority, attention should be paid to tackling the problem of inadequate financing for the efforts to combat climate change.

In the context of preventing the detrimental consequences of climate change, it is particularly important to introduce environmentally clean technologies and to prevent the degradation of natural resources, to make use of renewable sources of energy, to enhance the effectiveness of energy use and energy sources and to optimize the management and use of water resources.

Allow me to refer to a particular component of the problem of climate change, namely, the problem of ensuring ecological security. We have seen that the destruction of the environment can no longer be ignored, as it affects the entirety of sustainable development, social well-being, economic development and ecological balance. Ecological security has been particularly threatened in areas of ecological catastrophes.

One such ecological disaster is the situation in the Aral Sea watershed. The destruction of the Aral Sea, with its rich biological resources, not only has irreversible consequences regionally but also has a negative impact on climate change well beyond the boundaries of the region. Salt and dust from the surface of the dry seabed are destroying harvests and vegetation and decreasing the productivity of pastures and crops. Tremendous economic damage has been inflicted on fisheries and hunting grounds. That set of extremely difficult ecological problems is undermining the very foundations of life in the Aral area, leading to a chronic shortage of irrigation water and clean drinking water.

We welcome the participation of international partners in carrying out concrete programmes and projects aimed at improving the ecological situation in the Aral Sea region. Unfortunately, it is evident that the steps that have been taken and the funds made available thus far are not sufficient for the biological recovery of the Aral area. We expect our international partners to undertake active and more specific efforts to finance steps to normalize the ecosystem around the Aral Sea.

The standard of living of the population living near the Aral Sea, apart from other factors, is affected by one of the greatest problems besetting the Central Asian region, namely, the problem of the use and conservation of water resources. The population in Central Asia is growing, but the amount of water and irrigated land remains practically unchanged. In the mountains of Central Asia, an accelerating process of degradation, deforestation, erosion, waste-matter pollution and a reduction of pastureland is taking place. The glaciers of the Pamir and Altai mountains, have lost approximately 25 per cent of their ice, over the past 50 years, and that process is accelerating.

The ecosystems of watersheds link together all the countries of our region. An overall plan is needed to manage the water resources of Central Asia to ensure that life can continue, and that will require mechanisms for cooperation. We should therefore take into account, in designing our water use regime, every factor that could affect the ecological situation or have irreversible ecological consequences.

I would like to use this opportunity to inform the participants in today's thematic debate that Uzbekistan, in an effort to contribute to the efforts to combat climate change and to protect the environment, has decided to hold, on 11 and 12 March 2008 in Tashkent, an international conference on the problems of the Aral Sea, their influence on the genetic fund of the population and the region's fauna and flora, and ways of international cooperation to alleviate their consequences. The main purpose of the conference will be to discuss the influence of climate change on the standard of living and the health of the populations living in the Aral Sea area, protecting biodiversity and improving the management of water and land resources. After the Tashkent conference, a complex plan of action will be drawn up to improve the ecological and socio-economic situation in the Aral Sea area. I would like to take this opportunity to invite

representatives of the United Nations and of its Member States to participate in that conference and to make whatever contribution they can to resolving the problems of the Aral Sea.

The Acting President: I now give the floor to Mr. Kaïre Monionganda Mbuende, Permanent Representative of Namibia.

Mr. Mbuende (Namibia): Allow me at the outset to express our appreciation for the opportunity to participate in this important thematic debate and also to thank the Secretary-General for his report on the activities of the United Nations in relation to climate change (A/62/644).

My delegation associates itself with the statements delivered yesterday at the 80th meeting by Antigua and Barbuda and at the 81st meeting by Cameroon, on behalf of the Group of 77 and China and the African Group, respectively.

Climate change is a classic case of interdependence, in which the welfare of some spells disaster for others. My delegation is pleased with United Nations action to increase awareness of climate change. Today, farmers in Africa — and elsewhere, of course — are aware of the connection between crop failure due to drought and loss of life because of floods on the one hand, and the unsustainable patterns of production and consumption in industrialized countries on the other. My delegation has asserted time and again that the United Nations provides the appropriate framework for discussions on climate change and accountability on compliance with the international commitments under the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) and the Kyoto Protocol.

The need for partnerships to address the challenge of climate cannot be overemphasized. Governments have a critical role to play to ensure compliance with the targets set for the reduction of greenhouse gas emissions. Local authorities also have a critical role to play in ensuring that all activities within their area conform to high environmental standards that are climate-friendly.

The private sector, as the engine of growth and development, has a responsibility to ensure that growth is not at the expense of the climate. That calls for investments in new, cleaner energy technologies that are climate-friendly. In that regard a partnership

between industry, government, the scientific community and others is necessary.

The United Nations has an important role to play in ensuring greater international cooperation in the development, transfer, deployment and diffusion of technologies in order to help developing countries cope with mitigation and adaptation to climate change. Equally important are the adequate capitalization of the Adaptation Fund and the sufficiency of other flows of financial resources.

I would like to underscore that climate change is not an isolated environmental issue. It has serious implications for economic growth, sustainable development and life as a whole. It has a negative impact on the achievement of internationally agreed development goals, including the Millennium Development Goals.

As a global challenge, climate change requires the United Nations to ensure that its activities at the country level are well coordinated and properly aligned with the development plans and strategies of programme countries, bearing in mind that the eradication of extreme poverty remains the focus of development activities. The linkage between climate change, desertification, land degradation and loss of biological diversity also needs to be fully recognized when climate change is addressed, as these are mutually reinforcing.

In conclusion, I would like to reassure you of Namibia's commitment to the Bali Road Map and Action Plan. We will make our contribution to finding and reaching a comprehensive global agreement by the end of 2009.

The Acting President: I now give the floor to Mr. Mohammad Khazaei, Permanent Representative of the Islamic Republic of Iran.

Mr. Khazaei (Islamic Republic of Iran): At the outset, I would like to thank the President for holding the second round of thematic debates on the important issue of climate change. I also would like to associate myself with the statement made yesterday by Ambassador John Ashe, Permanent Representative of Antigua and Barbuda, on behalf of the Group of 77 and China.

In our view, the first round of deliberations on climate change in early August last year and the high-level event of 24 September were fruitful in terms of

raising public awareness and strengthening political will on the part of Governments in preparation for the negotiations at the Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), held last December in Bali.

The outcomes of the Conference, particularly the Bali Action Plan, clearly illustrate a road map for a comprehensive process to enable the full, effective and sustained implementation of the Convention through long-term and concerted actions before and after 2012. Therefore, the second round of the thematic debates, here in the General Assembly, should in no way substitute for or undermine that process. We hope that these deliberations will result in the enhancement of international cooperation and the further implementation of commitments made under the Convention.

Now, I would like to touch upon several important points which, in our view, should be fully taken into account in this process.

Climate change should not and cannot be considered in isolation, without regard to such other environmental issues as desertification and loss of biodiversity. Nor should it be discussed without reference to the components of sustainable development. The relationship between climate change and sustained economic growth and their mutual impact are well recognized worldwide.

I believe that the international process on climate change envisaged in the Bali Action Plan must be conducted in a manner which will lead to improved compliance with the provisions of UNFCCC and the Kyoto Protocol, together with a deepening of commitments by Annex I countries in terms of the reduction of greenhouse gas emissions, the provision of additional and predictable financial resources and the transfer of advanced and appropriate technologies.

The historical responsibility of the developed countries for the release of greenhouse gas emissions should be taken into consideration and the internationally agreed principle of common but differentiated responsibilities should be the basis for this process. Therefore, the developed countries must take the lead and make significant contributions in implementing present and future global policies on mitigation and adaptation.

Due to the severe impact of climate change, the developing countries in general, and the countries and areas identified in article 4.8 of the Convention in particular, should enjoy more support from the international community, especially from the appropriate Funds.

With regard to arrangements for the negotiations, my delegation reiterates the need for the process envisaged in the Bali Action Plan to be transparent and inclusive so as to ensure the full and active participation of the developing countries parties to the Convention. While we are getting ready to participate in the process, we are concerned about the possible consequences of the response measures for the developing countries. Thus, during the forthcoming negotiations, care should be taken to avoid any decision or measure that may lead to further suffering on the part of the most affected countries.

In addition, due to time constraints, we should stick to the elaboration of the four issues of financing, technology transfer, adaptation and mitigation and to their implementation before 2012 and in the post-Kyoto era.

We believe that contributions by countries to the relevant global funds, including the Adaptation Fund, are of the utmost importance. The level of these contributions, particularly from the developed countries, is a clear indication of their commitment to international actions on mitigation and adaptation designed to combat climate change and minimize its adverse impacts at the national, regional and global levels.

I wish to assure the attendees of this meeting of our resolve to participate actively in and contribute to the process, as envisaged in the Bali Action Plan, and to express the hope that it will enjoy international support and cooperation. The success of this process largely rests, in our opinion, on the faithful implementation of agreed commitments, on emission reduction, made more especially by developed countries, and on the contributions by developed countries to the national mitigation and adaptation efforts of developing countries.

The Acting President: I now give the floor to Mr. Mohamed Toihiri, Permanent Representative of the Comoros.

Mr. Toihiri (Comoros) (*spoke in French*): We fully align ourselves with the statements made by the representative of Antigua and Barbuda on behalf of the Group of 77 and China, by Ambassador Friday on behalf of the Alliance of Small Island States, by the representative of Algeria on behalf of the Arab Group and by the representative of Cameroon on behalf of the African Group.

Coming from a small island developing country in the Indian Ocean region, we know more than anyone about the dangers of climate change. In our country, there is a volcano called Karthala, which used to become active once every 10 years. It now becomes active every year, carrying away land, animals and the rest and causing much damage.

Paradoxically, on the other islands, the few rivers that were there have dried up, leaving nature, men and animals completely forsaken. The sea, too, has been extremely destructive. Vulnerability studies have concluded that there is a threat to cash crops and the economy in general owing to the deep intrusion of the sea.

That is why, faithful to the spirit of Bali, we call for the global sharing of technological knowledge, of early warning systems, of financing for prevention and, of course, of disaster management know-how.

In the light of such experiences, our country, which had not earlier acceded to the Kyoto Protocol, took the decision to ratify it on 16 January of this year.

Furthermore, my country, together with those of the Indian Ocean Commission, supports in principle the establishment of a United Nations agency for the environment that would be modelled on the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP). It would have an updated and strengthened mandate, receive stable financial contributions and operate on an equal footing with the other specialized agencies of the United Nations system.

Unless we have genuine international solidarity today, then 50, 40, 30 or even 20 years from now certain countries, particularly certain islands, will only be fading memories for humankind because they will have disappeared, will have been wiped off the face of the Earth — which will mean that we, the international community, will have failed.

The Acting President: I now give the floor to Mr. Raymond O. Wolfe, Permanent Representative of Jamaica.

Mr. Wolfe (Jamaica): My delegation welcomes the opportunity to participate in this thematic debate on climate change. At the outset, let me say that Jamaica aligns itself with the statements delivered by the representatives of Antigua and Barbuda on behalf of the Group of 77 and China, of Grenada on behalf of the Alliance of Small Island States (AOSIS) and, of course, of Barbados on behalf of the Caribbean Community (CARICOM). We also welcome the statements delivered by Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon and Mayor Michael Bloomberg, which confirm the need for urgent and decisive action on climate change.

Earlier reports have now become indisputable, and the evidence irrefutable. Climate change is a fact that we cannot continue to deny, and together we must act, as failure to do so will ultimately result in our demise. Last year, the United Nations Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) confirmed that climate change is likely to significantly undermine the efforts of developing countries in their pursuit of sustainable development and the achievement of global development benchmarks such as the Millennium Development Goals.

The vast majority of us agree that climate change poses a clear and present danger to the development prospects and the territorial existence of small island developing States such as Jamaica. The adverse effects of climate change with which we continue to grapple, including beach erosion and sea-level rise, and the alarming frequency and intensity of severe weather patterns and events, such as hurricanes and floods, have caused us to shift focus from our development agenda to relief, reconstruction and rehabilitation.

During the past three years alone, Jamaica and other CARICOM countries have been hit by five major hurricanes. These have resulted in significant loss of life and livelihood, damage to property and infrastructure, disruption of the major productive sectors such as agriculture and tourism, and the evacuation and relocation of several affected communities.

The implementation of appropriate adaptation strategies has now become crucial, as we seek to confront some of the challenges posed by climate

change. To this end, Jamaica has launched a programme to increase the use of renewable energy to 10 per cent of our total energy use by 2010 as part of the effort to reduce our total dependence on fossil fuels for energy production.

I am pleased to note that during the recently concluded meeting in Bali, Jamaica was appointed to the Board of the Adaptation Fund. Let me hasten to add that Jamaica is also one of 10 countries in which a community-based adaptation project is soon to be implemented under the Global Environment Facility Small Grants Programme to reduce vulnerability and enhance the capacity of selected communities to adapt to climate change.

Jamaica has also embarked on an ambitious programme aimed at achieving developed country status by the year 2030. The Government firmly believes that the development, diffusion and transfer of clean, less carbon-intensive technologies, along with the building of institutional and human capacities, will be critical to accomplishing this process.

The Jamaican delegation fully supports calls made in other quarters for annex I parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) to significantly reduce their greenhouse gas emissions in keeping with the long-standing principle of common but differentiated responsibilities and respective capabilities. We support the urgent pursuit of a second commitment period whereby annex I parties would undertake significant reductions in such emissions. We are of the view that negotiations to this end must be concluded by the fifteenth session of the Conference of the Parties, to be held in Copenhagen in 2009, thus ensuring that there are no gaps between the end of the first commitment period and the commencement of the second.

While the Bali Action Plan is not as time-bound and goal-specific as some of us had hoped, it sets in motion a process to deliver a post-2012 agreement and outlines an international strategy aimed at, inter alia, developing a shared vision for a long-term global action to reduce emissions and at enhancing action on adaptation and on technology, including an agreement to jump-start a strategic programme to shore up investments for the transfer of both mitigation and adaptation technologies to developing countries.

The potential for technologies to play key roles in domestic and global climate change monitoring,

mitigation and adaptation strategies is enormous. Therefore, the transfer of climate-friendly technologies and the provision of new and additional financial resources should be given high priority on the international agenda, account being taken of the needs of developing countries.

We take note of the report of the Secretary-General entitled "Overview of United Nations activities in relation to climate change" (A/62/644), which shows that the various agencies and programmes of the United Nations, in collaboration with Member States at the national and global levels, have taken a collaborative approach in order to address this multidimensional challenge. Several years ago, upon testing a new breed of horses in Canada, researchers found that one horse could pull an eight-ton load. When they teamed two horses together, they expected the horses to pull 16 or 18 tons. To their overwhelming surprise, however, the horses pulled a 30-ton load. This simple illustration of synergism drives home the point that, by working together in a broad global alliance, we can confront and overcome our greatest challenges.

My delegation therefore sincerely hopes that this thematic debate and other such discussions in similar deliberative forums will serve to add political impetus to the existing framework for addressing climate change within the context of the UNFCCC and that there will be no divergence into a parallel process. Finally, it is also my delegation's hope that it will spur the international community to urgent and concrete action now. We owe it to ourselves, but more so to future generations.

The Acting President: I now call on Mr. Jaime Hermida Castillo, Deputy Permanent Representative of Nicaragua.

Mr. Hermida Castillo (Nicaragua) (*spoke in Spanish*): At the outset, Nicaragua fully aligns itself with the statement made by the representative of Antigua and Barbuda on behalf of the Group of 77 and China.

In the face of the most important challenge that humanity has ever faced, a clamour has arisen from entire peoples whose survival is at stake, demanding an end to the suffering of Mother Earth. That suffering is due to an economic model whose unsustainable and irrational levels of consumption have brought the planet to the brink of collapse. Some industrialized countries are not even attempting to shoulder their

international responsibilities and commitments to reduce greenhouse gas emissions.

In seeking to define a future course of action, it is crucial that we begin by reaffirming that the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change and the Kyoto Protocol remain the frameworks for all future commitments. It is surprising that the report of the Secretary-General (A/62/644) itself suggests that we are negotiating on a new treaty. We reaffirm here that what is being negotiated is new reduction targets for the second and subsequent commitment periods of the Kyoto Protocol. We must ensure that the existing commitments set out in the Convention and the Protocol are met without conditions or contrivances, and we must strive to resolve implementation problems where they exist. The principle of common but differentiated responsibilities continues to guide our collective action. The developed countries continue to have the obligation to significantly reduce their emissions.

For our developing countries, the fight against climate change is a struggle to find a model of sustainable development that will ensure our survival. Once again, that requires that the industrialized countries meet their obligation under the Protocol and the Convention to provide access to new financing modalities for the transfer of technology. From the standpoint of both mitigation and adaptation, technology is the key to any viable sustainable development policy and thus to the fight against climate change.

However, despite the promises and commitments made under the Convention, the Kyoto Protocol and the well-known Monterrey Consensus, financing for development remains a rhetorical exercise. There have been many commitments, pledges and promises, but, above all, there has been much deception. Nicaragua appeals to the developed countries to meet their obligations without any conditions, to display their much-vaunted leadership and to make available the necessary financial resources.

The hundreds of millions of dollars that will be required over the next four decades for adaptation and mitigation must be mobilized. In that connection, it has become imperative that mitigation and adaptation efforts be balanced; precious human lives depend on this. That is why my delegation finds it incomprehensible that, in the face of such urgency, the

Adaptation Fund is being financed with only 2 per cent of what the clean development mechanism receives. In other words, not only is the Fund being financed through a mechanism that enables developed countries to shirk their obligation to reduce emissions, but those financial resources are also coming from developing countries and being rechannelled towards other developing countries.

In addition, my delegation would like to stress that the best way to ensure that we fail in our collective efforts to combat climate change would be to establish, as some have suggested, a sort of climate clause in trade relations, amounting to, another — not even veiled — form of protectionism on the part of the industrialized nations. Not only would that violate the rules of the World Trade Organization, but we, the developing countries, would not accept it. It would be the last straw if the countries of the North should not only fail to meet their emissions reductions obligations but should also try to impose unilateral, illegal and unjust measures on developing countries.

As we have already stated, the main aspects of a collective response to climate change are based on drastic emissions reductions and on technology and its transfer. Therefore, the reconsideration of intellectual-property rights must be addressed in a positive manner so that developing countries can utilize environmentally sustainable technologies as soon as possible. Indeed, given the urgency of the situation, declaring such technologies to be for public use and applying the pharmaceutical model of generic-medicine production are possibilities that should be studied very seriously.

While it is true that the developing countries are not under any binding obligation to reduce emissions, we have the moral duty to make the response to climate change a priority in our development policies and programmes. For countries such as Nicaragua, which have been beset by climatic disasters for decades, adapting to and mitigating climate change amount to fighting for the survival of a large part of our nation. That is why the Nicaraguan authorities will continue to formulate development policies based on renewable energy, such as geothermal energy, using the many volcanoes in Nicaragua; solar and wind energy; hydroelectric power; and the use of biomass. In addition, they have recently begun to study the possibility of using the long ocean coastlines to develop tidal and wave energy.

Those are the challenges. We must teach future generations that they must act in a responsible manner. Once again, we must place at the heart of our development women and men living in symbiosis with Mother Earth. Only thus will we be able to overcome the adversity that we are collectively facing, transforming indifference into responsibility. In other words, we must be able to live in harmony with this beautiful and generous planet so full of life.

The Acting President: I now call on Mr. Nebojša Kaludjerović, Permanent Representative of Montenegro.

Mr. Kaludjerović (Montenegro): At the outset, let me congratulate the President of the General Assembly, Mr. Kerim, on organizing this relevant and timely meeting. Montenegro fully aligned itself with the statement made by the Minister of the Environment and Spatial Planning of Slovenia on behalf of the European Union. I would now like to focus on the Montenegrin perspective in addressing the challenges of climate change in the light of this thematic debate.

Scientific data, as well as the fourth assessment report of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change, have clearly demonstrated the importance of climate change and illustrated the responsibility to react in a timely and adequate manner to the challenge. As a comprehensive response, both developed and developing countries have to conduct appropriate activities in order to reduce their greenhouse gas emissions, following the principle of common but differentiated responsibilities.

Since regaining its independence, Montenegro has invested significant effort in the area of environmentally sound social and economic development. The country is located in southern Europe, a region that could be considerably affected by climate change, according to the scientists. The negative effects can therefore hamper the economic and social development of the country, as well as inhibit our prospects for tourism and long-term sustainable development.

After resolving the issue of our status in the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) and ratifying the Kyoto Protocol, my country, in partnership with the Global Environment Facility (GEF), has intensified its activities related to the drafting of the first national communication in the context of the implementation of

the Convention. We have recently conducted activities towards the establishment of the designated national authority for Clean Development Mechanism (CDM) projects, and have prepared a number of feasibility studies for the implementation of CDM projects in the fields of energy, agriculture and transportation.

We strongly believe that partnerships among stakeholders to deal with climate change in the areas of mitigation, adaptation, financing and technology are of the utmost importance. The private sector, civil society, media, parliaments, the scientific community and United Nations systems collectively have the responsibility to address the climate change challenge.

We believe that broader cooperation between the Member States and the United Nations agencies, funds and programmes can foster national, regional and global efforts towards an effective and efficient response. The United Nations has unique know-how and expertise to assist Member States in developing integrated policies on mitigating and adapting to climate change and can be a unique catalyst for the dissemination of good practices globally. The United Nations system can strengthen effective private sector engagement and can support the development of national capacities to access and utilize the resources needed to implement an appropriate mix of policy instruments for achieving sustainable growth and development.

Based on the fact that Montenegro is defined by its Constitution as an ecological State, we have recently adopted several strategic documents — the National Strategy for Sustainable Development, the Energy Development Strategy of Montenegro by 2025, the Economic Reforms Agenda, the National Programme for the European Union Integration of Montenegro — all aimed at creating a favourable investment climate, building strong institutions, and defining proper incentives for a long-term climate-friendly development path.

In that sense, however, several issues pose a challenge. Determining the effects of global warming on the overall climate of the territory of Montenegro is among them. The ability to respond to climate change impacts will depend upon the ability to access the economic resources, technology, information, skills and infrastructure appropriate for the specific context of the country. Partnerships among national and

international institutions are of particular importance for scientific, technical and human capacity-building.

Following the Bali Road Map and in accordance with the findings of the high-level meeting held in September 2007, Montenegro will host a regional conference on climate change in the second half of this year. The conference will be aimed at, among other goals, fostering the implementation of CDM mechanisms in the Mediterranean region and promoting the willingness of national authorities to realize CDM projects in different areas. Montenegro believes that, for developing countries, the CDM is the key instrument for confronting the challenges of climate change. We therefore believe that the Adaptation Fund, established recently in Bali to finance developing countries in drafting and implementing their climate change adaptation strategies, and its appropriate connection with other GEF areas of action can provide additional momentum in creating more efficient implementation of the Kyoto Protocol.

The strategic objective of the United Nations family in dealing with climate change is multifold. It is a common responsibility of the international community to respond urgently to that issue, and Montenegro is willing to contribute to the efforts of the United Nations system and build partnerships to successfully address the climate change challenge.

The Acting President: I now give the floor to the representative of Sweden.

Mr. Fries (Sweden): Sweden fully aligns itself with the statement delivered yesterday by the representative of Slovenia on behalf of the European Union.

Climate change is a top priority of the Swedish Government. My country has long made substantial efforts to reduce the emissions of greenhouse gases and to assist developing countries to cope with climate change.

The message delivered in the fourth assessment report of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change is simple and precise. Global emissions of greenhouse gases have to be reduced by 50 to 85 per cent by 2050. Developed countries would have to reduce their emissions by 25 to 40 per cent by 2020. Actions have to be taken now. That is a challenge in

itself, and yet it is only half of the equation. The other half is that climate change is already upon us.

These are some important starting points for the new round of negotiations under the Bali Action Plan leading up to a comprehensive post-2012 agreement for fighting climate change. Allow me to emphasize three issues that the United Nations and decision makers at all levels may wish to consider as we prepare ourselves for the Copenhagen agreement in less than two years' time.

First, it is possible to combine reductions of greenhouse gas emissions with economic growth. The latest figures for Swedish greenhouse gas emissions show a reduction of 8.7 per cent in 2006 compared to 1990. At the same time, the Swedish gross national product has increased by 44 per cent. The reasons for that achievement are several. One important measure is the Swedish carbon dioxide tax that was introduced in 1990. Energy efficiency and savings and the use of renewables have further contributed.

It is our strong belief that it is necessary to put a price on carbon, and the wider the group involved in carbon trading, the more cost-efficient the emission reductions. The diverse expertise of the United Nations system should be drawn upon to promote the international sharing of good practice, the building of domestic capacity for policy formulation and implementation, and the development of equitable international sector-specific standards.

Secondly, climate change must be addressed globally in the context of the United Nations Millennium Development Goals. Efficient actions to adapt to climate change and investments in sustainable energy systems have to be undertaken. All development and poverty reduction strategies would have to take climate change into account.

The Swedish Government has established an international commission on "climate-proofing" development assistance. It is an attempt to meet our commitments to help developing countries to work preventively and to cope with the consequences of climate change. Furthermore, it is intended to contribute to United Nations system-wide efforts. The commission constitutes a forum in which a group of prominent experts and policymakers can discuss freely and identify a direction on how to design official development assistance that takes climate change and disaster risk reduction into account. But it will also

come up with concrete proposals on how to climate-proof development assistance by introducing risk reduction and adaptation to climate change into the development and poverty reduction plans of poor countries.

The commission will focus on four areas in particular. One is the role and importance of ecosystems in disaster prevention. Another focus will be on urban slum areas. It will also look into slow-onset disasters, such as prolonged droughts and chronic instability stemming from water scarcity. Last but not least, the commission will focus on risk management mechanisms in the insurance industry. That is quite a new area in which some interesting initiatives are under way.

The scale and nature of climate change may sometimes imply a dominant scientific approach to the problem. However, I believe that the human dimension must always be in focus. That will also be reflected in the commission's work. There will be a clear poverty and rights perspective, and the dimension of gender equality shall be explored.

The commission will meet for the first time in Stockholm the day after tomorrow. It will engage actively in relevant processes, such as the climate negotiations and the work carried out by, for instance, the United Nations, the World Bank and the European Union. A final report will be presented in spring 2009. The intention is for the results to be reflected in relevant processes and contribute to a post-2012 agreement in Copenhagen.

The third and final issue that I wish to stress is that climate change calls for an integrated approach to environment, development and security. Climate change is already affecting human security and aggravating conditions in many parts of the world relating to fresh water availability, soil erosion, energy supply, crops and fish stocks. Millions of people could become climate change refugees, thus creating serious migration problems in many areas. Weak Governments and countries in regions particularly affected by climate change would be exposed to risks of instability and unrest. On the other hand, the shared management of crucial natural resources like water could contribute to stability and peace. We call on relevant parts of the United Nations system to collectively address those challenges in the nexus between sustainable development and security.

The United Nations system has a critical role to play in dealing with climate change effectively. No doubt the basic elements of the Bali Action Plan set the course for any future strategy to cope with climate change. We welcome the Secretary-General's proposal to strengthen mechanisms for collaboration on the basis of those common goals and objectives. Existing structures should be used to get the work done.

Mitigation and adaptation have to be addressed jointly, even if strategies and actions to deal with them at the country level may differ. At the end of the day, future progress depends more than anything on the outcome of the negotiations within the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change and its Kyoto Protocol. An effective and equitable post-2012 agreement on climate change must therefore be the foremost priority over the next two years for the United Nations system.

The Acting President: I now give the floor to Mr. Ahmed Addulrahman Al-Jarman, Permanent Representative of the United Arab Emirates.

Mr. Al-Jarman (United Arab Emirates) (*spoke in Arabic*): We have carefully read the report of the Secretary-General, which presents a broad overview of how the United Nations would contribute to addressing the climate change problem that threatens the safety and security of people all around the world.

In commending the efforts of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change to identify the best collective solutions for dealing with the global crisis, we reaffirm that the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) and the Kyoto Protocol are the most appropriate frameworks within which we can address the crisis on the basis of common but differentiated responsibilities and capabilities.

In that connection, my delegation associates itself with the statements made by the representative of Antigua and Barbuda on behalf of the Group of 77 and China and by the representative of Algeria on behalf of the Arab Group.

The United Arab Emirates appreciates the magnitude and seriousness of the challenges emerging from climate change and the threat it poses to the security and stability of peoples in many countries, especially the developing countries. Convinced that addressing those challenges requires a global

partnership and effective cooperation among developed and developing countries, my country has willingly joined all regional and international conventions and protocols on the environment and sustainable development. We support the Road Map and Action Plan adopted at Bali in December 2007, which mainly call for negotiations among States parties, to be completed by 2009, leading to a convention on emissions reduction that can enter into force by the end of 2012. We hope that those negotiations will agree on a comprehensive post-Kyoto convention on emissions reduction that does not negatively impact the economies and development processes of the developing countries in general, and in particular the oil-producing and exporting countries, among which is the United Arab Emirates, whose economies depend primarily on fossil fuels.

The United Arab Emirates is one of the big oil-producing countries. Eager to ensure a continuous flow of energy to the world markets, my country continues to step up its efforts and initiatives in sponsoring and supporting international activities to find alternative sources of clean, safe and affordable energy and to deal effectively with the climate change crisis. Last month, we hosted the World Future Energy Summit with the participation of Government representatives, scientists, experts, researchers and specialists in environment and energy.

At the summit, the United Arab Emirates announced the launch of one of the largest-ever sustainable development programmes, with an initial investment of \$15 billion in projects targeting solar, hydrogen and wind power and carbon reduction and management. It also announced the launch of the Zayed Future Energy Prize, awarding \$2.2 million annually to honour individuals and organizations for their excellence in the innovation, development and implementation of sustainable energy solutions. Last Friday, we launched Masdar City, the world's only zero-carbon, zero-waste, zero-car city, expected to be completed in 2016 with a population of 50,000. My country has also supported and contributed \$150 million to the fund established by Saudi Arabia at the summit of the Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries last November, with a \$750-million budget for research on the relationship between oil, the environment and climate change.

These initiatives and activities represent one of the many aspects of our national comprehensive

strategy to protect the environment and deal with climate change without undermining development programmes in our country. A number of effective measures have been implemented in the areas of renewable energy, air pollution, combating desertification, increasing green areas and clean energy. We have enforced zero-emission policies in all activities related to the oil industries and mainstreamed the use of unleaded fuel in all transportation sectors. These efforts culminated in 2006 in the launching of the Masdar Initiative, which aims to establish a world centre for developing future solutions in sustainable energy through an integrated group of methods and means, including a network of research institutes specialized in energy and the maintenance of stability in world energy markets.

Last April, the United Arab Emirates announced adoption of a strategy that aims at achieving sustainable development in all sectors within the framework of general environmental standards in the country.

In conclusion, we renew our support for the role of the United Nations in meeting the challenges posed by climate change. We stress that it is necessary for the developed countries to shoulder their responsibilities towards this global crisis and to commit themselves during the coming negotiations to implement the recommendations set out in international conferences and conventions related to the environment and sustainable development, in particular, the UNFCCC and its Optional Protocol. We also call for providing the necessary support for developing countries and facilitating their access to new technologies so as to enhance their abilities to adapt, apply mitigation measures, and obtain clean and sustainable energy resources, all of which require that the funds and mechanisms established by the Kyoto Protocol operate in a transparent and just manner.

The United Arab Emirates will continue to cooperate with the international community in its collective efforts to reach proper solutions, nationally and internationally, for dealing with the negative impact of climate change.

The Acting President: I now give the floor to Ms. Enkhtsetseg Ochir, Permanent Representative of Mongolia.

Ms. Ochir (Mongolia): At the outset, my delegation wishes to commend the important and

timely initiative of the President of the General Assembly, Mr. Kerim, to convene this thematic debate on harnessing the work of the United Nations to address climate change. I wish to also thank the Secretary-General, Mr. Ban Ki-moon, for his comprehensive report on the overview of the United Nations activities related to climate change (A/62/644).

Over the last three days, we have been actively engaged in exchanging views and ideas on the necessity of taking urgent action, on the importance of forging partnerships and alliances and on how best to streamline the comparative advantages of various United Nations entities in our common battle against the formidable challenges of climate change. It is true that we, the Member States — large and small, affluent and poor — all face a host of different challenges in our home countries and in our respective regions. Yet when it comes to climate change, we ought to rise above all our differences and put the single most important issue — survival of the human family living in a shared global village — at the top of the political agenda.

There is ample evidence, scientific and other, that climate change is a reality. Our climate is becoming less stable, more volatile and warmer. The global mean temperature is rising; it increased by 0.7 degrees Celsius in the twentieth century and continues its upward trend. Seasons are arriving at different times, and the normal variations are increasing. Glaciers are receding, sea levels are rising. Extreme weather events are becoming more frequent and more severe. Droughts, floods and heat waves are already contributing to crop failures, conflicts and a steadily increasing toll of human suffering.

Yet this dangerous trend is an avoidable catastrophe, as the world lacks neither the financial resources nor the technological capabilities to act. What is required is the political will to cooperate. In other words, climate change calls for a change in our mindset, doing away with the “business as usual” mentality. Now is the time to act. Now is the time to deliver on the commitments made under the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) and its Kyoto Protocol. Now is the time to display the genuine political will necessary for building international consensus in favour of stronger post-2012 action, through Poznan and on to Copenhagen.

It is widely recognized that climate change poses a grave threat to sustainable development. There is also ample evidence that the poor bear the brunt of climate change today. Widespread poverty, underdeveloped infrastructure and severe financial constraints all add to the low capacity of developing countries, particularly the most vulnerable ones, to adapt to the devastating effects of climate change, despite their having contributed the least to causing the problem in the first place. Thus, there is an ongoing need to steadfastly adhere to the Rio principles, in particular the principle of common but differentiated responsibilities.

Furthermore, ensuring progress towards developing countries’ sustainable development goals — in particular the internationally agreed development goals, including the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) — requires full and immediate implementation of the commitments made under the UNFCCC and the Kyoto Protocol, especially those on financing for adaptation, technology transfer and capacity-building.

Even if a comprehensive framework for stabilizing greenhouse gas concentrations were adopted tomorrow, a global strategy for adaptation would still be essential, as the world today is already engulfed in further warming because of inertia and the delay between mitigation efforts and their results. An essential part of an integrated global adaptation strategy is a focus on increased financing and assistance in building the capacity of developing countries. Here, both the financial mechanism of the Convention and the Kyoto Protocol’s Adaptation Fund ought to be substantially scaled up. The impact of increased climate variability on ecosystems and deforestation, desertification, drought and food insecurity warrant high priority.

Mongolia, for one, is keen to develop its national strategy to adapt to climate change, along with the in-depth research on vulnerability and risk assessment, in collaboration with relevant bilateral and multilateral development partners. Over the last 60 years, the mean temperature in Mongolia has risen by almost 2 degrees Celsius. Some 85 per cent of Mongolia’s land surface has been degraded. Desertification is rampant. Ever more frequent occurrences of natural disasters like droughts and dzuds have a severe impact on our economy.

To address the challenges posed by climate change, Mongolia launched its National Action Programme on Climate Change back in 2001, in accordance with the principles of the Convention and the Kyoto Protocol, and has endeavoured to integrate climate change concerns into its national development strategies, including the MDGs-based National Development Strategy up to the year 2021, which was recently approved by the parliament.

In conclusion, may I reiterate my delegation's full concurrence that in order to effectively address climate change we need to forge effective partnerships with all stakeholders. Such a partnership has to be built at local, national, regional and international levels. In that regard, I am pleased to inform this body that Mongolia has offered to host a North-East Asian summit on climate change later this year in Ulaanbaatar. We do hope that such a high-level event will help forge a regional partnership on climate change, thus contributing to the larger global efforts.

The Acting President: I now give the floor to Mr. Armen Martirosyan, Permanent Representative of Armenia.

Mr. Martirosyan (Armenia): For many years, climate change was a remote topic, a disputable issue that, even if somewhat alarming, was not perceived to be a vitally threatening problem. Nowadays the situation has changed and noticeable transformations in the global climate have translated into a critical issue that commands immediate attention and reaction. An awareness-raising campaign that is being conducted with the active participation of the United Nations leadership, former and present political leaders, as well as various celebrities, has yielded results. It has become clear that real threat-adequate and urgent measures are required.

The Republic of Armenia is a party-signatory of the Kyoto Protocol and as such it has its share of responsibilities. Since ratifying the Convention in May 1993, Armenia has undertaken a number of steps to contribute to international efforts to mitigate the possible dire consequences of the process.

In the framework of the United Nations Development Programme-sponsored project "Armenia — country study of climate change", a climate change information centre has been functioning in Armenia since 1997 with the main goal of strengthening the Information Centre of the Armenian

Ministry of Environmental Protection. The Information Centre, with its state-of-the-art equipment, accumulates and updates information on climate change issues. The implementation of the project is directed at identifying and creating connections to both national and international sources of information, which should lead to knowledge-sharing and the prevention of duplicated efforts.

Since the ratification of the Convention, Armenian delegations have participated in 13 climate-related conferences and worked at the sessions of the permanent auxiliary bodies of the Convention. Back in 2004, the Republic of Armenia adopted a plan of action to fulfil its obligations stemming from the Convention. For the fourth Conference, Armenia developed and presented to the member States its first national report regarding climate change.

It has been estimated that, as a result of global climate changes in the coming 90 years, the average air temperature in Armenia will rise by 1.7 degrees Celsius and that precipitation on the territory of Armenia will decrease by about 10 per cent. Those developments would adversely affect not only the climate-dependent sectors, but also the entire economy of our country. The consequences may be even worse. Under the projected change of climatic characteristics, efficient cultivation in Armenia may be reduced by 8 to 14 per cent. That will intensify desertification, which by now has become a burning issue. That data proves that Armenia is taking climate changes very seriously and is committed to working as hard as necessary at the national and international levels to mitigate the negative processes.

Armenia, as a developing country, is not included in annex I of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change and has no obligations for greenhouse gas emissions reduction. However, within the corresponding mechanisms for the implementation of the Convention and with adequate international assistance, Armenia is ready to voluntarily undertake obligations for their limitation.

On a more practical side, Armenia has also been undertaking a number of projects, one of which is a large-scale project related to energy efficiency in urban heating and hot water supply systems. The project is based on a strategy developed in the first national report and aimed at the reduction of greenhouse gas emissions. In addition, Armenia is implementing an

energy master plan developed up to 2010, and its emissions limitation strategy is based on the principle provisions of the master plan.

As a member of the international community and of this Organization, Armenia is ready to make its contribution to the global efforts to make our planet Earth a better and a safer place to live for generations to come.

The Acting President: I give the floor to the representative of Ukraine.

Mr. Kryzhanivskyi (Ukraine): At the outset, my delegation would like to welcome the initiative of convening this important and timely debate. During the high-level event on climate change on 24 September and the Bali Conference in December 2007, world leaders agreed to move forward in very practical terms. We in New York, within the General Assembly, should work tirelessly to maintain and leverage the momentum reached in 2007 in tackling climate change, and to make tangible progress in negotiations this year.

We are grateful to Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon for keeping climate change at the top of his agenda and for the preparation of his very comprehensive and informative report on United Nations activities in relation to climate change (A/62/644). That report, along with the fourth assessment report of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change, concludes that global warming is the result of human activities.

My delegation is convinced that the General Assembly is the appropriate forum to discuss climate change in a comprehensive way and to support the ongoing negotiations under the auspices of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change. We would like to propose holding those discussions on a regular basis within the General Assembly and introducing a separate agenda item, which would allow discussion and action to effectively tackle climate change. We are ready to work with all interested delegations on that matter. At the same time, it is necessary to ensure that the outcomes of these deliberations are projected to the regional, subregional and continental levels.

Building momentum against global warming is very important at the national level. In that area, Ukraine attaches great importance to the Kyoto Protocol. We act in accordance with the improved

practice of joint implementation and application of the Clean Development Mechanism. Almost three years ago, in 2005, the Government of Ukraine approved the national action plan and introduced an inventory of annual greenhouse gas emissions. Ukraine anticipates cutting greenhouse gas emissions up to 25 per cent by 2020.

My Government has fully acknowledged the link between climate change and sustainable energy. Efforts are under way to transform our currently carbon-based economy into a low-carbon economy on the basis of clean technologies, such as renewable energies, biofuels and energy efficiency. At the same time, meeting that challenge will require strengthened international cooperation in the area of energy efficiency and energy security. Countries with special needs, such as least developed countries, land-locked developing countries and small island developing States, should also receive the necessary assistance and support.

Turning to the issue of the post-2012 emissions regime, we think it should be flexible and diverse in nature, taking due account of the specific needs and circumstances of the States parties. Ukraine would like to stress the importance of striking a balance between the first and second commitment periods. It is absolutely essential that while we are negotiating a future climate change agreement, including its quantitative emissions targets and a time frame for their achievement, we be guided by the basic principles enshrined in the UNFCCC: equity, common but differentiated responsibilities, respective capabilities, cost-effectiveness and sustainable development.

Joint international and concerted action will not be possible unless we build an appropriate architecture and create a relevant institutional basis. Among other measures, it is important that we consider setting up an international technology transfer mechanism with a view to cutting greenhouse gas emissions. Donor and recipient countries alike should actively engage in such a partnership initiative. Another topic is adaptation, which should be included in the policy decisions of Governments, the private sector, international agencies and other actors.

A long time ago, Ukraine called for the creation of an overarching organization mandated to address environmental issues in a comprehensive manner. Such an institution should have universal membership and

multiple national representation. It should be a mechanism to promote ecological responsibility and a system for international environmental security. Without such a responsible and caring approach, we will simply fail to meet the expectations of our nations.

The Acting President: I now call on the Permanent Representative of Kenya, Mr. Zachary Muburi-Muita.

Mr. Muburi-Muita (Kenya): I take this opportunity to thank Mr. Srgjan Kerim, President of the General Assembly, for convening this thematic debate on the subject "Addressing climate change: the United Nations and the world at work".

Kenya associates itself with the statements delivered by the representative of Antigua and Barbuda on behalf of the Group of 77 and China at the 80th meeting and by the representative of Cameroon on behalf of the African Group at the 81st meeting.

We wish to express our appreciation to the President of the General Assembly for the informative background paper on key issues and to the Secretary-General for his report, providing an overview of the activities undertaken by the United Nations in relation to climate change (A/62/644).

My delegation underscores the fact that climate change is one of the main challenges facing humanity in the twenty-first century. It is a global issue that requires international collective and collaborative action. Notwithstanding, I wish to point out that there exists a framework for addressing climate change issues within the United Nations. The United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) and its affiliate bodies and institutions are ably spearheading the efforts to address climate change. Hence, care needs to be taken to avoid establishing parallel processes on issues related to climate change.

In addition, the focus on climate change should not undermine efforts to tackle other issues important to developing countries, such as ensuring sustained economic growth, financing for development, implementation of the Millennium Development Goals and poverty eradication. For Kenya and many other developing countries, those are among the priority concerns.

Climate change is already inflicting serious damage on key economic sectors in Kenya. Kenyans have recently witnessed increased floods, frequent

devastating droughts, reduced agricultural productivity and increased prevalence of malaria, among other climate-induced phenomena. Our road infrastructure has yet to recover from the El Niño rains. Those extreme events are frustrating efforts to improve the living standards of the population. Overall, the projected impact of unmitigated climate change in Kenya will likely have major implications for livelihoods, health, water resources, agricultural productivity, food security, ecosystems and tourism.

The Fourth Assessment Report of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change is very clear regarding the causes of climate change and the potential environmental hazards likely to affect the global community in the near future, as well as the short window of opportunity available for addressing this issue. We owe it to future generations to act now if we are to avoid the catastrophes predicted in the report. We therefore need to translate decisions reached at various meetings into practical strategies and actions on the ground.

In that regard, all stakeholders should commit themselves to climate change mitigation and adaptation activities in line with the principles of common but differentiated responsibilities and respective capabilities. In particular, annex II parties should fully embrace their responsibilities under the Convention to mitigate climate change and to commit more financial and technological resources to support adaptation, mitigation and capacity-building activities in developing countries. We believe that the question of climate change should not be confined to the domain of abstract international discourse and negotiations, but must be brought down to finding simple, common-sense solutions and further responding to real threats facing millions of people all over the world.

My country has taken a pragmatic approach by initiating supportive policy and legislative frameworks as well as institutional reforms to rejuvenate and support the sustainable management of our natural resources, including forests and water resources. Particular focus is being given to increasing forest cover in the country in order to improve hydrological capacity. Forests also serve as important carbon sinks and help to provide livelihood support to adjacent communities. We are encouraged by international efforts through the climate change regime to support our efforts to reduce emissions caused by deforestation and forest degradation. In that regard, we recognize the

need for institutional and human capacity support with a view to engaging in and leading national efforts to address climate change issues in developing countries.

Kenya recognizes the important role that the United Nations system can play in assisting countries, particularly developing countries, in their efforts to address climate change. The report by the Secretary-General on United Nations activities related to climate change highlights a number of ongoing and potential avenues through which the United Nations can support efforts to effectively tackle climate change.

Overall, and in addition to those areas highlighted in the report, we believe that the United Nations can also assist Member countries in the following ways: building capacity for adaptation and mitigation, particularly in developing countries; promoting the creation of an environment conducive to technology development and transfer; creating awareness about issues related to climate change; ensuring political will, support and commitment on the part of leaders; promoting resource mobilization; promoting the sharing of best practices and experience among countries and stakeholders; and spearheading the establishment of internationally binding norms and standards in the area of climate change. While we recognize that the United Nations has the network and the will to undertake a wide range of activities in this area, it is important to make our proposals with due attention to the existing technical, financial and human capacities within the United Nations system.

In conclusion, let me state that it is noteworthy that, since climate change is a global challenge cutting across all sectors of society, no one stakeholder can adequately address its effects single-handedly. It therefore requires concerted, collective action at the local, national and international levels. Individuals, civil society and the business community alike must work together to meaningfully address climate change. That is why partnerships at all levels are paramount in endeavours to address this issue. We trust that the United Nations system, with its multidimensional and complex networks, has what it takes to initiate, develop and promote partnerships in the area of climate change.

As I depart, my delegation once again reiterates the importance of this debate, which provides an opportunity for an exchange of views among Member States and partners on climate change. We believe this will not only reinvigorate the attention and focus of the

United Nations, but will also galvanize international efforts to address climate change.

The Acting President: I now give the floor to Mr. Ali'ioaiga Elisaia, Permanent Representative of Samoa.

Mr. Elisaia (Samoa): Time and tide wait for no man. Likewise, climate change is impervious to the statements delivered during this thematic debate if our rhetoric is not translated into true commitment and action.

Climate change has been described in many ways. Some have called it the most important challenge facing humankind in the twenty-first century. Some believe it is a security risk of far greater proportions than any military risks the world has experienced. For others, climate change spells doom and the inevitable extinction of their islands from the face of the earth. A few have warned that climate change, if unabated, could result in a redrawing of national boundaries and ultimately a world with a new look.

Call it what you like. Give it a label that best suits your country's conviction. Or try a new description, if you prefer. Whatever you choose, one thing is absolutely certain. As surely as the sun rises in the east and sets in the west, climate change is real. It has happened, it is happening and will continue to happen.

Climate change knows no boundaries and respects no national sovereignty. As inhabitants of this world, we are all affected by it in varying degrees. No country is exempt from the wrath of climate change, regardless of whether or not it contributed to its root causes. The origins of climate change have been conclusively proven, both through real-life experiences and by science. These causes have been internationally accepted and are uncontested.

Solutions to avert this catastrophe have been continually elaborated and agreed upon. The lack of solutions to reverse the negative impacts of climate change is not the culprit, but rather the reluctance by some countries to be part of a unified global solution.

Yesterday, at the 81st meeting, the Permanent Representative of Grenada articulated the challenges facing the membership of the Alliance of Small Island States. The statement by Tonga on behalf of the Pacific Small Island Developing States reiterated the same

vulnerabilities our islands have been and are continuously exposed to on a daily basis. Regional initiatives in the Pacific to demonstrate our determination to be part of the solution by trying to put our house in order first were highlighted yesterday by Tonga's Permanent Representative and by some of my Pacific island colleagues.

Climate change, to be addressed successfully, requires a global solution. The United Nations remains best suited for that purpose.

The unanimous approval of the Bali Plan of Action, the launching of the Adaptation Fund and the ratification by Australia of the Kyoto Protocol underscore vividly that "where there's a will, there's a way".

Let me add a word of caution. There will always be sceptics bent on ensuring that the agreed time frame of the Bali Road Map will not be met. Too much is at stake for the global good to allow such detractors to frustrate our collective will.

The United Nations has the convening power to ensure that the issue of climate change is not allowed to slip from the world's attention. This thematic debate is an excellent way to keep Members States in tune with and focused on the magnitude of the task ahead. A realistic and practical post-Kyoto protocol is in sight; it is within our grasp.

We all share the same basic needs and aspirations. It is immoral for some to deny others what is rightfully their due because of the helplessness of those others due to consequences not of their making. The United Nations stands for equality and justice. We should turn to it for solutions that underpin such noble aims — solutions that are based not on our economic capacity and world stature, but rather on our genuine needs.

Our Organization should ensure that, climate change is mainstreamed into its multifaceted agenda, given its overarching reach and profound impact on every aspect of our social, economic and political life. Let climate change be the litmus test of how successfully United Nations agencies can deliver optimally as one, as we test the waters under the banner of system-wide coherence.

No single stakeholder has a monopoly on ways to address climate change. Everyone, the private and civil sectors included, has strategic contributions to make.

Ultimately, the success of any global solution will be assured only if it is led, driven and owned by Member States and supported in partnership with intergovernmental organizations.

Access to adequate resources to fund our mitigation and adaptation needs remains an important challenge that must be addressed if our modest efforts are to have a lasting impact. The decision in Bali to operationalize the Adaptation Fund is a positive step. We implore countries with the capacity and willingness to provide additional resources to boost the Adaptation Fund to do so. No assistance is too small or insignificant to matter.

Within our region, the launch in April this year of the GEF/Pacific Alliance for Sustainability, of the Global Environment Facility (GEF), is an innovative way for GEF resources to be expeditiously assessed and utilized for our islands' mitigation and adaptation needs. Italy's project to meet some of the renewable-energy requirements of our region, including proposed partnership arrangements with the Governments of Turkey, India, Iceland, Austria and Venezuela, is a manifestation of what partnerships within the United Nations context, or bilaterally, can contribute to addressing needs on the ground.

At the national level, our development partners, both old and new, including international lending institutions and various United Nations agencies, have been receptive to our call for support to meet our needs and priorities in the area of climate change. The decision of the United Nations Development Programme to set up a climate change clearing house for our region in Samoa in the near future adds strong impetus to our national aspiration to make Samoa the true climate change hub for the Pacific region.

While we agree with the cautionary note offered by some of our members that the proliferation of different assistance modalities should be avoided, it should be kept in mind that we all have different capacities and sometimes unique needs that more centralized approaches are ill suited to respond to. Practical approaches, sometimes outside the acceptable norms of doing things, can be quite effective and easily tailored to respond quickly to some of these challenges. Innovative partnerships should therefore be explored and encouraged where their overall contributions add value to our suite of responses to mitigate and adapt to climate change, benefit from technology transfer and

know-how and have adequate resources to respond effectively and efficiently to the challenges imposed by climate change.

There is much work to do between now and the Copenhagen climate change conference in 2009. Are we up to the task? Positively so, for we have a common goal, to succeed. For no man is an island to himself, and united we stand, divided we fall.

The Acting President: I now give the floor to Mr. John McNee, Permanent Representative of Canada.

Mr. McNee (Canada): First of all, let me take this opportunity to thank the President of the General Assembly for convening this important debate today. Let me also thank the Secretary-General for his continued commitment and initiative to raise awareness of, and promote action on, the challenge of global climate change. Climate change is, without a doubt, one of the most complex, dynamic and critical challenges of our time.

We must remember that climate change is not simply an issue of environmental protection. Climate change has deep roots in global economic and political activity. To be clear, addressing climate change also means addressing issues of development, health, natural disasters, demographic change and security. Effectively addressing climate change will also bring about benefits in these areas.

Internationally, the world has seen a remarkable focus on climate change over the past year, along with an increased sense of urgency regarding the need for action. The sum of national actions must drive a collective effort at the international level. Last December, the world assembled in Bali and rose to the challenge of charting a course towards the goal of a new international agreement on climate change which should be developed over the coming two years.

In Canada's assessment, the Bali Road Map allows for the development of a strong and comprehensive international framework. Canada is committed to working within the United Nations climate change process to this end.

One of the most important components of the Bali Road Map is that it recognizes that no country can effectively address climate change on its own and that all countries in a position to act must do so.

In this context, Canada is fully aware of the importance of having all major global emitters take on meaningful and binding emission reduction commitments in any future international agreement. Canada, of course, includes itself in this group. While none of us can predict the outcome of the negotiations in Copenhagen, Canada is fully committed to reducing its absolute emissions of greenhouse gases by 60 and 70 per cent by 2050.

While it is clear that all major emitters must act, Canada also understands that technology will play an integral role in addressing the challenge of climate change, in terms of both mitigation and adaptation. The Bali Action Plan itself has endorsed "[e]nhanced action on technology development and transfer to support action on mitigation and adaptation" as a required pillar of any future agreement.

Transition technologies are required now, both to reduce energy demand and to increase supply from the use of cleaner fossil fuels. Over the longer term, both existing and new clean technologies will need to be widely deployed in developing countries and especially in emerging economic Powers with rapidly rising emissions, where the majority of future emissions growth is expected to occur. Canada specifically recognizes the role that public-private partnerships can play in stimulating the development and deployment of these technologies while reducing their costs.

Reducing greenhouse gases through mitigation and the use of clean technology is only one part of the solution. While most attention is often paid to the discussions on mitigation, there is no question that discussions of the issue of adaptation to the impacts of climate change are of the utmost importance. Adaptation is a concern for all Member States, from the most exposed small island developing State, as the representative of Samoa has just argued so persuasively, to Canada's own vast and vulnerable Arctic.

Even if we could stop all greenhouse gas emissions today, the impacts of climate change would continue to preoccupy us for decades and perhaps centuries. These impacts will have severe implications for water resources, ecosystems, agriculture, forests, coastal zones, human health and security.

Ultimately, these impacts will vent their full severity on our citizens. It is the individuals who are often the most vulnerable and the least responsible for

the problems they are now forced to accept who will bear the brunt of the impacts. The importance of ensuring adequate adaptation measures is vital not only to a future agreement on climate change, but also to the safety, well-being and very livelihoods of billions of people.

With this in mind, Canada will continue to participate actively in the Nairobi work programme on impacts, vulnerability and adaptation to climate change. Canada also continues to stress the importance of integrating climate change adaptation considerations into national sustainable development and poverty reduction strategies.

(spoke in French)

Canada welcomes the report of the Secretary-General entitled "Overview of United Nations activities in relation to climate change" (A/62/644). It illustrates that a large number of United Nations entities are carrying out important work across a broad range of sectors to implement existing mandates. This work should expressly complement and support the outcomes negotiated under the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC).

Canada commends the Secretary-General for his leadership in the process under way in the Chief Executives Board to improve the United Nations system's coordination on climate change activities. In particular, we welcome efforts that place emphasis on making the United Nations system more results-based, efficient and accountable.

Canada is committed to the Bali Road Map and to meeting our obligations while working with the international community in order to find a global solution to this global challenge. Canada will play its part by rigorously pursuing a future international agreement that includes meaningful and binding emissions reductions commitments by all major emitters, for without the participation of all major emitters, both historic and emerging, we will never truly address the problem of rising greenhouse gas emissions nor will we manage to avoid the severe yet self-induced impacts of climate change. Secondly, such future agreement will be designed to achieve long-term results. Thirdly, the agreement should be ecologically effective while balancing environmental protection and economic prosperity. Fourthly, the agreement should support the development and deployment of low

emissions technology. Finally, the agreement should include measures that address the vital need for adaptation to the impacts of climate change.

It is clear that, in order to ensure success in Copenhagen in 2009, we cannot continue along the same path. We must all be prepared to demonstrate flexibility, engage in compromise, and go forward with hope, commitment and vision. In short, all of us, but in particular the major emitters, must be prepared to show leadership. To conclude, the world is watching, and we must all do our part.

The Acting President: I now give the floor to Mr. Andrei Dapkunas, Permanent Representative of Belarus.

Mr. Dapkunas (Belarus) *(spoke in Russian)*: Belarus welcomes the agreement reached in Bali on the steps to be taken to reach an agreement that could replace the Kyoto Protocol.

For us, with respect to the outcome of that process, common sense and the simple human instinct of self-preservation encourage nothing but a sense of optimism. However, that optimism is extremely cautious. It was no accident, we believe, that the first day of our debate was devoted to inspirational thematic discussions. Unfortunately, with respect to the problem of global climate change, inspiration — as a process that elicits the urge or capacity to act — has yet to be superseded by action. We are still not bold enough to stop playing tug of war and to begin rather to seek twofold results through joint action based on greater empathy for and better understanding of the problems and difficulties of others, primarily those in a less advantageous situation and need help more than others. We remain as strongly inclined to address even extraordinary tasks as business as usual.

Allow me to cite one brief example of that. Under the Kyoto Protocol, Belarus — a country with a transitional economy — has assumed the highest degree of voluntary obligations to reduce greenhouse gas emissions to the level of the developed countries of the European Union. The Conference of the Parties serving as the meeting of the Parties to the Kyoto Protocol unanimously decided to include Belarus in annex B. Unfortunately, since that decision was made 15 months ago, it has been ratified by only three States. If the amendment is to enter into force, internal procedures have to be carried out by 132 countries. It is clear that, at such a rate of ratification, the

amendment to the Kyoto Protocol — the only such amendment — will never come into force.

We call upon all parties to the Kyoto Protocol and the Secretary-General to demonstrate a genuine sense of priority regarding climate change and to promote the speedy implementation by States of the national procedures necessary for the amendment to come into force. Of course, we understand that such a step would not have a global impact, but national initiatives of that kind would set an important precedent. The attention of States Members of the United Nations to an albeit minor technical problem would confirm the international community's collective ability to undertake timely joint action to prevent the adverse effects of climate change.

Belarus understands the importance of a comprehensive approach to the problem of climate change. However, today we believe it necessary to draw particular attention to the issue of the joint development and transfer of environmentally safe technology to those countries that need it. Resolving that problem will also affect the success of efforts to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and to promote sustainable global development. The United Nations is already taking practical steps to create a mechanism to expand the access of developing countries and transitional countries to new and emerging technologies, inter alia, in the spheres of new and renewable sources of energy, energy efficiency and energy conservation that would contribute to mitigating the adverse effects of climate change.

We propose that the Secretary-General and the Administrator of the United Nations Development Programme consider the possibility of endowing regional and country offices of the United Nations with specialists and materiel to develop and transfer environmental and energy technologies. We believe that leading-edge technologies in the fields of new and renewable sources of energy, energy efficiency and energy conservation should become the common property of humankind. Only thus will it be possible to hope for serious progress in reducing greenhouse gas emissions and preventing global warming. We believe that the General Assembly and the Economic and Social Council have a decisive role to play in that difficult process.

In that connection, Belarus proposes that, at the coming session of the General Assembly, a thematic

debate be convened without delay to discuss that matter. We sincerely look forward to the active support of Member States and the Secretariat in organizing such a debate.

The Acting President: I now give the floor to Mr. Jairo Montoya, Deputy Permanent Representative of Colombia.

Mr. Montoya (Colombia) (*spoke in Spanish*): My delegation aligns itself with the statement delivered by the representative of Antigua and Barbuda on behalf of the Group of 77 and China.

Colombia appreciates the initiative of convening this debate, which will certainly contribute to maintaining the high priority that climate change must be accorded on the multilateral agenda. It is relevant to exchange points of view on the way in which the United Nations system can enhance its contribution to addressing climate change. Likewise, we value the report of the Secretary-General and its inputs to the debate.

Allow me to present Colombia's considerations and ideas on the substance of our discussion.

It is evident that the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change and the Kyoto Protocol constitute the primary framework for intergovernmental decisions on that issue within the Organization. The deliberations of the General Assembly should reaffirm such prevalence and recognize the integrity and autonomy of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention.

The United Nations system can and should focus its efforts on the promotion of and support for the effective implementation of the intergovernmental decisions agreed in the context of the Convention and the Kyoto Protocol. The report of the Secretary-General describes the mandates of and assigns possible actions to various bodies of the system with regard to climate change. It is essential to analyse the capacities of those organizations to undertake such actions. For instance, it is worth examining the role of United Nations bodies responsible for energy, water and the oceans, as well as their real potential for addressing intergovernmental issues to contribute to the climate change debate.

Colombia recognizes, in all instances, the importance of identifying additional opportunities for further commitments and contributions from the

system in that field. In that regard, United Nations organizations must observe five basic conditions. They must ensure consistency with the general orientation provided by the Convention, limit their activities to their respective thematic mandates, take into account their real capacities and comparative advantages, avoid competition for resources, and, above all, be driven by a development-based approach.

From that perspective, we highlight the urgency of taking into account the multiple dimensions derived from the relation between development and climate change that are not necessarily covered by the thematic agenda for negotiations under the Convention. The *Human Development Report 2007/2008* of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) acknowledges several of those dimensions and emphasizes the negative effects of climate change on progress in the fight against poverty and in the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs).

The United Nations system's actions to address climate change must therefore ensure coherence among activities to achieve the internationally agreed development goals, including the MDGs. That also requires any strategy in the area of climate change to be compatible with the economic growth and social welfare priorities of developing countries. Accordingly, the system must step up its efforts to help close the gap between the implementation of commitments and real progress towards the development goals.

United Nations agencies, funds and programmes have relevant mandates to support the efforts of developing countries to implement their own national sustainable development policies. The United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), UNDP, the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations and the United Nations Industrial Development Organization come to mind in that regard.

Support should focus on national capacity-building in the field. That is particularly needed in relation to adaptation activities. UNDP and UNEP can make a significant contribution in that respect.

The promotion of capacity-building is also relevant in specific areas, such as implementing strategies for climate monitoring, disaster reduction and early warning systems; enhancing the possibilities for access to international funds and mechanisms such as the Global Environment Facility and the clean

development mechanism; the production and exchange of scientific knowledge; and the development of South-South cooperation initiatives, supported through triangular schemes.

Another, equally important aspect involves promoting international conditions conducive to the implementation of measures by developing countries. Among such conditions, we highlight compliance on the part of developed countries with emissions-reduction commitments; an adequate flow of international resources to fund adaptation needs and to encourage voluntary mitigation measures; the transfer of environmentally sound technologies to developing countries on favourable terms; and the dissemination of objective and comprehensive information about the implications of climate change. In that connection, Colombia stresses the central role of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change as the organ mandated to produce the scientific, technical and socio-economic information necessary to understand this phenomenon. We also wish to point out that, in the promotion of favourable conditions, there is a need for greater cooperation among the various multilateral environmental agreements and between them and the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP). In addition, we highlight the need to increase UNEP's effectiveness.

In the area of partnerships, we highlight the opportunities presented by the Global Compact as a platform for promoting corporate social responsibility in the environmental arena.

My delegation has deliberately avoided a discussion of the system's architecture, which could divert attention from the true potential of the Organization to deal with climate change. In addition to the coherence agenda and the debates on the United Nations institutional framework for environmental activities, what is important is to identify opportunities to contribute effectively in this area.

Therefore, in the approach that we have proposed, the only way to truly deliver as one when dealing with the problems of climate change is to share the strategic objective of tackling major development issues. Moreover, that would be an act of justice for those who, even though not historically responsible for this problem, are those most severely affected by its environmental, economic and social repercussions.

The Acting President: I now call on Ms. Rosemary Banks, Permanent Representative of New Zealand.

Ms. Banks (New Zealand): New Zealand welcomes the opportunity to contribute to this thematic debate.

At the outset, my delegation wishes to align itself with the statement made yesterday by the representative of the Kingdom of Tonga on behalf of the Pacific Islands Forum.

New Zealand was very pleased to see the launch in Bali of a new negotiation on long-term cooperative action under the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC). The Bali meetings demonstrated the willingness of the international community to boost its efforts to combat climate change, by enhancing action on mitigation, adaptation, financing and technology transfer.

New Zealand appreciates the Secretary-General's report (A/62/644) on the climate change activities of various United Nations agencies and associated bodies. While we note the broad range of climate change initiatives undertaken by United Nations agencies, we see the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change as the primary United Nations climate change body. Over the next two years, it will set the agenda and the strategic direction for international action.

New Zealand agrees that climate change and sustainable development are intertwined. The impact of climate change on development is both real and problematic for the achievement of the internationally agreed development goals, including the Millennium Development Goals. As many have observed, the negative impacts will disproportionately affect poor people and poor countries.

Addressing climate change in development will therefore require greater harmonization of donor efforts and alignment with developing country plans and systems, as encouraged by the Paris Declaration on Aid Effectiveness. New Zealand is committed to implementing the Paris Principles. For that reason, we welcome the efforts of Pacific leaders in prioritizing the development of national plans of adaptation and in mainstreaming them into national development plans.

New Zealand is a small country contributing only 0.2 per cent of global emissions. While we cannot decrease the world's greenhouse gases by ourselves, we believe that we can make a contribution. For example, New Zealand is developing a comprehensive emissions trading scheme covering every sector of our economy and all six gases, not just carbon dioxide. We are including the challenging sectors of agriculture and forestry. We hope that, in due course, other countries may find this a useful model, and we would be happy to share our experiences with the scheme.

We are also committed to helping find solutions to the difficult problem of agricultural livestock emissions, which represent 50 per cent of New Zealand's emissions profile. To that end, New Zealand has played a leading role in the establishment of the Livestock Emission Abatement and Research Network, or LEARN for short.

LEARN, launched in New Zealand in December last year, is an international collaborative research partnership involving scientists and officials from around the world. The aim of LEARN is to improve understanding of greenhouse gas emissions from livestock and to develop cost-effective abatement solutions. The technologies developed through LEARN will benefit both developed and developing countries. LEARN works as a partnership because of the mutual interest of participants in addressing livestock emissions and because all partners in the network can add value.

Other kinds of partnerships can provide a means for addressing specific issues and for delivering targeted outcomes. Two such initiatives in which New Zealand is involved are the International Carbon Action Partnership (ICAP) and the International Council for Local Environmental Initiatives (ICLEI). We believe that ICAP will play an important part in the development of international carbon markets and that ICLEI can be a catalyst for climate change action at the crucial local and regional government levels.

While we recognize that there is still much important work to do in the coming years in the context of UNFCCC and Kyoto Protocol negotiations, we sense that there is a growing confidence among all stakeholders that we can all contribute to delivering tangible and practical action to address the challenges posed by climate change.

The meeting rose at 6 p.m.