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Chairperson: Ms. Lintonen (Finland)

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The meeting was called to order at 10.15 a.m.

Agenda item 54: Sustainable development (*continued*)
(A/C.2/62/L.21)

Draft resolution on the oil slick on Lebanese shores

1. **Ms. Ayesha** (Pakistan) introduced draft resolution A/C.2/62/L.21 on behalf of the Group of 77 and China.

(c) International Strategy for Disaster Reduction
(*continued*) (A/C.2/62/L.20)

Draft resolution on an International Strategy for Disaster Reduction

2. **Ms. Ayesha** (Pakistan) introduced draft resolution A/C.2/62/L.20 on behalf of the Group of 77 and China.

(e) Implementation of the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification in Those Countries Experiencing Serious Drought and/or Desertification, Particularly in Africa
(*continued*) (A/C.2/62/L.17)

Draft resolution on implementation of the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification in Those Countries Experiencing Serious Drought and/or Desertification, Particularly in Africa

3. **Ms. Ayesha** (Pakistan) introduced draft resolution A/C.2/62/L.17 on behalf of the Group of 77 and China.

(i) Promotion of new and renewable sources of energy (*continued*) (A/C.2/62/L.19)

Draft resolution on promotion of new and renewable sources of energy, including the implementation of the World Solar Programme

4. **Ms. Ayesha** (Pakistan) introduced draft resolution A/C.2/62/L.19 on behalf of the Group of 77 and China.

Agenda item 57: Groups of countries in special situations (*continued*) (A/62/488)

(a) Third United Nations Conference on the Least Developed Countries (*continued*) (A/62/79-E/2007/63 and Corr.1, A/62/216 and 322)

(b) Specific actions related to the particular needs and problems of landlocked developing countries: outcome of the International Ministerial Conference of Landlocked and Transit Developing Countries and Donor Countries and International Financial and Development Institutions on Transit Transport Cooperation (*continued*) (A/62/226 and A/62/256 and Corr.1; A/C.2/62/4 and A/C.2/62/5)

5. **Mr. Tekneci** (Turkey) said that the progress achieved in the implementation of the Brussels Programme of Action for the Least Developed Countries for the Decade 2001-2010, particularly the high rates of growth in some least developed countries, was encouraging. As the Secretary-General had noted in his report (A/62/79-E/2007/63), however, there was still room for improvement.

6. The least developed countries were making commendable efforts to develop their production capacities, establish good governance and improve their macroeconomic performance. Their initiative in formulating the Cotonou Strategy for the further implementation of the Brussels Programme of Action was also noteworthy. Nevertheless, extreme poverty continued to pose a major challenge. It was morally unacceptable that life expectancy should be declining in several of the least developed countries as a result of disease, food shortages and civil strife. Additional efforts were needed to meet the targets of the Brussels Programme.

7. Although itself a developing country, Turkey was committed to doing its share to help the least developed countries, landlocked developing countries and small island developing States. In 2006, its official development assistance (ODA) had reached \$750 million, or 0.18 per cent of GNI. The Turkish International Cooperation and Development Agency was engaged in projects across the globe, while the Turkish Government had provided humanitarian aid to 17 African countries over the previous two years and was proud to have been hailed by the World Food Programme (WFP) as a major donor in the effort to resolve the food crisis in Africa.

8. In July 2007, Turkey had hosted the Annual Ministerial Conference of Least Developed Countries, which had had as its theme "Making globalization work for the least developed countries". Since international trade was vital for the development, his

Government emphasized bilateral commercial relations with the least developed countries and funnelled Turkish investment to them. His Government had also made voluntary contributions to the Trust Fund of the United Nations Office of the High Representative for the Least Developed Countries, Landlocked Developing Countries and Small Island Developing States and supported a number of the Office's projects.

9. **Mr. Liu Zhenmin** (China) said that the international community was duty-bound to help the least developed countries and landlocked developing countries, which were deeply affected by globalization. Although the least developed countries had managed to improve their social indicators and had achieved an economic growth rate of 7 per cent in 2006, they remained vulnerable. In 2006, their trade in commodities and services had accounted for less than 1 per cent of the world's total trade volume.

10. The following three years would be a crucial period for achieving the objectives of the Brussels Programme of Action. His delegation called on all countries, and the developed countries in particular, to improve market access for the least developed countries and grant them tariff and quota exemptions. They should also devote 0.15 to 0.2 per cent of their GNI to ODA for those countries. At the same time, the international community should take account of the Economic Vulnerability Index, an important indicator for sustainable development, when considering those countries' graduation from least developed country status.

11. In 2006, his Government had cancelled the debt owed on certain interest-free loans to least developed countries in Africa having diplomatic relations with China and had increased the number of tariff-free imports from those countries. By 2009, China's aid to African countries would be double the 2006 level. China also planned to establish a China-Africa development fund that would ultimately reach \$5 billion, provide training to 15,000 persons in African countries and promote the development of infrastructure and public services.

12. The upcoming midterm review of the Almaty Programme of Action for landlocked developing countries would provide a significant opportunity to discuss the special difficulties facing those countries, evaluate the implementation of the programme and plan for future cooperation in key areas. His

Government, which well understood the concerns of landlocked developing countries because much of western and central China was also landlocked, had either entered into agreements with or was conducting negotiations with neighbouring landlocked countries to facilitate transit transport. It had also worked to facilitate trade with those countries, provide training in the areas of customs and transport and improve the efficiency of transit transport.

13. **Mr. Narkhuu** (Mongolia) endorsed the modalities for the 2008 review of the Almaty Programme of Action set out by the Secretary-General in his report (A/62/226) and called for broad participation in the review exercise by Member States.

14. A multidimensional approach was required to respond to the problems of landlocked developing countries. Above all, they needed bilateral, regional and international financial and technical assistance to build, maintain and improve transport and transit facilities. Given the importance of regional cooperation in transit transport, his Government had proposed a multilateral agreement that would ensure efficient transit transport services and reduce costs and losses.

15. Greater market access for landlocked developing countries would offset the disadvantages caused by natural and market-induced handicaps. Such access must be accompanied by improvements to the export and trade-negotiation capabilities of those countries, which could be effected through funding and technical assistance. He called on the international community to increase such assistance significantly and to take the difficulties faced by landlocked developing countries into consideration during trade facilitation talks in the World Trade Organization (WTO).

16. Last, he asked landlocked developing countries and their development partners to consider Mongolia's proposal that an international think-tank should be established to develop strategies for maximizing the efficiency of international efforts to meet the specific needs and interests of landlocked developing countries.

The meeting was suspended at 10.40 a.m. and resumed at 11 a.m.

17. **Mr. Yerlik Ali** (Kazakhstan) said that the ability of landlocked developing countries to benefit from trade was limited by high transport costs, which placed their exporters at a competitive disadvantage. For that reason, partnerships between landlocked and transit

developing countries and their development partners would be the most effective means of integrating those countries into the global economy and, consequently, achieving the Millennium Development Goals.

18. His Government attached paramount importance to the implementation of the Almaty Programme of Action, which was the most important framework available for addressing the challenges faced by landlocked and transit developing countries. In May 2007, Kazakhstan had hosted the sixty-third session of the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP). One of the resolutions adopted at that session, of which Kazakhstan had been a sponsor, encouraged landlocked and transit developing countries to prepare for the 2008 midterm review of the Almaty Programme of Action by, inter alia, preparing indicators to measure progress in its implementation. The review was an important exercise that would take stock of such progress and determine what further action was required to promote global partnerships to help landlocked and transit developing countries implement the Programme of Action.

19. A number of organizations within the United Nations system were playing an important role in that process, particularly through technical assistance programmes. The Economic Commission for Europe and ESCAP were doing excellent work on trade facilitation, accession to WTO and facilitation of border-crossing for the landlocked developing countries of Central Asia.

20. The international community had not fully acknowledged that climate change had a particularly devastating impact on landlocked developing countries as a result of desertification and a permanent deficit of water resources. It was time to bring that issue to the fore so that it could be addressed within the context of a broader international development agenda.

21. Much remained to be done, and he hoped that the Committee's consideration of the agenda item would yield specific recommendations for expanding multilateral partnerships to establish effective transit transport systems so that the products of landlocked developing countries could have secure and predictable access to world markets.

22. **Mr. Matenje** (Malawi) said that Malawi attached great importance to the item under consideration because of the country's unique status as a least developed and landlocked country whose economy was

driven predominantly by agriculture. The Brussels Programme of Action and the Almaty Programme of Action were vital tools for addressing the challenges facing the least developed countries, and his delegation called on the international community to facilitate their implementation so that those countries might achieve internationally agreed development goals, including the Millennium Development Goals. In particular, the Cotonou Strategy for the Further Implementation of the Programme of Action for the Least Developed Countries for the Decade 2001-2010 should be implemented as a matter of urgency.

23. In an effort to promote the attainment of the Millennium Development Goals, Malawi had adopted sound fiscal and macroeconomic policies and instituted measures to promote transparency, good governance, democracy, human rights, the rule of law, public sector management and gender mainstreaming in both the public and private sectors. His Government had found medium-term development strategies to be the most appropriate tools for achieving those Goals and was also finalizing a development assistance strategy that sought to use a practical and efficient balance of aid modalities to increase the productive capacity of the least developed countries. He was confident that with additional and new resources from its development partners Malawi would achieve the Goals by 2015. Accordingly, he called on the developed countries to facilitate Malawi's access to international trade by removing trade barriers and agricultural subsidies, thereby enabling the country to earn new and additional income for poverty reduction.

24. As noted in the Secretary-General's report on implementation of the current Programme of Action for the Least Developed Countries (A/62/79-E/2007/63), the least developed countries' efforts to attain economic growth and development could be sustained if donor partners focused their attention on enhancing those countries' productive capacity. If the least developed countries were lagging behind in attaining the Millennium Development Goals, it was largely for reasons that were not of their own making.

25. Malawi's status as a landlocked country had contributed largely to its high poverty levels and its failure to profit from international trade. Poor prices, high inland transportation costs and a lack of access to the sea made Malawi's agricultural exports uncompetitive. Given that the Almaty Programme of Action and the United Nations Convention on the Law

of the Sea called for transit countries to facilitate landlocked countries' access to the sea, he welcomed the cooperation shown by the Governments of Mozambique and Zambia and the Southern African Development Community (SADC) in the implementation of a waterway project on the Shire river in Malawi and the Zambezi river in Mozambique, and he called on the international community to assist in that project's realization.

26. Lastly, he expressed appreciation to those Governments that had hosted meetings of importance to the least developed countries in recent months and to the Secretary-General for launching the Millennium Development Goals Africa Steering Group.

27. **Mr. Teshome** (Ethiopia) welcomed the outcomes of the recent thematic meetings on transit transport infrastructure development and international trade and trade facilitation. Landlocked developing countries were among the poorest developing countries, owing primarily to their lack of access to the sea and isolation from world markets. Their seaborne trade unavoidably depended on transit through other countries and thus on the transit policies, enterprises and facilities of those countries. The resulting high transport costs eroded the competitiveness of their products, so that, landlocked developing countries were marginalized in the world economy.

28. The establishment of efficient transit transport systems depended on cooperative arrangements between landlocked developing countries and their transit neighbours. Often, the latter lacked resources, too, and thus could not offer adequate transport systems. The Almaty Programme of Action was expected to promote the establishment of close linkages between efficient transit transport systems and the development of landlocked developing countries. However, measures aimed at solving the transit problems of landlocked developing countries must consider many factors, including the imbalance of trade, inadequate infrastructure, inefficient transport organization, poor asset utilization and weak institutions. The establishment of efficient transit systems required closer and more effective cooperation between landlocked developing countries and their transit neighbours, and regional economic cooperation and transit agreements as well as bilateral agreements were critical in that regard.

29. Some 97 per cent of Ethiopia's exports and imports were transported via sea outlets. Accordingly, his Government had signed port utilization and transit agreements with the Governments of Djibouti and the Sudan and a multi-modal transport system agreement with the Government of Djibouti. It had also endeavoured to streamline port utilization frameworks with its neighbours.

30. Landlocked developing countries required assistance in order to implement the Almaty Programme of Action effectively. Their development partners should do more to help them develop their physical infrastructure, improve the operational efficiency of existing facilities and build new facilities. Support for institutional capacity-building was also needed. Particular attention should be paid to African landlocked developing countries, and a mechanism should be established to minimize their reliance on road funds and their need to pay unfair port and related service fees. The United Nations system and other international, regional and subregional organizations should provide greater financial and technical assistance to landlocked and transit developing countries. Lastly, the measures identified in the road map for the implementation of the Almaty Programme of Action should be vigorously pursued and voluntary contributions should be made to the trust fund established to facilitate follow-up to the implementation of the Programme.

31. **Mr. Kpukumu** (Sierra Leone) said that while some least developed countries had recorded increased economic growth, many were still in the twilight zone of development. Consequently, a significant portion of their population was dying needlessly from hunger, preventable diseases and other extraneous factors such as natural and man-made disasters and armed conflicts. Recognizing that the primary responsibility for combating poverty and attaining internationally agreed development goals, including the Millennium Development Goals, lay with the least developed countries themselves, Sierra Leone was making a serious effort to implement pro-poor policies aimed at eradicating poverty and promoting sustained economic growth and development. He drew attention in that connection to Sierra Leone's Poverty Reduction Strategy and Peace Consolidation Strategy, both of which were designed to inject new momentum into its development efforts. However, limited financial resources and weak human, institutional and technical capacity continued to compromise those efforts.

32. The extent to which the world's poorest countries were marginalized was frightening. The developing world was suffering a massive loss of skills to the developed world. A recent study of 10 African countries revealed that they lost, on average, 40 per cent of their university graduates. The collapse of the Doha Round and the drop in ODA levels represented another serious blow to the least developed countries. Yet, in an increasingly globalized and interdependent world, the achievement of development goals was the social and moral responsibility of the international community.

33. The least developed countries, which accounted for over 760 million of the global population but only 0.7 per cent of global exports, continued to grapple with the challenge of servicing a huge and unsustainable debt burden. Debt-service payments far exceeded export earnings and therefore undermined productive capacity and socio-economic development. He therefore welcomed the Multilateral Debt Relief Initiative (MDRI) and the enhanced Heavily Indebted Poor Countries (HIPC) Initiative, which had also benefited Sierra Leone. He likewise welcomed the European Union's Everything but Arms initiative, the African Growth and Opportunity Act of the United States of America, Japan's duty- and quota-free access for least developed country products and the increasing level of partnership between the least developed countries and other developing countries within the framework of South-South cooperation.

34. To help those least developed countries that were lagging behind get back on track, development partners should implement comprehensive debt cancellation; mobilize adequate, predictable and timely international support for the achievement of the commitments and goals set out in the Programme of Action for the Least Developed Countries; strengthen the implementation of the Aid for Trade Initiative; and expand market access by reducing trade barriers and resuming the Doha Round.

35. **Mr. Gurung** (Nepal) welcomed the attention paid by the international community to advancing the concerns of the least developed countries and landlocked developing countries in the form of action-oriented frameworks for global partnerships. Nevertheless, much remained to be done to achieve full implementation of the Programme of Action for the Least Developed Countries, particularly with regard to ensuring enhanced resource flows. The international

community must accelerate its efforts in that regard, taking into account the Cotonou Strategy for the Further Implementation of the Programme of Action for the Least Developed Countries for the Decade 2001-2010.

36. Despite adopting people-centred development strategies, most least developed countries were not yet able to produce tangible results, owing, inter alia, to their lack of productive capacity; their inability to compete on global markets; reduced aid flows; the growing debt burden; the absence of an increase in FDI; the failure of domestic revenue bases to expand; and the disproportionate impact of climate change. Urgent action was needed to reverse such trends. Moreover, development partners must honour their commitment to provide 0.20 per cent of GNP as ODA to the least developed countries and broaden their debt relief measures.

37. Trade had not been working as an engine for growth in the least developed countries. The current impasse in the Doha Round was undermining the development dimension of trade and thwarted any meaningful integration of the least developed countries and landlocked developing countries into the global economy. The Aid for Trade Initiative must be implemented properly to address supply-side constraints and the productive capacities of those countries. The United Nations could play a critical role in advancing the interests of countries with special needs by highlighting progress and gaps in the implementation of the various programmes concerned. In that regard, he welcomed the Secretary-General's report on the advocacy strategy on the effective and timely implementation of the Programme of Action for the Least Developed Countries for the Decade 2001-2010 (A/62/322).

38. It was important to prepare effectively for the upcoming midterm review of the implementation of the Almaty Programme of Action, which should assess the progress made thus far and identify measures to overcome implementation gaps. He welcomed the initiative taken by the Office of the High Representative for the Least Developed Countries, Landlocked Developing Countries and Small Island Developing States in that regard and encouraged all stakeholders and the relevant United Nations agencies to participate actively and constructively in the review exercise. Nepal was fully committed to the effective implementation of the Programme of Action for the

Least Developed Countries and the Almaty Programme of Action, and firmly believed that landlocked countries' inherent right to free and unhindered access to and from the sea must be respected by all.

39. **Ms. Beck** (Solomon Islands) called on the international community to support the Cotonou Strategy for the Further Implementation of the Programme of Action for the Least Developed Countries for the Decade 2001-2010, which strengthened the implementation of the Brussels Programme of Action for the least developed countries. Her delegation supported the holding of an annual review of the Brussels Programme of Action and agreed that the United Nations regular budget should fund two delegates from each least developed country to participate in that exercise.

40. Despite the fact that poverty eradication was being achieved more through trade than through aid, the least developed countries still accounted for only 2 per cent of global trade; they had not been fully integrated into the global economy and some of them continued to be subject to restrictive tax regimes. Duty- and quota-free access should therefore be granted for all least developed country exports by all partner countries without exception. Debt relief should also be extended to all the least developed countries, since many of them continued to experience a heavy financial burden owing to the conditions attached to the Heavily Indebted Poor Countries (HIPC) Initiative and the Multilateral Debt Relief Initiative (MDRI). Moreover, many of those conditions were difficult to meet and were not necessarily consistent with national development priorities.

41. Her delegation welcomed the appointment of the new High Representative for the Least Developed Countries, Landlocked Developing Countries and Small Island Developing States. It recognized the importance of the supportive role played by the High Representative's Office in galvanizing support for least developed countries and endorsed the call for a well-resourced Office dedicated to promoting the causes of least developed countries. It also called on the United Nations system to provide resources and support for the Small Island Developing States Unit of the Department of Economic and Social Affairs.

42. The least developed countries needed to have country statistics in order to make informed decisions. Such data already existed within the United Nations

system, but the data from the various agencies should be compiled into a single document that could be made available to all least developed countries. Each agency should also indicate exactly what it was doing to address issues of concern to least developed countries within the framework of the Brussels Programme of Action. Furthermore, a system-wide report on the implementation of the Brussels Programme of Action should be prepared to complement the usual country reports at the forthcoming United Nations Conference on Least Developed Countries.

43. Collective global action in the short, medium and long terms was needed to combat climate change. However, the lack of access to technology and inadequate funding had made it very difficult for the countries most affected by climate change to work on mitigation and adaptation programmes. A new consensus should therefore be reached at the forthcoming United Nations Climate Change Conference in Bali on the need to do more to protect the environment and to create a safer world for all.

44. **Mr. Labbé** (Chile) reaffirmed his country's total commitment to the Almaty Programme of Action and said that Chile would be an active participant in the midterm review of the Programme at the high-level plenary session of the General Assembly in 2008. Landlocked developing countries needed help in gaining access to world markets, and Chile was providing tangible assistance to those countries in South America. As a transit country, Chile was bilaterally reviewing issues related to costs for border crossings, port transfers and infrastructure with the countries concerned. In many cases it had also granted transit facilities that went beyond those provided for in existing multilateral agreements. For example, a major border-crossing programme had been established with Bolivia and a physical integration commission had been set up with Paraguay to study issues related to the transit of products and goods.

45. **Ms. Seo Eunji** (Republic of Korea) said that poverty eradication and sustainable development should be among the top priorities for least developed countries. The uneven performance of those countries, particularly the lack of socio-economic progress by sub-Saharan countries, was a major challenge. Another critical concern was the spread of the HIV/AIDS, malaria and other pandemic diseases, which had adversely affected the ability of least developed countries to achieve the Millennium Development Goals.

46. While primary responsibility for development in least developed countries lay with those countries themselves, national efforts should be complemented by support from other Governments and international organizations. As an emerging donor country, the Republic of Korea was strongly committed to increasing its contribution to help developing countries eradicate poverty and achieve the Millennium Development Goals. To that end, her Government intended to increase its ODA to \$1 billion by 2009 and to \$3.2 billion by 2015. It had also decided to join the Development Assistance Committee of the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) in 2010. The Republic of Korea was also assisting developing countries with capacity-building in the area of trade and was expanding market access for duty-free and quota-free imports from least developed countries.

47. Human resources development, particularly where women were concerned, was a decisive element of development strategies in least developed countries, and women's equal participation was instrumental for overall development. Since women and girls were most vulnerable to political, economic and social change, gender mainstreaming must become a central pillar of development strategies in least developed countries.

48. Her delegation supported the Almaty Programme of Action, which would help to expand cooperation with least developed countries and address their needs more effectively. It was of the utmost importance that all countries should share collective responsibility for alleviating hunger and poverty. The Republic of Korea therefore intended to retain strong global partnerships with a view to achieving the Millennium Development Goals.

49. **Mr. Kafando** (Burkina Faso) reiterated the need to ensure the comprehensive and effective implementation of the Almaty Programme of Action, which afforded landlocked developing countries an opportunity to make trade an engine for development. Unfortunately, while the new global partnership for establishing efficient transit transport systems had enabled those countries to strengthen their infrastructure networks, it fell short of what was required to meet the current demands of international trade. Thus despite the opportunities provided by globalization, landlocked developing countries continued to be increasingly marginalized in international trade.

50. The Thematic Meeting on Transit Infrastructure Development held in Ouagadougou and the Thematic Meeting on International Trade and Trade Facilitation held in Ulaanbaatar as part of the preparatory process for the midterm review of the Almaty Programme of Action had both rightly emphasized the urgent need for measures to improve the economic competitiveness of landlocked developing countries and ensure their integration in international trade. Important proposals from the thematic meeting in Ouagadougou related to the development of a regional railways model for and model railway and inland navigation concession agreements; the adoption of a multimodal approach to transit transport infrastructures and services; support from regional economic communities; the mobilization of technical and financial partners; the development of public-private partnerships; the promotion of computerized tracking systems; and the integration of an environmental dimension in infrastructure development projects.

51. International conferences to be held in 2008 offered good prospects for greater involvement of the international community in the eradication of constraints that stifled trade in landlocked developing countries. His delegation was confident that the implementation of the relevant conclusions of those meetings would bring the international community closer to the objectives set out in the Almaty Programme of Action. The real problem, however, was not a lack of solutions but the absence of a will to act. Accordingly, the meetings in question should at long last establish a genuine global partnership that would result in technical and financial partners honouring their commitments. Any delay in the implementation of the Almaty Programme of Action would not only further marginalize landlocked developing countries but would also seriously compromise their ability to achieve the Millennium Development Goals.

Agenda item 58: Eradication of poverty and other development issues (A/62/155, 371, 372, 486 and 488)

- (a) **Implementation of the first United Nations Decade for the Eradication of Poverty (1997-2006)** (A/62/211, A/62/267 and A/62/483-E/2007/90)
- (b) **Women in development** (A/62/187)
- (c) **Human resources development** (A/62/308)

52. **Ms. Mayanja** (Assistant Secretary-General, Special Adviser on Gender Issues and Advancement of Women) said that the report of the Secretary-General on women in development (A/62/187), prepared pursuant to General Assembly resolution 60/210, focused on the importance of gender equality for achieving economic growth, poverty eradication and sustainable development. The report noted that women and girls continued to constitute a disproportionate share of the world's poor and identified the various factors which increased their vulnerability to poverty. However, it also recognized that women were critical agents of development and poverty eradication.

53. While the report drew attention to the many measures Governments had taken to promote women's political participation at the national and local levels, it also noted that as of May 2007 women still represented only 17.3 per cent of parliamentarians in single or lower houses of parliament and 15.9 per cent of legislators in upper houses or senates. Research showed that increased participation of women in decision-making had a positive impact on development and poverty reduction. However, the most powerful bodies at all levels dealing with finance, trade and economies were dominated by men, who had been resistant to incorporating gender equality perspectives into their work. Accordingly, chapter IV of the report contained a number of recommendations aimed at redressing the balance. It was recommended in particular that gender perspectives should be incorporated into the design, implementation, monitoring and reporting of all development and poverty reduction strategies, including through national poverty reduction papers and Millennium Development Goal reporting processes.

54. Since its adoption, the Monterrey Consensus had become the major reference point for international cooperation in development financing. The 2008 Follow-up International Conference on Financing for Development should therefore address progress made, reaffirm goals and commitments, and share best practices and lessons learned with respect to each of the six leading actions set out in the outcome of the International Conference on Financing for Development. However, gender perspectives in relation to the six leading actions had not been fully identified in the Monterrey Consensus, and it would therefore be essential to identify and develop strategies to address those perspectives to ensure that the outcomes of the

follow-up process supported the goals of gender equality and the advancement of women. Even though resources to support and implement policies and programmes that promoted gender equality and the advancement of women remained insufficient, gender perspectives should be fully mainstreamed in the final preparation for and outcome of the Follow-up International Conference.

55. At its fiftieth session the Commission on the Status of Women had called for the mobilization of adequate funding for gender-sensitive development policies and programmes, national gender equality mechanisms and women-specific measures. The priority theme of the Commission's fifty-second session, to be held in March 2008, would be "financing for gender equality and the empowerment of women". The decision to focus on that topic reflected the need to influence the Follow-up International Conference on Financing for Development from a gender perspective. The session would afford a unique opportunity for the international community to adopt concrete policy recommendations aimed at achieving the internationally agreed development goals on gender equality and the empowerment of women.

56. The major trends observed during the previous year were an increased focus by both Member States and United Nations entities on implementing commitments to gender equality and further efforts to increase the effectiveness of the United Nations in meeting the challenges facing women, primarily by enhancing the links between the policy outcomes and operational work on the ground. While major gains had been made in ensuring gender equality and women's empowerment in such areas as health, employment, education and political participation, major challenges remained in combating poverty, violence, marginalization, restricted access to resources and exclusion from decision-making.

57. Violence against women in particular was a violation of women's human rights and an impediment to development. The in-depth study by the Secretary-General (A/61/122/Add.1 and Corr.1) and General Assembly resolution 61/143 had given unprecedented visibility to that problem and had highlighted the urgent need for action. The Secretary-General would soon launch a system-wide multi-year campaign to ensure a consistent and comprehensive response, especially in support of action at the national level. The Inter-Agency Network on Women and Gender Equality

would play a critical role in initiating and coordinating that strategy, and she called on Member States to give similar priority to that issue.

58. **Mr. Seth** (Director, Office of ECOSOC Support and Coordination), introducing the report of the Secretary-General on human resources development (A/62/308), said that the report explored the opportunities to use science and technology to enhance human capabilities and the challenges. Challenges included the high cost of creating an enabling environment that would facilitate the acquisition, use and diffusion of technology and the need to link research and development more closely to the benefits of research in the productive sector, to give greater priority to science and technology education while simultaneously implementing policies to prevent the massive outflow of skilled personnel, and to understand the risks associated with new technologies and develop the capacity to mitigate those risks.

59. Among the opportunities, the report highlighted the critical role of information and communication technologies (ICTs) in providing cost-effective, broad-based and equitable access to technological knowledge and learning in developing countries. The report stressed the importance of Government intervention in such critical sectors as education, research and development. Private-sector development was also important in order to strengthen the link between academia and the productive sector. Technology-oriented research should be promoted, and the private sector should be encouraged to invest in research and development and technological training. Establishing appropriate institutions and regulations that facilitated technology transfer, transformation and innovation should also be a priority of national Governments.

60. The report placed special emphasis on the need for Governments to invest in education in science, technology, engineering and other advanced technological fields. It also emphasized the role played by international organizations, including the United Nations system, in promoting the effective use of science and technology to improve human welfare. In particular, it highlighted the role of international institutions in raising overall awareness of the benefits of science and technology and in promoting a strategic use of ICTs to accelerate technological learning and innovation. In its conclusions and recommendations, the report stressed the importance of an integrated strategy to promote technological knowledge and

learning; the strategic use of ICTs to accelerate technological learning and innovation; partnerships between Governments, academia and the productive and business sectors; developing basic economic infrastructure; nurturing local talent and entrepreneurship; the need for donors to help develop capacities in line with national priorities; and the importance of the United Nations system in contributing to those efforts.

61. **Mr. Zelenev** (Officer-in-Charge, Division for Social Policy and Development, Department of Economic and Social Affairs), introducing the report of the Secretary-General on implementation of the first United Nations Decade for the Eradication of Poverty (1997-2006) (A/62/267), said that the report presented an overview of key developments that had taken place during the Decade and addressed key challenges faced by countries and the international community in pursuing the objective of poverty eradication. It concluded with a number of policy recommendations for consideration by the Assembly. The current evaluation of the first United Nations Decade for the Eradication of Poverty was taking place at the midpoint of the effort to attain the Millennium Development Goals. The assessment was that poverty was retreating globally, but much remained to be done.

62. The mixed results of efforts to reduce poverty had led to a better understanding of the nature and range of deep-rooted obstacles that countries faced in their efforts to reduce poverty. National development strategies needed to be broad and inclusive and should adopt an integrated and holistic approach that could address poverty in all its dimensions. Without support from the donor community, national capacity-building and resource mobilization could not be achieved by countries that were experiencing serious difficulties in reducing poverty. It was equally important for the donor and international communities to support and contribute to national efforts by aligning ODA and creating a global economic environment that promoted employment in developing countries.

63. **Mr. Abbas** (Pakistan), speaking on behalf of the Group of 77 and China, said that the United Nations Decade for the Eradication of Poverty (1997-2006) and the International Year for the Eradication of Poverty (1996) played an important role in creating awareness of the need for a long-term response at all levels to tackle the challenge of poverty. To reinforce the momentum generated by those events and as part of the

broader objective of poverty eradication, the Group of 77 and China supported the proclamation of a Second Decade for the Eradication of Poverty from 2008 to 2017.

64. The empowerment of women remained central for achieving the Millennium Development Goals on poverty eradication and gender equality. It was essential not only to recognize the role of women in eradicating poverty but also to empower women by granting them equal rights and providing them with full access to education, training, employment opportunities, technology and economic and financial resources. That would enable them to play an enhanced role in national development endeavours. Qualitative and quantitative research should be conducted on the impact and effectiveness of women in decision-making and women's impact on development and poverty eradication at both the national and international levels.

65. Human resources development was central to the achievement of internationally agreed development goals, including the Millennium Development Goals. Science and technology were also essential. Constraints on access to technology, especially advanced technologies which could address critical development problems, had become a major manifestation of inequality between the developed and the developing countries. Restrictions on technology transfer and acquisition needed to be reviewed and revised. Incentives should be provided for research, including by the private sector, into the problems of the poor, which currently attracted only 10 per cent of research and development expenditure.

66. **Ms. Gomes** (Portugal), speaking on behalf of the European Union; the candidate countries Croatia, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia and Turkey; the stabilization and association process countries Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Montenegro and Serbia; and, in addition, Armenia, Georgia, Moldova and Ukraine, said that the European Union wished to reiterate the relevance of human rights protection, including the right to food, in the context of poverty eradication. It fully agreed with the broad definition of poverty as encompassing various dimensions besides income, such as access to health and social services, education, gender equality, social exclusion, powerlessness and lack of voice or representation. Even in developed countries, pockets of poverty and social exclusion persisted, so that renewed efforts

targeted at disadvantaged groups were needed. The National Action Plans for Inclusion in place in States members of the European Union represented a coordinated policy framework for addressing poverty among children, women and vulnerable groups. The European Union also attached particular importance to the promotion of public-private partnerships as an important tool for achieving the Millennium Development Goals, including poverty eradication. As recognized in the 2005 European Consensus for Development, poverty eradication and sustainable development continued to be of the utmost importance in an increasingly globalized and interdependent world. The Consensus underlined the importance of policy coherence for development, ensuring that European Union policies in such areas as trade, security and integration contributed to developing countries' efforts to meet the Millennium Development Goals.

67. The European Union believed it was important to strengthen the United Nations gender architecture in order to address both normative and operative concerns in accordance with the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action and Security Council resolution 1325 (2000) on Women, Peace and Security. Deficiencies arising from the current fragmentation of the gender architecture system, which was also incoherent and under-resourced, needed to be addressed. Comprehensive gender-sensitive poverty-eradication strategies, allowing for the full and equal participation of women in policy-setting and decision-making, were needed to address the feminization of poverty, guarantee women their human rights and enhance women's contribution to economic and social development.

68. The adoption of the Roadmap for Equality Between Women and Men for the period 2006-2010, the European Pact for Gender Equality and the Regulation establishing the European Institute for Gender Equality testified to the Union's continued commitment to achieving genuine equality between women and men. The European Commission's Communication on Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment in Development Cooperation, adopted in March 2007, and the European Council's Conclusions on Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment in Development Cooperation, adopted in May 2007, provided a clear European Union response to the gender commitments set out in the European Consensus for Development.

69. Although women were driving European Union job growth, they still faced barriers to equality. In spite of some welcome changes, mainly as a result of the gender mainstreaming approach adopted in all European Union policies and activities, horizontal and vertical labour segregation still had a negative impact on women's participation in the labour force, particularly at the decision-making level. One well-documented reason for that unequal representation was the dual role women still played at work and in the family. Developing measures to reconcile family and professional responsibilities was therefore fundamental, and the role of men in the reconciliation of work and family life also needed to be encouraged.

70. The European Union affirmed its strong support for and commitment to the full implementation of the Cairo Programme of Action adopted at the 1994 International Conference on Population and Development (ICPD) as well as the key actions for the further implementation of the Conference Programme of Action agreed at the five-year review, the Copenhagen Declaration on Social Development and the Programme of Action of the World Summit on Social Development. Gender equality could not be achieved without guaranteeing women's sexual and reproductive health and rights.

71. Education in technology was an important tool for empowering people and expanding their economic and social opportunities and should be placed at the centre of national development strategies. In the States members of the European Union, specific measures and programmes had been established to combat info-exclusion and provide opportunities for men and women of all ages to acquire basic knowledge and skills to boost their participation in social and economic life. Since 2000, the European Union had been pursuing the goal, to be achieved by 2010, of becoming one of the most competitive and dynamic knowledge-based economies in the world. The revised Lisbon Strategy and the subsequent Integrated Guidelines for Growth and Jobs (2005-2008) adopted by the Council of the European Union had placed an even stronger emphasis on the need to invest more in research and development underpinned by technological innovation and in human capital, a key determinant of economic growth in a knowledge-based economy.

72. The European Union endorsed the focus on the role of biotechnology in providing a way forward in

agriculture and medicine. The European Commission's recent midterm review of the Strategy on Life Sciences and Biotechnology (2007) provided an important framework for the development of a competitive and sustainable bio-economy. Partnerships among key actors in Government, academia and local productive sectors were essential to developing technology-oriented research and bringing about long-term technological transformation that would benefit all sectors of society.

The meeting rose at 1.05 p.m.