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Summary record of the 29th meeting
Held at Headquarters, New York, on Tuesday, 3 November 2009, at 10 a.m.

Chairperson: Mr. Mohamed Cherif Diallo (Vice-Chairperson). . . . . (Guinea)

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09-59098 (E)

In the absence of Mr. In-kook (Republic of Korea), Mr. Mohamed Cherif Diallo (Guinea), Vice-Chairperson, took the Chair.

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

Agenda item 53: Sustainable development (*continued*) (A/64/259, A/64/83-E/2009/83, A/64/83/Add.1-E/2009/83/Add.1, A/64/489, A/64/81, A/64/65, A/C.2/64/91 and A/C.2/64/10)

(a) Implementation of Agenda 21, the Programme for the Further Implementation of Agenda 21 and the outcomes of the World Summit on Sustainable Development (*continued*) (A/64/275, A/64/274, A/64/258, A/64/169 and A/64/301)

(b) Follow-up to and implementation of the Mauritius Strategy for the Further Implementation of the Programme of Action for the Sustainable Development of Small Island Developing States (*continued*) (A/64/278)

(c) International Strategy for Disaster Reduction (*continued*) (A/64/280)

(d) Protection of global climate for present and future generations (*continued*) (A/64/202)

(e) Implementation of the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification in Those Countries Experiencing Serious Drought and/or Desertification, Particularly in Africa (*continued*) (A/64/202 and A/64/379)

(f) Convention on Biological Diversity (*continued*) (A/64/202**)**

(g) Report of the Governing Council of the United Nations Environment Programme on its twenty-fifth session (*continued*) (A/64/25, Supplement No. 25)

(h) Sustainable mountain development (*continued*) (A/64/222)

(i) Promotion of new and renewable sources of energy (*continued*) (A/64/277)

1. **Mr. Djoghlaf** (Executive Secretary, Convention on Biological Diversity), introducing the note by the Secretary-General on implementation of United Nations environmental conventions (A/64/202), emphasized the importance of the upcoming Copenhagen Conference on Climate Change and of the tenth meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity to be held in Nagoya, Japan, in October 2010. If climate change was the problem, biodiversity was part of the solution. Healthy ecosystems were essential to the health of the atmosphere. According to the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change, more than 30 per cent of all known species might disappear before the end of the century owing to climate change.

2. At the World Summit on Sustainable Development in 2002, world leaders had agreed to reduce substantially the rate of biodiversity loss by 2010. The third edition of the Global Biodiversity Outlook, to be issued in May 2010, would demonstrate clearly that the international community had failed to fulfil that commitment. The slogan of the tenth meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity was “Living in harmony, into the future”, and that of the 2010 International Year of Biodiversity was “Biodiversity is life, biodiversity is our life”.

3. The Nagoya meeting was expected to adopt a new 2011-2020 strategy plan, post-2010 targets and an international regime on access and benefit-sharing, inter alia. It would be preceded by a City Biodiversity Summit, in which 300 mayors were expected to participate. There would also be associated youth, non-governmental and women’s summits.

4. The official launch of the International Year of Biodiversity would take place in Berlin, in January 2010, and would be followed by a high-level event in Paris at the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, where a new travelling exhibit on biodiversity would be launched. The General Assembly would also mark the International Year of Biodiversity in September 2010, holding the first meeting of Heads of State and Government on biodiversity. The closing would take place in December 2010 in Japan and would coincide with the launch of the International Year of Forests, 2011. The following year, 2012, would be the twentieth anniversary of the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development, held in Rio de Janeiro in 1992. The International Year of Biodiversity was an important step in addressing biodiversity loss. The support of all stakeholders was needed to respond to the challenge.

5. **Ms. Adam** (Switzerland) said that achieving sustainable development was a challenging but was

necessary endeavour to ensure long-term survival and well-being on the planet. At the sixty-third session of the General Assembly, the idea of holding another World Summit on Sustainable Development in 2012 had been introduced. A new high-level event on sustainable development could give new impetus to common approaches and solutions for addressing environmental, economic and social challenges. With regard to scope, the event could assess implementation of the previous major sustainable development conferences, identify and address existing gaps in the international regime, critically assess existing governance structures with regard to environment and sustainable development and make proposals to improve the effectiveness of governance in regard to sustainable development.

6. The preparatory process would be decisive and must be fine-tuned to the scope and expected outcomes of the event. The Commission on Sustainable Development, which already had an established multi-year work programme, was not the appropriate preparatory body for the high-level event. The event should achieve a far-reaching declaration targeted to specific key subjects strengthening effectiveness, coherence and innovation of sustainable development worldwide.

7. The importance of combating climate change and achieving a successful conclusion to the ongoing negotiation process under the auspices of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change could not be overemphasized. Tangible progress in disaster risk reduction and the implementation of the Hyogo Framework for Action were also needed. Both processes were critical to preserving development progress. Important processes which would culminate during 2010 included negotiations on an international regime of access and benefit-sharing and the establishment of an intergovernmental platform on biodiversity and ecosystem-related services.

8. **Mr. Mbou-Mylondo** (Congo) welcomed the universal or near-universal agreement on the need for energetic and coordinated action under a successor agreement to the Kyoto Protocol. It was very important that the will to reduce emissions be reflected in an acceptance of the findings of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change. It was also important that the principle of common but differentiated responsibilities be fully applied.

9. Thanks to the negotiations on the role of forests in climate, which had started in 2005, the world had gained greater familiarity with the forests of the Congo Basin. Their immense contribution to the preservation of local, regional and planetary ecosystems was indisputable. Conservation and sustainable forest ecosystem management were priorities for the Congo, which played a clear role, particularly within the Central African Forest Commission, in support of countries with tropical forests. It was also one of the Forestry eleven (F-11) tropical rainforest countries.

10. The Congo had recently joined the United Nations Collaborative Programme on Reducing Emissions from Deforestation and Forest Degradation in Developing Countries (UN-REDD), aware that the current status of the Central African subregion, which was heavily forested and had low rates of deforestation, could undergo rapid change if the future REDD mechanism was not appropriate and lacked sufficient incentives. In developing countries that were having difficulty responding to the financial crisis, forest products were often the sole source of income for local and indigenous populations. That could lead to disaster at the national level, particularly in Africa.

11. The Seventh World Forum on Sustainable Development had been held in Ouagadougou in October 2009. African countries relied on their own efforts and on African solidarity above all and, at the Forum, had reaffirmed and strengthened their strategy for combating climate change based on adaptation, clean energy use and financing. Priorities set had included integrating adaptation to climate change into policy at all levels; capacity-building, capitalizing on existing expertise and dissemination of good practices; use of clean energy, reforestation and conservation of forest ecosystems; strategic re-evaluation of support to African agriculture in advance of the deadline for attainment of the Millennium Development Goals; establishment of an environmental body within the African Development Bank that would mobilize resources for adaptation and mitigation; and easing access for African countries to various types of financing.

12. The African Union regarded climate change as a very serious matter, and the Congo was active on the issue within the Conference of African Union Heads of State and Government. The UN-REDD programme, as the cornerstone of the partnership between Africa and the developed countries, particularly in the area of

preserving carbon sinks and the need to strengthen carbon markets, must be taken into account for future agreements to be viable.

13. The Congo Basin was home to nearly 24 million people, most of whom depended on the forests for their livelihood. They made great sacrifices to preserve the forest and its biodiversity, and therefore expected offsetting measures from the international community enabling the, to embark on the only sustainable economic path — green growth.

14. **Ms. Navarro Barro** (Cuba) said that global warming, rising sea levels, deforestation, the use of food for fuel in industrialized countries, shortages of fossil fuels and irrational water usage all posed threats to life on the planet. Unless production and consumption patterns in developed countries changed, climate change would accelerate and threaten mankind's very existence.

15. Developing countries would never achieve the goals of Agenda 21 unless developed countries had the political will to lead change through technology transfer, provision of resources and capacity-building. True international cooperation would be required to implement Agenda 21, the Johannesburg Plan of Implementation, the Millennium Development Goals and the 2005 World Summit Outcome. The United Nations Climate Change Conference in Copenhagen could provide a framework for action that would ensure the world's survival, if the richest countries made commitments commensurate with their historical responsibility for the current situation. Cuba supported Brazil's initiative to convene a conference in 2012 on the occasion of the twentieth anniversary of the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development in order to take stock of commitments and the implementation of the outcome of the World Summit on Sustainable Development.

16. Developed countries, which had caused the environmental deterioration, must not only fulfil their commitments on official development assistance but must also contribute to economic growth in the South and provide access to clean technologies and their markets. It was time to move from words to action and step up to the challenge of saving the human race.

17. **Mr. Woldearegay** (Ethiopia) said that Africa's ecosystems were the most fragile in the world and were highly vulnerable to catastrophic changes resulting from small shifts in global temperature. Many parts of the continent were already suffering from frequent high-intensity droughts and floods. Compounded by weak adaptive capacity, the situation posed a serious threat to past development gains and could constrain future development in Africa. Anticipated dire consequences included a decline in agricultural production, worsening hunger, water stress, frequent floods, massive migration, conflict over scarce resources and expanded desertification.

18. Agriculture was the dominant sector in Ethiopia, as it was in many parts of Africa, accounting for nearly half of GDP and providing a livelihood for the vast majority of the population. The sector was dominated by small-scale farmers using largely rain-fed and traditional practices, which made the country vulnerable to climate variability. Desertification had claimed significant agricultural land. The minimum temperature had increased, and extreme drought and flood had become more frequent. The droughts created poverty traps for many households, undermining efforts to build up assets and increase income. Destitution was rising every year.

19. Collective action was needed to mitigate the impact of climate change. Greenhouse gas emissions must be reduced, and adaptation measures taken to improve resilience. Strategies should be linked with efforts to alleviate poverty, enhance food security and water availability, combat land degradation and soil erosion and reduce biodiversity loss, inter alia.

20. Such adaptation measures would be costly. Financial and technical assistance from developed countries which were historically responsible for climate change would be required. Gains from adaptation should not be eroded by unabated emissions. Therefore, the developed world should commit itself to reduce emissions, pursue green growth and engage in technology transfer to Africa.

21. It was incumbent on all to ensure the success of the forthcoming United Nations Climate Change Conference in Copenhagen. Africa committed itself to remain fully engaged.

22. **Archbishop Migliore** (Observer for the Holy See) said that a durable and comprehensive energy strategy must be found which could meet short-term and long-term needs, ensure energy security, protect the environment and establish concrete commitments to address climate change. It should also be capable of launching a peaceful transition towards a more

efficient global economy in which energy consumption and fossil fuel use could be lowered.

23. Progress in the use of renewable energy was important for poverty eradication. Development objectives could be linked to the application and dissemination of new and renewable energy sources, and energy cooperation should be oriented towards poverty alleviation and adjusted to economic and fiscal instruments. The group of developing countries had more than 40 per cent of installed renewable power capacity, more than 70 per cent of existing solar hot water capacity and 45 per cent of biofuel production power capacity. However, low-carbon technologies often had very high initial expenses. Access by the poor to innovation was essential.

24. Access to energy had a strong positive impact on health, education, nutrition and income. Improved energy access required better infrastructure, which in turn required the involvement of local institutions best able to identify the types of energy, financing and marketing most appropriate to a given area. Where access was limited, existing energy efficiency should be improved and conservation promoted.

25. The human and environmental costs should be part of every discussion on identifying appropriate energy services. Environmental exploitation without regard for environmental concerns could provide short-term growth, but had a cost that was borne primarily by developing countries, the poor and the vulnerable. Since energy consumption had an impact on future generations, renewable energy initiatives should be based on "intergenerational justice", which transcended national and economic boundaries. Future generations should not be burdened by the current excessive energy consumption; lifestyle change was therefore imperative.

26. **Mr. Motter** (Observer for the Inter-Parliamentary Union) said that actual emissions cuts depended to a large degree on the introduction of legal and fiscal reforms — a political question in which parliaments had to reconcile the competing demands of their constituents. People were still divided between those who appreciated the dangers of climate change and wanted to take action, and those who worried about cost. Yet, in fact, the long-term cost of inaction would be far greater than that of action today. Parliaments must work to bridge the divide and achieve a win-win solution for rich and poor, labour and industry, developed and developing. While some parliaments had supported strong carbon emissions reduction commitments, others were finding such agreements elusive.

27. The one hundred and twentieth Assembly of the Inter-Parliamentary Union, held in Addis Ababa earlier in 2009, had adopted a resolution on climate change that showed considerable consensus on some policy approaches. The resolution noted, that pursuing cost-effective measures that already had a lot of public support could do much to address climate change. Such measures included new approaches to urban public transit, home building codes, school curricula, agricultural methods, including organic farming, and population policy. Such solutions were widely available but underutilized. The resolution also recognized that the necessary shift towards renewable energies from fossil fuels would require active government intervention. Wind power, solar energy and other renewable energies were gaining ground in countries with a supportive legislative and fiscal framework. Subsidies for fossil fuels must be eliminated. Indeed, higher taxes on fossil fuels might be required. Massive investment in research and development would be necessary, and developed countries must lead on that issue. Nuclear energy must not be considered a renewable energy, as uranium was a finite resource and also because of the associated environmental and human costs of nuclear energy. Similarly, too much reliance on biofuels was inadvisable, as that sacrificed arable land and compromised food security.

28. The economic crisis should serve as a catalyst for the transition to a green economy, with stimulus investment in green solutions. That would be discussed shortly in a meeting between parliamentarians and United Nations officials. The Inter-Parliamentary Union would also be represented at the Copenhagen Conference.

29. **Mr. Dall'Oglio** (Observer for the International Organization for Migration) said that rising sea levels, deforestation, dryland degradation and natural disasters would affect development, livelihoods, settlement options, food production and health and lead to large-scale displacements of people. Policy coherence must be built, nationally and internationally. National adaptation programmes of action did not include migration considerations, and national migration policies did not incorporate environmental and climate change considerations. The implications of climate

change for human mobility had not been considered in the United Nations Framework Convention. In the successor document to the Kyoto Protocol, the humanitarian consequences of climate change should be taken into account. Member States must discuss how to fill legal, operational and capacity gaps associated with climate change and human mobility and allocate sufficient additional funding to the issue. The International Organization for Migration had begun to try to close the research and analysis gap on the nexus of climate change and population mobility. In the period leading up to the Copenhagen Conference, the Organization would release a volume on migration and climate change. Stakeholder capacity must be built up, and collaboration must reach across disciplines, to include climate science, geography, migration, development studies and health.

30. Because of the particular vulnerabilities of small island developing States, it was hoped that during the coming year there would be discussions on the possible displacement of people due to climate change. It was gratifying that the text on adaptation being negotiated included language on migration, displacement and relocation of persons affected by climate change. Migration should be recognized as an element of broader adaptation strategies, and the resilience of vulnerable populations to climate change and environmental degradation should be increased. Management of environmental migration was multidimensional and required an interdisciplinary approach.

31. **Ms. Fröberg** (Observer for the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies) said that the Federation's approach to sustainable development addressed the underlying causes of vulnerability by reducing disaster risks, adapting to climate change, strengthening food security and livelihoods and applying the Hyogo Framework for Action. Communities with sustainable livelihoods, good health care and access to a strong civil society were better able to withstand hazards, and such development gains must be protected from disasters. Mainstreaming disaster risk reduction into development work remained a top priority for the Federation. In 2009, 113 of its national societies had improved safety and resilience for 13 million people. Nearly 4 million more people had been reached by the Federation than in 2008, and 33 more national societies were currently involved.

32. Disaster risk reduction measures at the community level were the most effective way to save lives and protect development gains. The World Disasters Report, published by the Federation in 2009, made a strong argument for greater focus on early warning and early action.

33. Climate change adaptation was urgent. Climate change was not a future threat, but a key driver of disasters currently. Disaster response systems must be strengthened. Adaptation must include disaster risk reduction, disaster preparedness and response and must be integrated into longer-term risk reduction, sustainable development and poverty reduction strategies. Timely and clear weather information was necessary for vulnerable communities to plan livelihood activities, and resources were necessary to scale up preparedness at the community level.

34. A significant increase in community resilience investments was needed. Investments in early warning systems, water management and ecosystem restoration would reduce adaptation costs, which, according to current estimates, would reach 250 billion dollars per annum by 2020.

35. **Ms. Barth** (International Labour Organization (ILO)) said that the jobs and climate crises had their roots in the overemphasis on the economy in the development model, to the detriment of the social and environmental dimensions of sustainable development. Investments in a green recovery were part of longer-term structural change and should not wait for economic recovery.

36. Governments and employers' and workers' organizations from ILO member States had recently adopted the Global Jobs Pact, underscoring that greening the economy was indispensable and pressing. The ILO Green Jobs Programme was working towards a greener, fairer global economy and had been joined by some of the emerging economies as well as countries struggling with the impacts of climate change. It was understood that climate change mitigation and adaptation would help to create a high-employment, low-carbon economy by boosting clean energy and environmental services, as well as through the greening of all enterprises. Green jobs promotion would yield sustainable enterprises, poverty reduction and a job-centred recovery. Green jobs, while not a panacea, were indispensable.

37. The myth that action on the environment was bad for jobs must be dispelled. Well-designed, environment-related investments were beneficial for employment. Green sectors would create more jobs than would be lost in other sectors. At the same time, policies, investments and benefits would be required to assist those whose jobs might be lost during the transformation to a low-carbon economy. The social protection floor concept would be useful.

38. Where coherent sustainable policies had been put in place, in China, Germany, Brazil and elsewhere, hundreds of thousands of green jobs had been created, more than outweighing job losses in emission-intensive sectors. Inaction on climate change would have a detrimental impact on labour markets.

39. **Mr. Kennedy** (United Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO)) said that renewable energy was becoming a global success story. In 2008, added power capacity from renewables in the United States and the European Union had exceeded added power capacity from conventional power, according to the Renewable Energy Policy Network for the 21st Century. UNIDO was helping developing countries to benefit from that growth through technology transfer, support for clean energy policy, capacity-building assistance with rural electrification and the promotion of research and development, inter alia. Most of the Organization's technical cooperation was centred on bioenergy, hydropower and solar and wind energy. UN-Energy, an inter-agency mechanism of 20 United Nations and multilateral agencies chaired by the Director-General of UNIDO, was the channel for increased United Nations cooperation in the area of energy.

40. Recently, UNIDO and UN-Energy had worked with the Global Environment Facility to develop a large energy component for the Facility's Strategic Programme for West Africa. The programme scaled up renewable energy for rural electrification and supported energy efficiency measures. About 26 projects proposed by the countries of West Africa had been selected for final implementation.

41. UNIDO had organized of two recent global renewable energy forums, one in Vienna and the other in León, Mexico. The former had highlighted the need for enhanced international cooperation on energy, and at the latter there had been discussion of ways to provide energy justice to the one third of the world's population without access to affordable energy sources. It was no longer a question of whether to move to renewable energy, but of how to deploy renewable energy at the required scale and pace. The coming decade would be critical for the future of renewable energy.

42. **Mr. Brandstätter** (Austria) said that his delegation wished to inform the Committee of the international energy conference entitled Towards an Integrated Energy Agenda Beyond 2020, held in June 2009 in Vienna. It had been organized by UNIDO, Austrian Development Cooperation and the International Institute for Applied Systems Analysis. At the conference, 93 countries had been represented, with participants including policymakers, civil servants, scientists, energy experts and representatives of United Nations organizations and non-governmental organizations. The conference had adopted recommendations to set energy access goals and energy efficiency targets, to identify technologies needed to address climate change and energy access and catalyse their diffusion, and to strengthen UN-Energy and provided it with a support structure.

43. **Mr. Valero Briceño** (Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela) said that, in order to achieve sustainable development, action in the economic, human and environmental spheres was necessary. As long as speculation, exploitation of human beings and overexploitation of natural resources continued, sustainable development would not be possible. His country had a new economic development model based on sustainability. Its environmental component involved preservation, protection, restoration and amelioration, with local communities playing a leading role in designing and managing projects. The specificities of each region were taken into account. A wide range of energy sources were being developed that were in harmony with nature. Water resources problems related to supply and various economic activities were being remedied through the use of a geographical information system. The production of refrigerant gases that depleted the ozone layer had been prohibited, measures had been taken to reduce vehicle emissions and the accuracy and timeliness of weather alerts had been improved.

44. Although it was an oil producer, his country had ambitious environmental programmes and low carbon emissions. It supported the idea of a sustainable development conference in 2012 at which developed

countries committed to complying with the principles of sustainable development.

45. In, his report on the outcome of the World Summit on Sustainable Development (A/64/275), the Secretary-General had not delved into the true reasons for the greenhouse effect and global warming. The global crisis had been caused by the predominance of an irrational economic model imposed by capitalism. The Secretary-General's report stated that access to fossil fuels was lacking in some developing regions, while others were particularly vulnerable to price shocks. It did not refer to the main reasons for the increase in oil prices, nor did it discuss programmes promoted by oil-producing countries to mitigate the effect of high oil prices on developing countries. In the framework of the Energy Security Treaty, signed at the third PetroCaribe Summit held in Caracas in 2007, the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela had implemented 44 pilot renewable energy projects in the areas of solar, thermal, photovoltaic, geothermal and wind power. The Secretary-General's report did not refer to the speculative practices of multinational oil companies or to the taxes imposed by developed countries on energy use, which were a determining factor in high oil prices. Given continued dependence on fossil fuels, research, development and new technologies were important in order to develop more sustainable use of such fuels.

46. Developing countries, which were not primarily responsible for climate change, were suffering particularly from the impact of the calamity. Those who were responsible were still refusing to take the necessary steps to combat the scourge.

47. **Mr. Ali** (Syrian Arab Republic) expressed surprise that the Secretary-General, in his report on the oil slick on Lebanese shores (A/64/259), had noted Israel's failure to compensate Lebanon for the environmental damage caused by the oil slick but had not mentioned its failure to compensate the Syrian Arab Republic. Paragraph 4 of General Assembly resolution 63/211 had called for compensation for all countries affected by the oil slick, for the costs of repairing the environmental damage. The report did not, therefore, fully reflect the mandate set out in the resolution. His Government's position on the matter was contained in a letter addressed to the Secretary-General (A/C.2/64/10).

48. Given Israel's failure to comply with the resolution, the General Assembly should condemn Israel's conduct and call on it to compensate the Syrian Arab Republic.

49. **Mr. Resnick** (Israel) said that, in his country's experience, agro-industrial innovation could play a critical role in sustainable development. Extending modern agricultural techniques to the hardest hit areas of the developing world would help reduce poverty and ensure their self-sustenance while also taking into account environmental imperatives. Israel's extensive agricultural research and development and its integrated approach to the management of water and land resources had made advanced agriculture possible in arid regions for domestic consumption and export. Existing agricultural technologies and techniques included cost-effective smallholder irrigation systems, production practices that emphasized rain-fed agriculture, water harvesting systems, high-quality genetic materials, value-added agricultural production, agro-technological awareness among young people, forestation, prevention of soil erosion and improvements to pastures.

50. Increased investment was needed in research and development, together with a permanent mechanism for transferring know-how to where it was most needed. Cooperation between Israel's scientific research establishment, government institutions and private sector had been crucial, combining political vision and a regulatory framework, scientific know-how and creativity, and market-oriented development of innovations. That triangular model could be central to the global sustainable development agenda and was the subject of Israel's proposed draft resolution on agricultural technology for development.

51. **Mr. Biya** (Cameroon) said that the decisions adopted a month earlier at the ninth session of the Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification would be vital to the implementation of that Convention and would in turn inform the upcoming Climate Change Conference. He reiterated that all international legal instruments in the area of sustainable development were inextricably linked and complementary.

52. In the Sahara region of Cameroon, annual temperatures were rising and precipitation levels were dropping, causing the desert to advance steadily. Protected areas were becoming more fragile and farmland was being lost owing to drought and reduced soil fertility. In twenty years, the agricultural belt for

crops such as cotton and corn had moved over 300 kilometres southward. On the Atlantic, Cameroon's coastal ecosystems were deteriorating as a result of sedimentation, flooding and rising sea levels. In the south, there was a need for conservation of the vast forest and rational use of resources.

53. To tackle those challenges, Cameroon had taken measures that included national environmental and forest development plans, a reforestation campaign and legislation that created protected areas for greenhouse gas sequestration, required sustainable management and environmental impact studies, and regulated access to forest resources. A network of protected areas covering 18 per cent of the country's surface area safeguarded its biodiversity. Projects aimed at doubling hydroelectric capacity and boosting agricultural production to ensure self-sustenance had been launched.

54. Reminding the Committee that Cameroon's forest was part of the Congo basin, the second largest ecological lung in the world after the Amazon rainforest, he hoped that the international community would include a mechanism in the agreement on the post-Kyoto regime that would compensate his country and others for forgoing full use of their forest resources and thereby maintaining their carbon capture capacity.

55. **Mr. Okuda** (Japan) said that his country could contribute to sustainable development by sharing its experience of doubling its gross domestic product in 30 years with no increase in energy consumption by industry. On climate change, Japan would aim to reduce its emissions to 25 per cent below the 1990 level by 2020. That commitment was premised, however, on a fair and effective international framework covering all major economies and agreement on ambitious targets. Japan would also provide more financial and technical assistance, since vast resources would be needed to support adaptation efforts by developing countries and small island States. The international community must create a mechanism that not only ensured the effective use of public funds but also facilitated the flow of private investments to meet the needs of those countries.

56. He welcomed the Secretary-General's recommendation to hold a high-level event on biodiversity in September 2010, after which Japan would host the tenth session of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Biodiversity in Nagoya in October 2010. His Government was committed to helping establish ambitious, realistic and action-oriented biodiversity targets.

57. Disaster risk reduction was an important component of adaptation to climate change, as more intense and frequent natural disasters posed a serious threat to human safety. The Hyogo Framework for Action should be promoted and implemented as a guideline for building the resilience of the most vulnerable communities.

58. Japan recognized that small island developing States and the least developed countries, which were most affected by climate change while contributing least to global warming, required special support. His Government would provide some $500 million to Pacific island countries over the following three years to assist in protecting the environment and countering climate change, achieving the Millennium Development Goals, promoting human security and overcoming economic vulnerabilities.

59. Before a high-level event on sustainable development was held, thorough consideration should be given to possible themes, timing and necessary preparations as well as to the ongoing workplan of the Commission on Sustainable Development regarding the implementation of Agenda 21. Furthermore, before tackling international environmental governance, Member States should first consider how to achieve maximum results with the limited resources available to the United Nations system. The relevant activities — including multilateral environmental agreements — should be better coordinated and the function of the United Nations Environment Programme should be reviewed.

60. **Ms. Espósito Guevara** (Plurinational State of Bolivia) said that, 20 years after the adoption of Agenda 21 at the Rio Summit, little progress had been made on combating poverty or climate change. The number of persons living in extreme poverty was estimated to have risen to 1.2 billion in 2009, while by 2030 greenhouse gas emissions would be 45 per cent higher than 1990 levels. Desertification was rampant, the list of endangered species was long and South America's glaciers would disappear within a few decades. The current economic model, which had caused the human and environmental crisis, could no longer be applied, based as it was on intensive exploitation of natural resources that failed to take environmental degradation into account in calculating

economic growth. Indeed, greenhouse gas reduction was now being transformed into a speculative market.

61. The climate change crisis was tangible proof of the principle upheld by indigenous peoples that human beings were part of an interdependent system of plants, animals, water and air that must be respected and safeguarded. The challenges now facing the world required a redefinition of sustainable development. Nature must no longer be viewed as merely serving mankind, but as having intrinsic value. Each species, tree, river or mountain had a right to exist independently of human beings. Changing people's mindset would not be easy: the capitalist model had put corporations at the centre of development; the Soviet model had put people at the centre; it was time to put life itself at the centre of all aspirations for development and to recognize that unlimited growth would end in disaster.

62. Man's domination of nature was part of a system of domination that had gradually been countered through the establishment of human rights, economic and social rights, and the rights of women, children and indigenous peoples. It was time to create rights for a vulnerable and defenceless Mother Earth. The current generation was in the unique position of being capable of making a difference at a time when change was crucial.

63. **Mr. Kohona** (Sri Lanka) said that a new development model based on green consciousness might be the way to sustain mankind's future. The development approach of the industrialized countries had been responsible for the increase in carbon dioxide concentrations in the atmosphere, but developing countries would be most vulnerable to the resulting crisis. The issue must be addressed on the basis of the principle of common but differentiated responsibilities and capabilities. Developed countries must accept their historical responsibility for the problem and cover most of the cost of adaptation by developing countries. They should also cut their per capita emission levels: the proposals being discussed by the Group of Eight countries offered a workable starting point.

64. Incentives must be provided to countries with large tropical rainforests, which were a major vehicle of carbon absorption. Over 20 per cent of Sri Lanka was forested; it should be compensated for refraining from using those resources, perhaps by ascribing a carbon value to the forests that could be traded on the global carbon market.

65. His Government had established several agencies, policies and programmes dedicated to achieving sustainable development and exploring solutions to emerging economic and environmental challenges. The new policies had been embraced by the private sector, which was actively involved in efforts to promote cleaner production and consumption practices and introduce new environmental management techniques.

66. The South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation had drawn up an action plan to face threats such as flooding, coral bleach, drought, melting glaciers and insect infestations. The Association had emphasized the need to restore harmony with nature by drawing on ancient South Asian cultural traditions of environmental responsibility and sustainability and had called for cooperation in capacity-building, clean development projects and awareness-raising campaigns. Climate change would be a key theme of the Association's sixteenth summit in 2010. On biodiversity, his Government had begun work on a domestic legal framework for biosafety in accordance with the Cartagena Protocol on Biosafety.

67. Sri Lanka had borne the brunt of the 2004 tsunami: since then, it had established a Disaster Management Centre and introduced a holistic strategy that placed disaster risk management at the centre of development planning. A series of weather stations now monitored weather patterns across the region and a regional agreement on disaster rapid response mechanism would take effect in 2010.

68. **Mr. Rajabi** (Islamic Republic of Iran) said that, while the demand for oil was expected to continue rising, diversification of energy resources and a shift to clean and renewable energy, together with the rational use of fossil fuels, could help address the challenges of sustainable development and global warming. Strong cooperation would be needed among Governments, non-governmental sectors and international organizations to mobilize the extensive investments that would be required to bring new production capacity on line and to transport fuel supplies — in particular natural gas — to market. His Government's main sustainable development policies were to encourage private investment in new and renewable energy, subsidize the development of new technologies by manufacturers and design companies and support university research.

69. Developed and developing countries must share renewable energy technologies. Measures to improve energy use included diversifying energy sources and using them more efficiently in combination with cleaner fossil fuel technologies; developing a global liquefied natural gas market; accelerating the development of affordable energy conservation technologies and their transfer to oil- producing developing countries in particular; minimizing oil and gas losses and emissions throughout the production and distribution process; facilitating the provision to oil-producing and oil-exporting countries of affordable technologies to transform solid fuels to liquid or gaseous fuels, control gas flaring and venting, and perform carbon capture and storage or recapture of energy from waste; and supporting regional energy transmission through interconnected electricity grids and cross-border pipelines and trade. Patterns of energy generation and consumption must change: secure, reliable and affordable energy was fundamental to economic prosperity, social stability and political security.

70. **Ms. Mjuwene** (Malawi) said that poverty, rapid population growth and urbanization, pandemic disease and environmental threats undermined Malawi's efforts to achieve sustainable development. The longer action on climate change was delayed, the more elusive sustainable development would become, especially for the most vulnerable groups living in rural areas suffering from environmental degradation. Since 2004, Malawi had put policies, strategies and programmes in place to assist farmers in adopting practices to increase agricultural productivity, protect the environment and free themselves from poverty. Gender mainstreaming was a part of all policies in recognition of women's important role in natural resource management and the choice of technologies to promote sustainable development. The Government was doing its utmost to promote alternative renewable sources of energy, for example, by encouraging women to use efficient locally made technologies to reduce their dependence on fuel wood.

71. Environmental threats must be addressed on the basis of the principle of common but differentiated responsibilities. Malawi looked forward to achieving a binding consensus at the Climate Change Conference, including on the reduction of greenhouse gas emissions in accordance with the recommendations of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change. While Malawi's greenhouse gas emissions were too insignificant to cause any worry, her Government stood ready to take appropriate national measures in concert with its development partners in order to do its part to preserve the planet for future generations.

72. Her delegation welcomed the decision to hold the Fourth United Nations Conference on the Least Developed Countries in 2011 to take stock of the implementation of the Brussels Programme of Action. She called on cooperating partners to continue fulfilling their commitments on development assistance and to provide the resources, expertise and technologies required to strengthen sustainable development in the least developed countries.

73. **Mr. Oumar** (Niger) said that sustainable development was an acute issue for his country because of its geographical location in the sub-Saharan region, which was characterized by poor soil and growing desertification, and because most of the Niger's population depended on natural resources for their survival. His Government had therefore ratified and would do its utmost to implement all of the Rio Conventions. In accordance with Agenda 21, the Niger had established a national council responsible for implementing environmental and sustainable development policy as well as technical commissions on climate change, biodiversity and combating desertification. Action on the implementation of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change included building capacity by training experts, establishing a database and preparing a comprehensive report on greenhouse gas effects and adaptation; producing public awareness materials and publishing articles on greenhouse gas; and carrying out a study on technology transfer requirements in the areas of energy, agriculture, sanitation, desertification, habitat, industry and transportation. Several rural and forestry projects were under way aimed at combating desertification and deforestation and promoting biodiversity by improving soil use, maintaining greenhouse gas sinks and assessing the environmental and socio-economic impact of climate change. Funding those activities was one of the Niger's main challenges, for the international community had failed to keep the promises of financing it had made at the Rio Conference. His delegation hoped that the Climate Change Conference would yield real solutions. Any new international agreement must include provisions on technology transfer and financial assistance, while

differentiated emissions reduction requirements should be established for all countries.

74. **Mr. Hackett** (Barbados) said that the Barbados Programme of Action and the Mauritius Strategy for Implementation must remain blueprints for the sustainable development aspirations of small island developing States such as his own. The upcoming review of the Programme and Strategy should be comprehensive and should result in a renewed commitment by all Member States to implement them, including through the provision of additional resources, capacity-building and technology transfer. He urged Member States to prepare constructively for and participate at the highest political level in the high-level event to be held in 2010.

75. The rapid and coordinated response to the global financial crisis, in which no effort had been spared to avert total collapse of the financial system, was a good model for action: a similar response was needed to avert an environmental collapse. A mere fraction of the trillions of dollars that had been spent to rescue private financial institutions — or of the military expenditures of developed countries — could help developing countries adapt to climate change.

76. The Climate Change Conference in Copenhagen must deliver an ambitious and comprehensive outcome based on scientific reality. Those who contemplated that a rise of 2 degrees Celsius in average global temperatures was acceptable would not be confronted with the dire impacts of climate change that Barbados was already beginning to experience at current temperature levels. Even a rise of 1.5 degrees entailed risks from which some small island developing States might not recover. The international community must focus on research and development of renewable energy sources and refrain from spending money on mitigation options that prolonged the life of fossil fuels, which caused great damage and would one day be exhausted. With the right mix of fiscal incentives, the private sector and consumers would easily make the transition to renewable energy. His Government aimed to make Barbados one of the most advanced green economies in the region. The General Assembly should send a clear signal that the promotion and use of renewable energy was an international priority and that no effort should be spared to achieve that goal.

77. **Mr. Hernández-Milian** (Costa Rica) called for a commitment by all countries to make sustainable development a reality, for the conservation, management and sustainable use of nature were a common responsibility and tackling global warming, resource shortages, pollution and unplanned development were priorities on the international agenda. Given that developing countries were most vulnerable to environmental crisis, a new international order for the transfer of aid, information and technology was required to combat climate change. The success of the upcoming Climate Change Conference would depend on Member States making more stringent commitments based on shared but differentiated responsibilities.

78. Costa Rica was proud of its goal of becoming carbon neutral by 2021, two centuries after its independence. That ambitious goal was possible thanks to decades of work on protecting the country's biodiversity through reforestation, plant and animal protection and an institutional framework for renewable energy use. All of the country's electricity was generated by water, wind or the sun.

79. International cooperation was needed to devise a global disaster risk reduction strategy. Costa Rica, which was especially prone to natural disasters, had included a housing policy for vulnerable populations in its national development plan for 2006-2011 in order to suppress the development of slums, which were often located in high-risk areas. His Government would also extend its risk management programme.

80. With respect to the implementation of Agenda 21, his delegation recognized the need to make renewable energy available to everyone and supported the Committee's efforts to find strategies for transferring technology to the least developed countries. Costa Rica planned to increase its energy supply and ensure energy security through the use of local energy sources that were both economical and environmentally and socially viable. Nevertheless, much remained to be done to reduce the costs of producing renewable energy. The Commission on Sustainable Development was the appropriate forum for discussions that could improve international cooperation. The United Nations must take the lead in overcoming difficulties to consolidate an economic system based on sustainable development for the benefit of all.

81. **Mr. Savostianov** (Russian Federation) recalled that the Commission on Sustainable Development had adopted a number of recommendations to maintain

agriculture as an international development priority. The principal result of its seventeenth session was the understanding that sustainable agricultural development was important not only for the resolution of the economic and food crises but also, in the longer term, for the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals, poverty eradication and combating environmental degradation.

82. The United Nations Environment Programme continued to play a key role in resolving current environmental problems. At the same time, it had untapped potential. It was gratifying that, at the eighth session of the United Nations Forum on Forests earlier in 2009, Member States had demonstrated long-term thinking and a readiness to compromise, allowing for forward movement on international forest issues. Important decisions had been made on key forest issues, in particular the resolution on forests in a changing environment, and it was hoped that the intergovernmental ad hoc expert group would be able to find mutually acceptable solutions and achieve progress in the financing of sustainable forest development.

83. The recent Summit on Climate Change had demonstrated that there was political support for joint international efforts to combat climate change. A binding political instrument should emerge from the Copenhagen Conference. All countries, and in particular those which had the highest rates of emissions, should sign the new instrument in order for it to have weight. The Russian Federation would insist that the carbon absorption capacities of the Russian forests be more fully taken into account, which had not been the case in the Kyoto Protocol.

84. The Russian Federation welcomed the outcomes of the recent meetings of the Conferences of the Parties to the Convention on Biodiversity and to the Convention to Combat Desertification and attached importance to international collaboration to prevent and respond to natural disasters. The Global Platform for Disaster Risk Reduction was an appropriate format for developing such cooperation. The second session of the Global Platform, held in June 2009 in Geneva, had been positive overall. Reducing disaster risk should be linked to the achievement of the MDGs.

85. While in principle the Russian Federation did not object to integrating disaster risk reduction into climate change adaptation activity, it was important that other elements of the Hyogo Programme, such as geological, biological and man-made disasters, were not crowded out or replaced by climate issues. All the Hyogo priorities should receive balanced financing.

The meeting rose at 1.10 p.m.