



## Economic and Social Council

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### Substantive session of 2009

Coordination segment

#### Provisional summary record of the 21st meeting

Held at the Palais des Nations, Geneva, on Tuesday, 14 July 2009, at 10 a.m.

*President:* Mr. Soborun (Vice-President)..... (Mauritius)

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*In the absence of Ms. Lucas (Luxembourg), Mr Soborun (Mauritius), Vice-President, took the Chair.*

*The meeting was called to order at 10.35 a.m.*

**The role of the United Nations system in implementing the ministerial declaration of the high-level segment of the substantive session of 2008 of the Economic and Social Council** (*continued*) (A/64/64-E/2009/10, A/64/87-E/2009/89 and E/2009/56)

*Introduction of the Report of the Secretary-General on the Role of the Economic and Social Council in the integrated and coordinated implementation of the outcomes of and follow-up to major United Nations conferences and summits, in the light of relevant General Assembly resolutions, including resolution 61/16*

**Mr. Stelzer** (Assistant Secretary-General for Policy Coordination and Inter Agency Affairs), introducing the report of the Secretary-General (E/2009/89), said that the report documented the significant progress that had been made in providing architectural and substantive coherence to the follow-up to major United Nations conferences. Architectural coherence referred to the effort to fit the diversity of the different follow-up tracks into a coherent whole; substantive coherence referred to the promotion of holistic approaches taking account of the links between the different development goals. On the question of periodicity, it was proposed that the report, rather than being issued annually, should be published every four years, in the year prior to the publication of the quadrennial comprehensive policy review of operational activities for development (QCPR).

The original purpose of issuing an annual report had been mainly to monitor progress in setting up an architecture for follow-up to conferences. The institutional framework being largely in place, and the Annual Ministerial Review having taken on part of the monitoring role, a quadrennial report with a substantive focus would give the Council and the General Assembly an overview of the progress made in promoting policy coherence in the implementation of the United Nations development agenda, thereby enabling Member States to provide new guidance on the system's operational activities. It would also reduce the overall reporting burden as the quadrennial report could serve as a basis for drawing up the quadrennial comprehensive policy review. Finally, the report would

also provide useful guidance to United Nations funds, programmes and specialized agencies at the start of their new four-year planning cycle.

Future reports — it was proposed — should pay greater attention to substantive coherence, while providing concrete examples to ensure added value. They would in this way focus on the progress made in advancing the follow-up of conferences on the United Nations development themes examined by the Annual Ministerial Review, while drawing upon the experience mentioned by countries in their national voluntary presentations.

*Introduction of the Report of the Secretary-General on Progress made in the implementation of and follow-up to the World Summit on the Information Society outcomes at the regional and international levels*

**Mr. Hamdi** (Chief of Science and Technology, UNCTAD), introducing the report of the Secretary-General (A/64/64-E/2009/10), said that the digital divide had continued to narrow: in 2008, over half the world's population enjoyed some kind of connectivity and 80 90 per cent lived within range of a cellular network, double the level in 2000. The Internet gap between developed and developing countries was also closing: at the end of 2008, half the world's Internet users were in developing countries, especially Asia, with Africa and the Middle East experiencing the fastest mobile phone and Internet growth.

However, large disparities in terms of penetration and affordability continued to exist, both across and within countries and regions. The broadband divide represented a particular challenge: issues relating to low-cost access to broadband connections, local content development and data privacy merited special attention from the international community. Broadband was a prerequisite for many of the WSIS targets and held great promises for social and economic inclusion. Connection speed and affordability were crucial issues and should be addressed by the United Nations system at large, along with Governments, civil society and the private sector, to assist developing countries in achieving WSIS targets and meeting Millennium Development Goals.

Rising Internet penetration did not necessarily spur an increase in local content. Companies that disseminated non-local content were generally more

powerful than those providing local content. In many developing countries, the incentives for and resources necessary to creating, adapting or exchanging content were simply not available.

Data privacy was an area of growing concern: vulnerability to illegal and intrusive activities, abuser of personal information entrusted to large corporations, trans-border data flows that circumvented national laws were among the potential threats to the general public posed by the global information society. With the assistance of international organizations, developing countries and regions had begun to establish effective laws and institutions for data protection as part of their efforts to prepare cyberlaws and increase their participation in the information society. However, a global approach to a truly global problem had yet to emerge.

While consideration progress had been made in 2008 towards implementation of the outcomes of WSIS, including the sharing of best practices, policy development support for national Governments, e-services deployment and capacity-building, much more needed to be done to create an information society for all. United Nations agencies and bodies must work together with Governments, civil society and the private sector to explore ways of reaching that goal.

**Mr. Maksimych** (Russian Federation) said that there was considerable scope for strengthening the coordination segment by reviewing its agenda in the light of the Council's coordinating function in implementing the decisions of the major United Nations summits and conferences on development and the relevant General Assembly resolutions, including resolution 61/16. According to the report of the Secretary-General (A/64/87-E/2009/89), some progress had been made in that regard, especially through the Annual Ministerial Review and the Development Cooperation Forum. However, the question of the effectiveness of the United Nations system should not be obscured by concentrating solely on the efforts of countries themselves, as the report appeared to propose. The Council remained responsible for monitoring the effectiveness of the work of the numerous inter-agency thematic partnerships and the coordinating structures of the Secretariat, and for monitoring the outcomes of the various United Nations conferences and summits.

The coordination segment must focus on ensuring coherence between the work of the organs responsible for United Nations programmes, funds and specialized agencies, and the Council's efforts to ensure that the decisions of key social and economic forums of the United Nations were implemented in a comprehensive and coordinated manner. The report of the Secretary-General rightly pointed out that least progress had been achieved in that respect.

He agreed that it was necessary to restructure and optimize the process of reviewing, within the Council's coordination segment, its role in implementing the decisions of the major United Nations conferences and summits in the social and economic fields. The Council's agenda item 8, currently dealt with in the general segment in connection with follow-up work on the outcomes of international conferences on financing for development, would more appropriately be handled within the coordination segment.

He was concerned at the tendency to dilute the agenda of the coordination segment by shifting its focus chiefly to the operational activities of United Nations agencies, thereby combining the functions of the coordination segment and the operational activities segment. To narrow down the Council's coordination role merely to oversight of operational activities would not be in accordance with the decisions of Member States, notably General Assembly resolution 61/16, and would undermine the effectiveness of its statutory functions. The comprehensive and coordinated implementation of the decisions of United Nations social and economic conferences and summits should not be confined merely to monitoring progress at the country level and the work of the operational programmes and funds. To do so would be a departure from the principles governing that implementation. He therefore doubted whether it made sense to prepare a report on follow-up activities to the outcomes of major United Nations conferences and summits one year before the quadrennial comprehensive policy review (QCPR) of operational activities for development. The first such review would take place in 2012, and its first report would appear in 2015, a year in which there would be no shortage of thematic reports.

The comprehensive character of the role of the United Nations in development called for an integrated and coordinated approach. To achieve such coherence was a primary task of the Council, and especially of its coordination segment.

**Ms. Holst** (UNESCO) said that in 2008 UNESCO had increased its efforts and resources dedicated to meeting the WSIS Summit goals in its threefold role of implementer of specific activities included in the Plan of Action, facilitator of six action lines, and coordinator of the overall implementation process.

Of particular concern to the Organization's Member States were issues relating to linguistic diversity, including the internationalization of domain names, which would give hitherto excluded language communities greater access to the benefits of technology.

Despite the progress that had been made on a broad range of knowledge of society issues, maintaining the momentum of the World Summit remained a challenge. Another key challenge was to address issues of quality and equity of access and to help countries bridge not only the digital divide but also the more complex knowledge divide.

**Mr. Hilale** (Morocco) said that the role of the Commission on Sustainable Development in examining the environmental, economic and social dimensions of topics central to international multilateral cooperation should be strengthened and its decisions made binding. The important decisions taken by the Commission at its session in May 2009 with regard to agriculture, rural development and the combat against desertification should be implemented rapidly and the mechanisms for doing so identified, with a view to reinforcing the United Nations role in the area of sustainable development.

Imbalances in international environmental governance called for a new, unified structure that could take over activities of the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) and would have the political authority and the financial resources necessary to respond to the current environmental situation. The aim should be to achieve a coordinated strategy that would limit the proliferation of legal instruments, which often led to the duplication of effort.

The United Nations system should play a part in overcoming the obstacles to the promotion of research in renewable energy sources, in particular solar energy, where access to technology was very costly. The agreement to be reached at the Climate Change Conference in Copenhagen in December 2009 must embody a shared vision based on respective capacities, equity and the principle of shared but varying

responsibilities. In the same spirit, his country had recommended at the 14th Climate Change Conference that a multilateral fund on climate technologies be established, with a view to facilitating access to technology and offsetting intellectual property constraints.

In a difficult economic climate, dominated by the food, financial and energy crises, information and communication technologies (ICTs) in the service of development were fundamental. They had become vital throughout the production and services sectors to enabling the developing countries to make good their deficits, and efforts to extend the use of ICTs should be sustained, in particular to reduce the high-speed digital divide.

The international community had a clear roadmap to guide it towards sustainable and harmonious development, equal shares in the benefits of globalization and a peaceful world. Yet those goals could only be reached through implementation, backed by the necessary funding, of the various pledges made on the occasion of United Nations conferences and summits. United Nations system funds, programmes and agencies needed to integrate the outcomes of those conferences in their operational activities and specific cooperation mechanisms and frameworks, having due regard to the political choices and development priorities of the countries concerned.

Revitalizing the spirit of multilateralism and shared responsibility was more important than ever in the context of rapid globalization and economic interdependence. In face of the growing threats of marginalization and impoverishment of large sections of the world's population, the international community, and the developed countries in particular, must act rapidly to establish a global partnership to achieve development for all; in accordance with the Millennium Development Goals.

*The meeting was suspended at 11.15 a.m. and resumed at 11.40 a.m.*

*Panel discussion: Towards a United Nations comprehensive response to the challenges of climate change*

**The President** said that climate change posed challenges in many areas, including health, food security and economic growth. The Chief Executives Board for Coordination (CEB) had launched a cross

cutting initiative to help the agencies and funds of the United Nations system to act in concert and in a comprehensive manner to address the challenges of climate change.

That initiative would confirm the Organization's contribution to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change process and harness its normative, standard setting and operational capacities to deal comprehensively with the challenges of climate change. In so doing, it would facilitate the goal of promoting sustainable development.

The current panel discussion would provide an opportunity to review progress, identify challenges and opportunities and discuss how the intergovernmental process could help ensure a coherent response to climate change within the broader development agenda. He invited Mr. Stelzer, Assistant Secretary General for Policy Coordination and Inter Agency Affairs, to act as moderator for the panel discussion.

**Mr. Stelzer**, Moderator, said that a holistic approach to climate change required the participation and cooperation of a wide range of actors. Accordingly, the CEB initiative on climate change was aimed at developing an action oriented system wide plan to connect the normative, standard-setting and knowledge sharing capacities of the system with its operational activities. The initiative was an important step forward for consolidating the concept of sustainable development within the United Nations system. The panel discussion provided an opportunity for the intergovernmental bodies that guided the work of United Nations agencies to identify ways in which they could help achieve that objective.

**Mr. Khazaei** (Islamic Republic of Iran), speaking in his capacity as Chairman of the Executive Board of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), said that climate change was a global problem that required a comprehensive response supported by decision makers at the local, national and international levels. The United Nations system was unique and should play a central role in the response to climate change, which would affect the availability of basic necessities and vital socio economic infrastructure. The challenges of climate change must be addressed with a view especially to ensuring sustainable development and the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals by the developing countries.

The Organization should allocate financial resources in a more simple and transparent manner based on the needs of countries. It should strengthen developing countries' institutional capacity and promote access to efficient, clean technologies. There should be a balance between economic development, social development and environmental protection, the three pillars of sustainable development. United Nations system activities should be results oriented and tailored to the needs of the developing countries.

Member States should be made aware that the United Nations had the capacity to meet the needs of the developing countries in the four major areas of the Bali Action Plan, namely mitigation, adaptation, finance and technology. They should be informed of the opportunities and resources available within the system. Institutional arrangements and management by developing countries, in particular with regard to project implementation, must be strengthened.

As the Organization's major operational entity, UNDP helped developing countries to prevent such crises as the financial crisis or climate change from becoming humanitarian crises. Crises should be seen as opportunities for coordinated national and international action to promote sustainability and reduce poverty, for example through energy efficiency and improved production patterns. The response to climate change must be linked to poverty reduction; the poor contributed the least to the build up of greenhouse gases, but food security, access to water, agriculture and employment were all affected by climate change.

UNDP worked in the context of the United Nations Development Group (UNDG) to address the problem of climate change and meet countries' development needs, in particular with regard to the Millennium Development Goals. In 2009 UNDG had surveyed country teams on their activities and needs and was currently conducting an inventory of climate change activities and developing a guidance note on mainstreaming climate change into country programmes. The Executive board of UNDP used its monitoring responsibility to ensure the system integrated a climate change perspective into national programmes.

In coordination with the World Bank, UNDP encouraged synergies and collaboration between the United Nations, international financial institutions and development partners. Given the changing financial

situation, new roles for UNDP could include: preparing countries for direct access to international resources and better coordination with other sources of funding; providing technical support for development and facilitating technology transfer; promoting existing development cooperation tools, for example multi donor trust funds; working on innovative financial solutions; and analyzing how climate change funding and funding for economic recovery benefited the poor and led to long term sustainability.

UNDP was one of the largest sources of funding for environmental assistance, having disbursed US\$ 1.5 billion directly and over US\$ 3 billion in co-financing for environmental assistance during the period 2004-2007. About 48 per cent of that had been provided in the context of the Global Environment Facility (GEF), of which UNDP was a major partner. He stressed however that the financial resources of the United Nations must be increased. It had for example been estimated that up to US\$ 250 billion was needed for environmental activities across the world. In the important area of capacity building UNDP was developing a training platform on climate change for United Nations agencies and member States.

Strong political will on the part of member States was necessary to tackle the problems posed by climate change. That will must be complemented with increased financial resources for the United Nations development system so that it could address the challenge of climate change at the global level. He expressed concern that the financial assistance the developing world needed did not seem to be forthcoming.

**Ms. Verburg** (Netherlands), speaking in her capacity as Chairperson of the Commission on Sustainable Development, underscored the Council's crucial coordinating role in ensuring the implementation of the outcomes of major United Nations events. The current multiple crises had severely affected sustainable development and achievement of the Millennium Development Goals. The world needed an urgent transition toward a sustainable and resource efficient way of life.

One of the biggest challenges was how to feed the population of the planet. At its seventeenth session, the Commission on Sustainable Development had therefore identified agriculture as the key to poverty reduction. In many developing countries agriculture

was also the driving force for economic development. It was at the heart of sustainable development and the sustainable use of natural resources and should be an integral part of the climate change agenda, especially with regard to mitigation and adaptation.

Agricultural productivity must be increased but in a sustainable way. Private investment from farmers, processors and traders was needed while Governments, civil society organizations and donors must promote an enabling environment and provide the required public goods, from research to roads. Agricultural chain management, market access and security and safety must likewise be improved.

The Commission on Social Development had put forward numerous policy options and practical measures relating to agriculture, rural development, land, drought, desertification and Africa, focusing on the opportunities and challenges for the global agriculture system, especially its importance for the developing world in terms of reducing poverty and hunger. It had underscored that agriculture was not part of the problem but part of the solution.

The Commission had also stressed the link between agricultural productivity and food security and the need for increased investment in sustainable agriculture; the importance of transferring innovative technology, training, and sharing of good agricultural practices; and the need to adapt science to local conditions and allocate more resources to sustainable agriculture, especially in the developing countries. Special attention must be given to promoting a sustainable green revolution in Africa by combining science with farmers' own knowledge. There must also be a new focus on land and water management based on the principle of sustainability.

Lastly, the Commission had underscored that agriculture must play a central role in the response to climate change and in the upcoming Copenhagen Conference. In that regard, she said that much could be done to make agriculture an ally in combating climate change while also improving the lives of farmers or delivering alternative livelihoods. Increased agricultural efficiency would reduce greenhouse gas emissions while also enhancing food security. Some experts for example believed that the agricultural sector could be broadly carbon neutral by 2030 if sustainable management practices were adopted. Productivity could likewise be improved through

enhanced market access, investment in infrastructure and education.

Mitigation activities could be undertaken for little cost while maintaining production. Actions to increase soil carbon for example could increase resilience in the face of climate induced stresses and ensure sustainable production. Investments could likewise be made in drought and heat tolerant crops. Other opportunities included: improved agriculture related advice and training; promotion of sustainable land management; improved access to credit and microcredit; coordinated regional agriculture related mitigation problems; and analysis of traditional practices with a view to facilitating change. Much could likewise be done in the areas of distribution, post harvest processing and consumption; making better use of food waste was, for example, an area that had been neglected.

Action on a broad front in terms of agriculture and food production in order to meet the challenge of climate change could therefore have significant climate benefits. The international development community must strive for synergy within the United Nations community and between the Organization and member countries in order to achieve food security, poverty reduction and the sustainable use of ecosystems, in particular in the context of climate change.

The United Nations had a crucial role to play in providing member States with coherent and integrated support for the implementation of policy recommendations. All stakeholders, including civil society, must be involved in the management of natural resources. By acting together, the international community could fundamentally change agricultural policy and promote a green economy for the benefit of current and future generations.

**Mr. Martirosyan** (Armenia), speaking in his capacity as Chairperson of the United Nations Commission on the Status of Women, said the Commission had always paid attention to the role of women in sustainable development. It had worked on sustainable development since 2000, and at its forty sixth session in 2002 it had addressed environmental management and the mitigation of natural disasters, calling for action to mainstream a gender perspective into research and policy on climate change. In 2008 the Commission had called on Governments to ensure women's participation in decision making at all levels on environmental issues. Among the conclusions of its

2009 session was a call for women's equal participation in decision making processes on sustainable development, including those that addressed the impact of climate change on women.

In 2008, the Commission had decided to focus on the gender perspective of climate change as an emerging issue. It had organized an inter active expert panel to consider the gender aspects of climate change, which had found that poor women in communities dependent on local natural resources were disproportionately affected by climate change. They were highly exposed to the risks of drought, uncertain rainfall and deforestation. They tended to be underrepresented in decision making processes on climate change, but in their role as stewards of natural resources they could be effective in mitigating and adapting to it. Action was now being taken to increase the participation of women, through advocacy and awareness raising, information and training for women, efforts to include them in climate change negotiations, and initiatives to increase attention to gender perspectives in policymaking.

In the past, the Commission had transmitted its conclusions and recommendations to the Council and to the Commission on Sustainable Development. Increased interaction between the two Commissions and with the United Nations Forum on Forests and other bodies dealing with climate change could be a positive development.

At its fifty sixth session in 2012, the Commission on the Status of Women would focus on the empowerment of rural women and their role in poverty and hunger eradication. That would be an opportunity to address the impact of climate change on rural women, and for the Commission to cooperate on the issue with the Commission on Sustainable Development. It already cooperated with the United Nations Statistical Commission in resolving the lack of sex disaggregated data for policy formulation. Another challenge was the lack of systematic mainstreaming of gender perspectives into the work of the United Nations on climate change. Key instruments on climate change, such as the Kyoto Protocol, the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) and the Bali Action Plan failed to address the specific concerns of women. The Commission on the Status of Women stood ready to bring its expertise in those concerns to bear in the Council and in other functional

commissions, in order to ensure greater attention to gender perspectives.

**Ms. Azevêdo** (Brazil), speaking in her capacity as Chairperson of the Governing Body of the International Labour Organization (ILO), said that the importance of labour related issues for climate change could hardly be overstated. In the process of creating greener patterns of production and consumption, new jobs would be created, while some jobs would be lost and others replaced. The task facing ILO and the international community was to ensure that the transition to a low carbon world offered new economic opportunities for workers, employers and governments. Workers could be trained for innovative and environmentally sustainable jobs, employers should facilitate access to greener technologies, and governments should share experiences and best practices in promoting decent work in an environmentally sustainable economy.

At present, around 1.3 people worldwide, or over 43 per cent of the global workforce, were struggling to survive on less than US\$ 2 a day, while millions were unemployed and 5.3 billion lacked social security cover. Millions were affected by climate-related disasters, pollution, water and food shortages and loss of biodiversity, and many became environmental refugees. However, the current economic crisis offered an opportunity to build new and more sustainable patterns of production and consumption. It had already been agreed, at the recent G8 meeting, to reduce greenhouse gas emissions by 80 per cent by 2050. That would make it imperative to create green jobs. The ILO had launched a "Green Jobs Initiative" in partnership with the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), the International Trade Union Confederation and the International Organization of Employers. The first report issued by the partnership, "Green Jobs: Towards Decent Work in a Sustainable, Low-Carbon World", showed that clean development could achieve both economic growth and environmentally sound jobs.

Through high-efficiency strategies, green jobs could reduce energy consumption and the waste of raw materials and water, cut greenhouse gas emissions and restore biodiversity. Renewable energy created more jobs than fossil fuel power plants per unit of installed capacity, per unit of power output and per dollar invested. Brazil's experience showed that biofuels could play a major role in creating green jobs in agriculture and energy production. In Germany,

thousands of green jobs had been created in the construction sector by retrofitting and replacing obsolete equipment in buildings. Investment in solar energy for social housing had created many more green jobs. In the transport sector, new job opportunities could stem from the production of fuel-efficient or hybrid vehicles, or those using alternative fuels. Political will was needed, especially at the forthcoming Copenhagen conference on climate change, to protect the environment while promoting economic growth and social inclusion.

**Dr. Hetteš** (Slovakia), speaking in his capacity as Vice-Chairperson of the Commission for Social Development, commented on the follow-up and implementation of the Copenhagen Declaration and Programme of Action. The Commission's priority theme for the current biennium was social integration. Climate change might prove to be the defining issue for social justice, but its social consequences were still largely unknown. Weak governance and inadequate regulation of the financial markets were responsible for the global jobs crisis, developing countries being especially badly affected. However, new jobs generated by climate change could benefit the most vulnerable population groups: women, young people, those living in poverty and migrants. The report recently produced through the Green Jobs Initiative, and the recent policy brief by the United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs (UNDESA) called "A Global Green New Deal for Sustainable Development" both offered good starting points. Poverty eradication and tackling climate change went hand in hand. The MDGs could not be achieved without tackling climate change and environmental degradation. Immediate short-term measures to counter the impact of the current global crisis could include large scale, internationally coordinated fiscal stimulus packages consistent with the goals of sustainable development, and integrated economic and social policies aimed at protecting the well-being of the poor and disadvantaged. In the medium- to long-term, gender perspectives must be incorporated into all policies addressing climate change, and public spending on health and education should be increased to a level sufficient to meet the MDGs. It was important to capture the environmental enthusiasm of the present generation of young people. They, given the right training, could find employment in the growing green jobs sector, thereby helping the planet as well as themselves.



The United Nations system could assist countries in socio-economic cost-benefit analysis, the climate-proofing of investments and spatial planning. It could strengthen national capacities to improve policy on climate change, while collecting and disseminating good practices and knowledge. It could also enhance regional cooperation in adapting to climate change.

**Mr. Shwaikh** (Iraq), stressing that the world's poor were not responsible for greenhouse gas emissions, asked whether developed countries would be required to provide bilateral compensation to countries most affected by climate change or whether funding for adaptation would be provided in the framework of a United Nations assistance programme.

**Mr. Fries** (Sweden), speaking on behalf of the European Union, said that climate change was a global problem requiring a global response. Adaptation was a challenge for every country, especially for those developing countries that were vulnerable to adverse climatic effects, least developed countries (LDCs), small island developing States and African countries most affected by drought, desertification and floods.

The European Union had announced ambitious greenhouse gas mitigation targets as early as 2007 and was prepared to further reduce its emissions provided that other developed countries did likewise and that developing countries also contributed, based on their ability to pay and their responsibility for emissions. Developed countries must take the lead in order to achieve an ambitious agreement in Copenhagen, but there was room for active participation by all stakeholders at every level. Women were key actors in sustainable development and a gender perspective could greatly benefit actions to address climate change. Those actions must also incorporate the needs of the most vulnerable, especially children.

Mitigation and adaptation policies would only succeed if integrated into national development strategies and budgets. The financial implications for development would be huge, requiring multiple sources of funding.

The European Union would continue to promote a more integrated approach to climate change. The international response should take account of the potential impact of climate change on security and migration, as well as the likelihood that it would provoke conflicts over scarce resources.

Climate change concerns should be mainstreamed into sustainable development policies that promoted economic growth, social development and sound environmental management. Access to sustainable energy was a prerequisite for all three, as well as for achievement of the MDGs. The fact that the world faced climate change impacts in the midst of a global economic and financial crisis made a stronger United Nations all the more imperative.

**Ms. Kakimzhanova** (Kazakhstan) said her country had recently ratified the Kyoto Protocol. It had set in train applied research into the vulnerability of the economy and natural resources to climate change, and an appraisal of possible adaptive measures. Steps were being taken to update the law on renewable energy, in order to comply with the country's obligations to reduce greenhouse gas emissions. Industrial emissions had been reduced from 4.7 million tonnes in 1990 to 3 million in 2006. Kazakhstan's technical breakthrough was due in part to the creation of the Euro Asian Water Centre and the Climate Change Coordination Centre. Kazakhstan welcomed the leading role of the United Nations in tackling the problems of environmental degradation and climate change, and would take an active part in developing an international agreement on a framework programme for combating climate change in the period after 2012.

The United Nations was central to the promotion of clean technologies and new jobs and to the task of assisting developing countries in the transfer of technology through financial institutions such as the World Bank and the Asian Development Bank. Kazakhstan supported international efforts to reduce the depletion of tropical forests, which currently caused about 20 per cent of greenhouse gas emissions, and had launched its own nationwide "Green Nation" initiative. The business community accounted for the largest share of greenhouse gas emissions. The leading investors in Kazakhstan had accordingly been recommended, at a Government-investor dialogue in December 2007, to prepare a programme for the transition of their enterprises in Kazakhstan to sustainable development by introducing clean production principles.

**Mr. Bonamigo** (Brazil) said that the crisis was entirely economic and financial in origin, yet its consequences were largely social. As financial institutions toppled, people throughout the world were increasingly exposed to unemployment, poverty,

hunger and homelessness. The role of the State as regulator and driver of sustainable development should thus be reinvigorated. The crisis also offered an important opportunity to orient economic recovery towards social inclusion and sustainable practices. New investments in energy, transport, agriculture and infrastructure should be combined with incentives for sustainable innovation and technology transfer. He would be grateful if the panellists would comment on how the United Nations system might use its response to the crisis to promote food security, the creation of “green jobs” and public health.

**Mr. Mbuende** (Namibia) said that climate change posed a serious threat to all nations and could not be divorced from its political context. The world must not wait for Copenhagen before implementing adaptation practices, since adaptation to climate change was key to mankind’s very survival. The sustainability of mitigation efforts would depend, quite simply, on the extent to which developed countries were prepared to assist developing countries with financial resources and technology transfer. It was important to avoid the usual development cooperation platitudes and focus on ensuring concrete action on the ground.

**Ms. Nabarro** (Plurinational State of Bolivia) said that the historic responsibility of developed countries to meet the costs incurred by developing countries in mitigating the effects of climate change was enshrined in article 4, paragraphs 3 and 7, of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change. Developed countries could be said to have incurred a “climate debt” towards developing countries, which must now be repaid through reductions in emissions, provision of financial support and transfers of technology. Poverty eradication and sustainable social and economic development must be integrated within climate change adaptation efforts.

**Mr. Khazaei** (Islamic Republic of Iran), President of the Executive Board of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), said that financial assistance from the Bretton Woods Institutions for mitigating the effects of climate change must not be used as a political tool against poor nations. Political will and a sense of solidarity were needed at both the global and national levels to equip developing countries to deal with climate change. Although sound environmental management had been viewed as a pillar of sustainable development for almost two decades now, the issue had yet to be properly integrated into

assistance strategies and policies. It was vital also to ensure that political issues did not prevent developed countries from transferring much-needed technology to the developing world.

**Ms. Verburg** (Netherlands), Chairperson of the Commission on Sustainable Development, said that the climate change debate should also address positive opportunities, such as how to combine new technologies with local experience and knowledge in order to devise “home-grown” solutions for food, energy and water and for rethinking the farm to consumer chain. New technologies — such as drip irrigation — offered the possibility of increasing food production while at the same time reducing greenhouse gas emissions. Efforts to ensure future food sustainability for a rapidly growing world population must also be coupled with sound environmental management.

She wished to assure the representative of Namibia that the United Nations was not merely engaged in producing paper recommendations and statements, but in actually translating words into concrete action. Its role with regard to climate change was clear: to share information and stimulate the exchange of best practices; to help countries implement new strategies; to connect stakeholders and create global partnerships; and to promote the integration of climate change responses in line with the “One UN” initiative.

**Mr. Martirosyan** (Armenia), Chairperson of the Commission on the Status of Women, said that he hoped that the lack of any specific mention of the role of women in climate change efforts did not reflect the importance being accorded to the issue. The Commission on the Status of Women remained ready to cooperate with the Council in efforts to promote a multidimensional approach to climate change.

**Ms. Farani Azevêdo** (Brazil), Governing Body of the International Labour Organization (ILO), said that all stakeholders had a shared yet differentiated responsibility to address climate change. The transfer of technology to developing countries was crucial, as was greater market access for their products. Without a world trade free of subsidies, there would be no prosperity for poorer nations.

**Mr. Hetteš** (Slovakia), Vice-Chairperson of the Commission for Social Development, said that since climate change and the global financial and economic

crises were interconnected, a holistic response was required. It was necessary to move from paper commitments to concrete environmental regulations and a strengthened role for the United Nations. He wished to suggest that the ILO Director-General be invited to the conference in Copenhagen. That said, more actions were needed, and fewer conferences.

*The meeting rose at 1.20 p.m.*