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Chairperson: Ms. Würtz (Vice-Chairperson) (Hungary)

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In the absence of Ms. Ochir (Mongolia), Ms. Würtz (Hungary), Vice-Chairperson, took the Chair.

The meeting was called to order at 10.05 a.m.

Agenda item 20: Sustainable development (*continued*) (A/65/88, A/65/275, A/65/278, A/65/485 and A/65/486)

- (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/65/229, A/65/297, A/65/298 and A/CONF.216/PC/5)
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- (f) **Convention on Biological Diversity** (*continued*) (A/65/294)
- (g) **Report of the Governing Council of the United Nations Environment Programme on its eleventh special session** (*continued*) (A/65/25 (Supp) and A/65/383)
- (h) **United Nations Decade of Education for Sustainable Development** (*continued*) (A/65/279)
- (i) **Harmony with Nature** (*continued*) (A/65/314)

1. **Mr. Zan** (Myanmar) said that while the international community had made great strides towards promoting sustainable development, persistent implementation gaps remained in poverty eradication, food security, income inequalities, climate change and water sanitation, and the approach taken towards achieving sustainable development goals, including the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), was

fragmented. Against that backdrop, and in the light of the multiple crises facing the international community, the opportunity of the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development, to be held in Rio in 2012, must be seized.

2. The eradication of poverty figured prominently on Myanmar's development agenda as that scourge was both the cause and effect of environmental degradation. To address environmental protection, his Government had strengthened national legislation, had established a national commission on environmental affairs in 1990, and had adopted an environmental policy to ensure that environmental concerns were incorporated into national economic development programmes, among other measures. Sound environmental policies and laws were in place, with stringent enforcement, particularly to ensure the sustainability of forests, which covered nearly 50 per cent of Myanmar's total land area and played an important role in its economy. The International Year of the Forest in 2011 would be an occasion to enhance awareness-raising for current and future generations.

3. Countries needed to work together towards substantive outcomes at the upcoming Conference on Sustainable Development, and developing countries must be given more equitable access to the benefits of the world economy, through a supportive international economic environment, the transfer of environmentally sound technology and adequate additional financial resources.

4. **Mr. Kohona** (Sri Lanka) called for the early establishment of a fund to address the impacts of climate change. His Government also endorsed the establishment of a global partnership to synergize investment in climate change mitigation, as the private sector could be a major catalyst in addressing global warming through corporate social responsibility.

5. Negotiations under the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change needed to reach a satisfactory conclusion, based on the principles of equity and common but differentiated responsibilities. The Ad Hoc Working Group on Further Commitments for Annex I Parties under the Kyoto Protocol and the Ad Hoc Working Group on Long-term Cooperative Action under the Convention should continue their work with a view to obtaining a legally binding outcome in Cancún at the sixteenth

session of the Conference of the Parties to the Framework Convention in December 2010.

6. The outcomes of the tenth meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity, held in Nagoya, Japan in October 2010, must be implemented. The multi-year plan of action on South-South cooperation on biodiversity for development, adopted by the Group of 77 and China, also had merit. However, adequate financing and effective implementation were still required to achieve the 11 biodiversity goals for 2010 reported in the third edition of the *Global Biodiversity Outlook*.

7. A series of national measures were in place in Sri Lanka to protect biodiversity, including a complete moratorium on timber felling, the protection of 13 wet-zone forests and a biodiversity conservation action plan which enjoyed broad participation, including from civil society. His Government planned to increase the country's forest area to cover more than 30 per cent of its total land area by 2016, and would support reducing emissions from deforestation and forest degradation (REDD-plus). However, those activities needed adequate, predictable and sustainable financing and technological support.

8. Other national measures included the establishment of a national council for sustainable development, the reorientation of Government ministries to focus on energy, climate change and other environmental aspects, and the incorporation of cleaner production principles into national development activities. Sri Lanka's national disaster management plan, which included an early warning system via mobile phone and the construction of multi-hazard warning towers in coastal areas, was ready for implementation.

9. The principles contained in the Rio Declaration on Environment and Development, adopted in 1992, remained valid; the Plan of Implementation of the World Summit on Sustainable Development and the Marrakesh Process were also integral parts of the progress achieved. Moving forward, the concept of a green economy should complement the globally agreed sustainable development principles. Nevertheless, developing countries still required technological transfers, knowledge-sharing and capacity-building. Moreover, major consumers and waste producers must take steps to ensure the environmental sustainability of their production and consumption patterns.

10. **Ms. Bruell-Melchior** (Monaco) welcomed the adoption of the Nagoya protocol on access to genetic resources and the fair and equitable sharing of benefits arising from their utilization at the recent meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity in Japan. She noted that her Government was committed to ensuring sustainable fishery resources, promoting marine protected areas and the biodiversity of coastal areas, and meeting the objectives set out in the Convention on Biodiversity. It therefore fully supported the early establishment of an intergovernmental science-policy platform on biodiversity and ecosystem services.

11. Her Government would support the negotiations process with a view to obtaining tangible and balanced results at the forthcoming Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change. For its part, Monaco planned to improve energy efficiency and to reduce greenhouse gas emissions, including by encouraging the use of seawater heat pumps, solar heating systems, public transport and electric and hybrid vehicles.

12. Her Government supported taking a comprehensive approach to address the multiple crises that the global community faced. Moreover, through technical, scientific or financial partnerships, in full cooperation with local communities, it planned to assist the most vulnerable populations to deal with climate change by sharing skills and knowledge. Those initiatives ranged, inter alia, from providing access to drinking water, health and sanitation services to promoting the employment of women.

13. The international community should not only seize the opportunity of the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development in 2012 to work towards a green economy which fostered sustainable development, but should also adopt an institutional framework for environmental governance to help tackle the challenges ahead.

14. **Ms. Al-Zaabi** (United Arab Emirates) said that her country continued to make significant progress in implementing Agenda 21 and the outcomes of the World Summit on Sustainable Development. It had already achieved several MDGs, including in the areas of poverty eradication, education, health care and the empowerment of women. Her Government had prioritized decent jobs and employment for youth, allocating more than 20 per cent of its 2009 federal

budget to education; planned to undertake educational reform and a decent work programme; and was continuing to diversify the local economy and move away from dependence on oil exports.

15. Her Government, which was proactive in tackling climate change issues at the local, regional and international levels, had taken major steps to reduce pollution, preserve ecosystems and promote a green approach to construction, transportation and waste management; had applied zero emissions policies to all oil-related activities; was mainstreaming the use of unleaded fuel in transport sectors and expanding green areas in urban cities and desert areas; planned to build on the alternative and renewable energies sector to provide sustainable, environmentally friendly sources of energy, such as through its Masdar City initiative; and had also adopted strategies in order to develop sustainable freshwater resources and to maximize water usage efficiency.

16. International partnerships for development were important. In that respect, her Government had provided financial assistance and direct investment in education, energy, agriculture and infrastructure in numerous countries. It had exceeded the target of 0.7 per cent of gross national product as official development assistance (ODA) to developing countries, and urged other donors to honour their commitments in that regard.

17. **Mr. Rengifo** (Colombia) said that all stakeholders must seize the opportunity of the 2012 United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development to launch a new environmental agreement, building on lessons learned and bridging implementation gaps. It was crucial to strengthen the link between sustainable development and economic prosperity. In that regard, initiatives such as the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change should reinforce the development perspective and focus on adaptation, technology transfer and capacity-building. The agreements reached at the recent meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Biodiversity should also be effectively implemented, particularly the Nagoya protocol.

18. Recalling that Colombia was home to more than 10 per cent of the world's biodiversity, he said that its achievements to date reflected its commitment to protecting its heritage. The economy was relatively clean, since Colombia had the lowest emission levels per unit of gross domestic product in Latin America

and almost 90 per cent of its energy was derived from water. Striving to recover, maintain and preserve its flora and fauna, Colombia had made significant investments both nationally and internationally in order to achieve the relevant MDGs.

19. Biodiversity and development were interlinked and had great potential for eradicating poverty, particularly in countries of origin. Given that biological diversity was crucial to human welfare, economic and social progress and the environmental health of the planet, it deserved priority attention and full commitment from the international community.

20. **Mr. Loulichki** (Morocco), speaking on behalf of the Group of Arab States, which associated itself with the statement made by the delegation of Yemen on behalf of the Group of 77 and China, said that the economic, social and environmental dimensions of sustainable development must be pursued with equal energy, as stressed at the second Afro-Arab summit held in the Libyan Arab Jamahiriya in October 2010. In that connection, the forthcoming United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development should arrive at an international agreement on mechanisms to support sustainable development for the post-2012 period. To that end, it must review the outcomes of the 1992 United Nations Conference on Environment and Development; assess what had been achieved to date; define ways to support developing countries in achieving sustainable development goals; reaffirm the political commitment to support sustainable development; and deal with new challenges. He also reaffirmed the provisions of the Rio Declaration on Environment and Development and the Johannesburg Plan of Implementation, particularly with regard to the removal of obstacles to sustainable development. One such obstacle was foreign occupation, first and foremost the Israeli occupation of Arab territory in Palestine, the Golan and South Lebanon, an issue that must also be reviewed by the forthcoming Conference.

21. Climate change was likely to have adverse impacts on development in the Arab region, such as a decline in agricultural production and plant cover, a loss of biodiversity, inadequate food security and a threat to many vital economic investments. There would also be many social consequences stemming from the migration of population from affected areas, both within and between States, with growing pressure on the environment and resources.

22. Dealing with the possible consequences of climate change would require international mobilization and solidarity to achieve sustainable development goals that would benefit all States, with special importance accorded to helping those developing countries most likely to be affected by climate change. Emphasis must once again be placed on the historical responsibility of the advanced countries and the need for them to shoulder their responsibilities and help developing countries adapt to climate change. There was a need for enhanced political will to prepare the necessary momentum for the sixteenth session of the Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change and the sixth session of the Conference of the Parties serving as the Meeting of the Parties to the Kyoto Protocol both to be held shortly in Cancún. Those sessions must lead to binding results and a consensus reached through transparent, inclusive negotiations, taking into account the provisions and principles contained in the Framework Convention and the Kyoto Protocol, in particular the principle of common but differentiated responsibilities, in a manner that reflected the views and expectations of the Arab States regarding climate change mitigation, adaptation and financing, as well as technology transfer and capacity-building.

23. The Arab Group welcomed the outcomes of the tenth meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity, which had resulted in the establishment of an international system of access to genetic resources and benefit-sharing. That system would help protect genetic resources from unfair exploitation and guarantee their sustainable use, in addition to developing rules for defining responsibility and compensation for any harmful effects of the use of genetically modified resources. The Group further welcomed the adoption by the Conference of a strategic plan for the period 2011 to 2020 in connection with the United Nations Convention on Biological Diversity.

24. All countries must exercise full sovereignty over their genetic resources and traditional knowledge and practices. The new international system must therefore be legally binding and take into account the interests of countries of origin and end-user countries; it must include the requirement to disclose relevant sources in a manner that ensured the technical, scientific and financial benefits accrued to the countries of origin;

and it must include provisions for the sustainable use of genetic resources in the countries of origin on preferential terms.

25. Speaking in his national capacity, he said that economic development based on the use of conventional energy was not sustainable since it destroyed the natural resources needed to promote present and future economic activity. The benefits of growth must be shared equitably in order to address the global priority of poverty eradication, which remained inseparable from socio-economic development and environmental protection.

26. The objectives of sustainable development, as enshrined in Agenda 21 in 1992 and repeatedly endorsed by Member States, required the mobilization of additional funding for developing countries. While remarkable progress had been made, many of those objectives had not been attained: several outstanding issues, including climate change, environmental degradation and the impact of the financial crisis, called for an intervention by the international community as a whole.

27. In the face of that challenge, Morocco welcomed recent international developments, including the conclusion of the Nagoya protocol and the adoption of the Strategic Plan for the Convention on Biological Diversity for the period 2011-2020, and hoped that the positive outcomes of the Nagoya meeting would in turn help to ensure the success of the forthcoming Cancún Climate Change Conference. Recent United Nations initiatives, such as the proposed high-level meetings on disaster reduction and desertification and the establishment of a high-level panel on sustainable development, also deserved every support.

28. Morocco, for its part, had resolutely embarked on a course of sustainable development, out of a concern not only to manage its resources rationally but also to improve the quality of life of its people. It was irreversibly committed to implementing the recommendations of the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development, which were reflected in several of its national strategies and plans. Its 2020 Rural Development Strategy was a specific dimension of its overall development strategy and addressed the many social problems arising in rural areas. In the energy field, Morocco was seeking to diversify its resources through a 2000 megawatt solar mega-project, which would be operational in late 2019. In the matter

of risk prevention, which was seen as the shared responsibility of citizens and the State, the Moroccan natural disaster strategy reflected the spirit of the Hyogo Declaration adopted at the 2005 World Conference on Disaster Reduction.

29. Morocco had also drawn up a Natural Charter for Environment and Sustainable Development, which established an ethical framework for sustainable development based on the preservation of biodiversity. The choice of Rabat to lead the celebrations for the fortieth anniversary of Earth Day in 2010 attested to the achievements of Morocco, which was rightly regarded as a development model for Africa.

30. At the international level, a great deal hinged on the question of governance. His delegation therefore hoped that the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) Major Group and Stakeholders Advisory Group on International Environmental Governance, which would be holding its second meeting in November 2010, would pave the way for the establishment in the near future of an international mechanism to promote sustainable development, particularly in developing countries.

31. **Mr. Velasteguí** (Ecuador) said that the idea that human beings were an inseparable part of nature, as expressed in the Secretary-General's report entitled "Harmony with Nature" (A/65/314), had rightly been at the centre of international discussions on the principles and goals of sustainable development. Those goals had been severely jeopardized by the global financial, food and climate crises and further exacerbated by the failure of several developed countries to honour their ODA commitments. Under such circumstances, it had become all the more difficult not only to achieve the three pillars of sustainable development, but also to meet the MDGs, particularly with regard to poverty eradication.

32. Given the lack of political will on the part of the developed countries historically responsible for climate change, there was a need for a second series of commitments under the Kyoto Protocol and the effective and comprehensive implementation of the Bali Action Plan. The Cancún Climate Change Conference would provide a fresh opportunity to advance that agenda.

33. Ecuador was taking constructive action to reach a consensus to that effect. In that spirit, it had voluntarily decided not to exploit the oil reserves that it possessed in one of the most biodiverse regions in the world,

thereby forfeiting revenue that could serve for its development. As a result of that decision, which would yield benefits for the planet as a whole, Ecuador needed the support of the international community.

34. As a megadiverse country, Ecuador welcomed the outcomes of the tenth meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity, particularly the establishment of an international system of access to genetic resources and benefit-sharing. While Ecuador had joined the Countdown 2010 network and was committed to fighting biodiversity loss, without the support of the international community, especially the developed countries, developing countries like his own would not be able to achieve sustainable development. There was therefore an urgent need for all countries to enter into a firm political commitment and undertake decisive action for the benefit of all, particularly the poorest and most vulnerable.

35. **Mr. Sparber** (Liechtenstein) said that climate change and ecosystem destruction were already affecting human beings and, if not addressed, could have an irreversible impact on the future of the world. Environmental pollution and climate change ignored boundaries; they required collective action as a matter of urgency, in line with Goal 7 of the MDGs.

36. Liechtenstein, for its part, stood ready to contribute to the collective response to the new development challenges; it had signed the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change and had set aside further funds to help developing countries address those challenges. However, reductions in global carbon dioxide emissions required the collective political will of all States.

37. As a member of the Environmental Integrity Group, Liechtenstein would continue through both national and international action to support the conclusion of a legally binding post-2012 climate change agreement. A continuing stalemate in the climate negotiations would not only have disastrous consequences for future generations; it would also have a detrimental effect on the role of the United Nations in that field. While the Group of Twenty and other forums could provide valuable input in that process, a substantial compromise ultimately depended on the political will of the negotiating partners. He therefore urged the States Parties to the Framework Convention to adopt a pragmatic approach in the forthcoming negotiations in Cancún, in the interests of the efficient

multilateralism that determined the primary global governance role of the United Nations.

38. **Ms. Al-Hadid** (Jordan) said that, as a country whose semi-arid climate made it highly dependent on scarce water resources, Jordan was severely affected by the impacts of climate change, to which, however, it contributed relatively little. The global response to that phenomenon should be negotiated on the basis primarily of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change and the Kyoto Protocol. Moreover, access to clean and renewable energy offered a key to ecologically, economically and socially sustainable development.

39. Jordan, which was at risk of a high rate of desertification, was seeking to counter that risk through its National Action Programme. It had also launched other initiatives to improve water use efficiency, minimize soil erosion and enhance research on drought- and saline-tolerant crops and seed production. Her country had a huge diversity of habitats, making for rich albeit threatened biodiversity. Her Government had therefore taken steps to conserve the many threatened species and habitats through a national network of protected areas and by monitoring the country's wildlife and carrying out strategic environmental assessments as a means of promoting sustainable development.

40. **Mr. Rajabi** (Islamic Republic of Iran) said that sustainable development was a well-defined concept. Eradicating poverty, changing unsustainable patterns of production and consumption, and protecting and managing the natural resource base were essential for sustainable development.

41. However, sustainable development was not merely a question of environmental issues. The United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development in 2012 was an opportunity to address past failures and to identify ways for the United Nations system to increase capacity-building support for national sustainable development plans and strategies in developing countries. Since there was still no clear consensual definition of "green economy", a theoretical discussion of it should be avoided at the Conference. While the green economy could be equated with the cluster of economic policies under the sustainable development paradigm, so as to bridge the gap between the economy and the environment, that issue had not yet been resolved. Emphasis should therefore be placed on identifying gaps and challenges that had impeded the

implementation of the agreed outcomes to date, and the preparations should start at the local, national, regional and global levels.

42. Sand and duststorms were another serious challenge to his country and the wider region. The Islamic Republic of Iran therefore stood ready to enter into bilateral and multilateral regional arrangements to identify the root causes of the problem and to eradicate it. Cooperation and coordination among affected countries would be essential for any successful plan of action. In that connection, his country had recently hosted a regional ministerial environmental meeting at which the countries of the region had agreed to cooperate to bring such storms under control over the next five years. The post-Kyoto arrangements must also examine that problem closely in order to identify its root causes and eradicate it.

43. By 2020, 135 million people risked being driven from their lands because of continuing desertification; approximately 70 per cent of drylands utilized for agriculture were already degraded and at risk of desertification. Insufficient financial resources, a lack of institutional capacity and limited access to efficient clean technology were among the major problems that prevented developing countries from tackling those challenges. Nevertheless, if no countermeasures were taken, desertification in drylands threatened to reverse development gains in some regions.

44. **Mr. Sorreta** (Philippines) noted the increasing relevance of sustainable development discussions in the context of global concerns about climate change, biodiversity loss, deforestation, desertification and the combined effects of those phenomena on ecosystem stability, food security and the very existence of nations. In preparation for the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development in 2012, it was urgent to integrate those concerns into a common vision. Priorities must be reordered so that global discourse could proceed in a coordinated manner. In that connection he recommended closer coordination between the Commission for Social Development and the Commission on Sustainable Development.

45. He welcomed the successful outcomes of the tenth meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity, including the multi-year plan of action for South-South cooperation on biodiversity for development, which should help reverse the alarming trend of increasing biodiversity

loss. Noting that not enough was being done to counter the adverse effects of coral bleaching, he also called for unanimous support for the draft resolution on the protection of corals reefs for sustainable livelihoods and development (A/C.2/65/L.28).

46. Lastly, he stressed that the problems under discussion, which were equally important, must be treated in a comprehensive and coordinated manner and with due regard for their urgency and the limited resources available.

47. **Mr. Wangchuk** (Bhutan) said that his country's development philosophy of Gross National Happiness was consistent with the concept of sustainable development and, indeed, went beyond that by making the attainment of contentment a development goal. His Government pursued that objective by striving to ensure equitable and sustainable socio-economic development, environmental conservation, the promotion and preservation of culture, and the establishment of good governance, all of which were supported by governmental programmes and policies. All of Bhutan's achievements, including its peaceful emergence as the youngest democracy, had resulted from the pursuit of happiness.

48. The MDGs and the pursuit of happiness were mutually supportive. His delegation planned to circulate a concept paper and a draft resolution calling for the inclusion of happiness as the ninth, voluntary, MDG, and hoped that the proposal would receive wide support.

49. **Ms. Dastidar** (India) said that the international community must take an integrated approach to sustainable development, with an emphasis on its three pillars. Such an approach was key to achieving the internationally agreed development goals, particularly the eradication of poverty and hunger. The full implementation of Agenda 21 and the Plan of Implementation of the World Summit on Sustainable Development, specifically the creation of an international environment conducive to development, was essential in that regard.

50. Preparations for the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development must focus on an ambitious outcome that gave precedence to the interests of the poor and the marginalized. A global understanding on the green economy and green growth should be subsumed under the broader framework of sustainable development, and priority must continue to be given to eradicating poverty in developing countries.

51. The unique challenges which small island developing States faced in their efforts to achieve sustainable development had been further exacerbated by climate change. Accordingly, the strong political commitment to assist those countries expressed by the global community at the High-level Review Meeting on the implementation of the Mauritius Strategy for the Further Implementation of the Programme of Action for the Sustainable Development of Small Island Developing States must be backed by action.

52. The lack of progress on promises made in Copenhagen at the fifteenth session of the Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change was undermining the level of trust required for a substantive and constructive dialogue on climate change. India was among the countries most seriously affected by climate change and would continue to advocate in Cancún for an ambitious and equitable outcome based on the principle of common but differentiated responsibilities and respective capabilities. Small island developing States in particular urgently required financial and technical support for climate change adaptation and mitigation.

53. It was essential to make relevant technology transfers available to developing countries on concessional and preferential terms. To that end, the international community must be willing to balance rewards for innovators with the common good of all people, and introduce necessary flexibilities in the intellectual property rights regime. In that connection, an informal ministerial dialogue on climate technologies, organized by India, Mexico and the United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs, would be convened in New Delhi in November 2010 to address many related issues.

54. The conservation, protection and sustainable use of genetic resources were important aspects of sustainable development. Her delegation therefore welcomed the adoption at the tenth meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity, held recently in Nagoya, of a legally binding instrument on access and benefit-sharing, as well as the decision by the Parties to urge the General Assembly at its current session to consider the establishment of an intergovernmental science-policy platform on biodiversity and ecosystem services at the earliest opportunity. The success at Nagoya

demonstrated that multilateralism continued to play a constructive role with respect to environmental issues.

55. The increase in natural disasters in recent years, as shown by the floods in Pakistan, earthquakes in Haiti, Chile and China and the volcanic eruptions and tsunami in Indonesia, underscored the importance of strengthening global preparedness to combat natural calamities. Her delegation therefore fully supported the International Strategy for Disaster Reduction.

56. **Mr. Šćepanović** (Montenegro) said that the events in the Balkans during the 1990s had delayed by nearly a decade the implementation in the region of the principles set out at the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development. However, as a member of the Commission on Sustainable Development, Montenegro was fully committed to abiding by the principles of sustainable development. The Government had established a national council and an office for sustainable development. The adoption of a national sustainable development strategy and a plan of action for its implementation had led to wide acceptance of the concept by policymakers, and had resulted in the development of appropriate infrastructure and the ratification of international conventions, treaties and commitments, especially with regard to environmental and social issues. In addition, steps had been taken to incorporate sustainable development into all levels of the education system.

57. Nevertheless, the impact of the economic and financial crisis had demonstrated the importance of strengthening the structure of Montenegro's economy and improving its domestic production capacities. In addition, decision makers were wary of promoting alternative solutions to certain challenges, particularly in the areas of energy and transportation, and environmental protection goals had yet to be sufficiently integrated into all sectoral policies. In preparation for the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development in 2012, his Government would continue its efforts to facilitate the incorporation of the provisions of its national strategy for sustainable development into those policies.

58. Addressing the challenges of sustainable development required close cooperation between all national and regional actors. In September 2009 his Government had organized a regional conference on sustainable development dealing with institutional system challenges and implementation, which had

confirmed that sustainable development was gradually becoming a higher priority for countries in the Western Balkans, as was the case in the developed countries.

59. Looking ahead to Cancún, his delegation underscored the importance of adopting a legally binding post-Kyoto agreement and expressed its support for the Copenhagen Accord. Furthermore, on the basis of Montenegro's initial national communication on climate change submitted in accordance with the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, his Government planned to adopt measures for the reduction of greenhouse gas emissions by 2020. The establishment of a national council on climate change was under way and a national plan on climate change would be elaborated by the end of 2010. Montenegro would also continue to harmonize its national legislation on climate change with that of the European Union.

60. **Ms. Kite** (Israel) said that global efforts to advance sustainable development were critically important for improving the environment and could serve as primary engines for economic and social growth. Over the past decade, Israel had made significant progress in promoting sustainable development both at home and through strong partnerships across the globe. Her Government's sustainable development policy focused on supporting a dynamic economy, ensuring the wise use of natural resources, protecting ecosystems and providing equal opportunities for all. Israel had pursued that mandate by securing strong public support for sustainable development goals, building coalitions around those goals and prioritizing their implementation. Incorporating a wide range of stakeholders, including business, academic and civil society representatives had played a key role in Israel's efforts to promote sustainable development. For example, local authorities were involved in local Agenda 21 programmes.

61. Israel had prioritized five goals to be achieved in the coming five years: recycling waste; preventing and reducing air pollution; reducing greenhouse gas emissions by 20 per cent by 2010; increasing pollution control enforcement; and promoting environmental education and sustainable lifestyles, with a focus on educating youth.

62. Her country was eager to share its expertise and experience with other members of the international community and to adopt methods, technologies and

practices that had proved useful elsewhere. Israel's active participation as a member of the Bureau of the Commission on Sustainable Development since 2006 had spurred it to establish a centre for sustainable development through international environmental cooperation, which worked to achieve the goals of the United Nations Conventions on Desertification, Biodiversity and Climate Change.

63. Israel placed particular emphasis on combating desertification by living in harmony with the natural environment and retaining its delicate ecosystems. In December 2010, her country would host the Third International Conference on Drylands, Deserts and Desertification: The Route to Restoration, which would be accompanied by relevant side events.

64. Her delegation welcomed the establishment by the Man and the Biosphere Programme of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) of a sub-network of dryland biosphere reserves, which had the potential to become a powerful instrument for promoting international cooperation on dryland development and on combating desertification. It also encouraged the incorporation of the Millennium Ecosystem Assessment methodology as a tool to promote the MDGs.

65. **Mr. Mnisi** (Swaziland) said that his country experienced incessant droughts, wildfires and windstorms and received only sporadic rainfall. Those problems severely undermined its social and economic development; had a particularly devastating impact on its agribusiness sector, which was the backbone of the economy; were hampering its efforts to achieve the MDGs; and had reversed much of the progress that Swaziland had made in its efforts to combat poverty and unemployment.

66. In view of the ominous threat which climate change posed to mankind's very survival, it was imperative that the forthcoming Cancún Climate Change Conference should adopt a morally and legally binding post-Kyoto agreement on greenhouse gas emissions that took into account the common but differentiated responsibilities of countries. Observational and experimental evidence had proved that without such an agreement the devastating effects of environmental degradation would become unmanageable. Developing countries must also do their part by adopting voluntary and nationally appropriate mitigation measures

supported by scaled-up technology and capacity-building.

67. **Mr. Benmehidi** (Algeria) said that ongoing multidimensional crises and challenges were impeding international efforts to achieve sustainable development objectives and policies and were jeopardizing the progress achieved thus far. Vulnerable populations in developing countries were particularly adversely affected. It was therefore essential for Governments to redouble their efforts to achieve the objectives of Agenda 21, the Programme for the Further Implementation of Agenda 21 and the Johannesburg Plan of Implementation by taking an integrated approach based on an understanding of the interlinkages among economic, social and environmental goals.

68. His delegation welcomed the detailed assessment at the eighteenth session of the Commission on Sustainable Development of progress achieved in the implementation of Agenda 21, which had made it possible to identify obstacles, constraints, best practices and lessons learned with respect to management of chemicals, waste management, mining, transport and a 10-year framework of programmes on sustainable consumption and production patterns. As a member of the Commission's Bureau at its nineteenth session, Algeria would do its utmost to provide countries with tools and resources to increase human welfare and improve the lives of the poor worldwide.

69. The first session of the Preparatory Committee for the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development had provided valuable inputs regarding the main themes to be addressed at the Conference, which should reinvigorate the political commitment to sustainable development.

70. National legislation in the context of sustainable development was being implemented with a view to boosting economic growth, reducing poverty, preserving fragile natural resources and enhancing public health through better waste management, improved sanitation and air pollution control.

71. Algeria fully adhered to the principles driving international action to combat climate change. The international community must redouble its efforts in Cancún to reach a legally binding and comprehensive agreement that reflected the principles set out in the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change.

72. The High-level meeting of the General Assembly as a contribution to the International Year of Biodiversity had provided a valuable opportunity for Governments to review and update their biodiversity preservation strategies, which were threatened by economic forces that showed scant regard for future generations. His delegation also welcomed the adoption at the recent tenth meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity of the Strategic Plan of the Convention for the period 2011-2020, the strategy for resource mobilization and the protocol on access and benefit-sharing.

73. Desertification was one of the most serious forms of environmental degradation. His delegation therefore supported the recommendation of the Bureau of the Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification that the General Assembly should consider convening a high-level event on desertification in September 2011 in anticipation of the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development in 2012. It was also necessary to ensure that the commitments undertaken pursuant to the 10-year strategic plan and framework to enhance the implementation of the Convention (2008-2018) were honoured. Efforts to that end should be pursued throughout the United Nations Decade for Deserts and the Fight against Desertification (2010-2020) with a view to identifying innovative options for mobilizing human, financial and technological resources and the appropriate institutional framework for addressing the challenges of desertification.

74. **Mr. Mičić** (Serbia), referring to the report of the Governing Council of UNEP (A/65/25 (Supp)), said that it was important that the Nusa Dua Declaration had stressed the nexus between environmental change and development, as well as the need to consider the reform of international environmental governance within a sustainable development context. Serbia supported the strengthening of coherence at the global level with a view to ensuring the delivery of United Nations system services, especially to developing countries and those with economies in transition. The improved international environmental governance system was expected to improve human well-being by mainstreaming climate change and ecosystem services into economic and social policy sectors, and he appreciated the efforts of UNEP, the consultative group of ministers and others to provide broader options for such governance reforms.

75. Future discussions should focus on some of the most relevant and urgent reforms. For example, the science-policy interface should be further strengthened within the reformed governance system, so as to provide a solid basis for informed decision-making and coherent policy creation. In that respect, broader use must be made of experience gained from other processes, such as the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change, and other UNEP multi-stakeholders assessments. Such reform should ensure a responsive and cohesive approach to meeting country-specific needs, since the implementation of international environmental priorities was possible only if properly translated to the national level.

76. The green economy should support, rather than replace, the social, economic and environmental pillars of sustainable development. Furthermore, it should embrace both the development and environment agendas and help to create new jobs.

77. Having drawn up by-laws to regulate waste disposal and management, his Government had introduced a system of taxation and subsidies to strengthen the waste treatment industry. As a direct consequence of increased investment in the waste sector, several thousands of new jobs would be created by mid-2011. That would trigger further investment in the recycling industry.

78. Serbia, which recognized the importance of the sustainable and responsible development of tourism, supported the work of the World Tourism Organization (UNWTO) and encouraged it to continue to promote and disseminate the Global Code of Ethics for Tourism. UNWTO should also continue to monitor the implementation of those ethical principles by the public and private sectors.

79. **Mr. Aongola** (Zambia) commended the work of the Commission on Sustainable Development and said that his Government was making tremendous efforts to integrate sustainable development into its national development plans. In that regard, the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development in 2012 would go a long way towards identifying measures to strengthen the national and global implementation of both Agenda 21 and the Johannesburg Plan of Implementation.

80. His delegation, which was greatly concerned by the increased frequency and scale of natural disasters in recent years, including in Zambia, supported the

International Strategy for Disaster Reduction. His Government was implementing a comprehensive disaster management policy and national legislation in line with the Strategy.

81. Developing countries could effectively respond to the challenge of climate change only if developed countries fulfilled their commitments relating to financing and technology transfer. Positive outcomes were needed at the Cancún Climate Change Conference: time was short and it was essential to reach a consensus.

82. The International Year of Biodiversity provided a great opportunity to raise awareness and mobilize efforts to achieve the internationally agreed targets. In that connection, his delegation welcomed the outcomes of the Nagoya meeting, including the establishment of an access and benefit-sharing regime, and stressed the importance of sustainable patterns of consumption and production, in line with the principle of common but differentiated responsibilities.

83. **Mr. Aslov** (Tajikistan) said that sustainable development required the mainstreaming of water issues in national sustainable development strategies and that a key element of such strategies was the sustainable and integrated management of freshwater resources. The sad plight of the Aral Sea was a good example of the failure to abide by those principles.

84. He noted that the adoption of General Assembly resolution 64/198 at the previous session had led to the successful holding of the High-level International Conference on the Midterm Comprehensive Review of the Implementation of the International Decade for Action, "Water for Life", 2005-2015, which had been convened in Dushanbe, Tajikistan, on 8 and 9 June 2010. All participants at the Conference had agreed on the following points: integrated water resources management was central to meeting social, environmental and economic needs in an equitable manner; and sustainable and efficient water resources management could play a crucial role in ensuring equal access to safe drinking water and basic sanitation.

85. The outcome of the Conference was contained in the Dushanbe Declaration on Water (A/65/88, annex), which called for, inter alia: national Governments to define appropriate policies and sufficient budgetary allocations to the water sector; a gradual and sustained implementation of integrated water resources management at the level of river basins; increased

efforts to address the lack of access to safe drinking water and sanitation; the implementation of climate change adaptation measures; improvements to systems monitoring the status of glaciers and freshwater resources; enhanced coordination among all stakeholders in order to integrate water issues into national plans and development programmes; and greater participation of women in decision-making processes related to water resources management. The main outcome was the recognition of the need to improve cooperation and strengthen mutual trust, including through joint approaches to water resources management at the local, national and regional levels.

86. Guided by those principles, his delegation intended to submit a draft resolution to the Committee (A/C.2/65/L.25) to declare 2012 the International Year of Water Diplomacy. He urged other delegations to support the draft resolution so that it could be adopted by consensus.

87. **Mr. Alimov** (Russian Federation) said that his country was actively involved in efforts to implement Agenda 21, the decisions of the 2002 World Summit on Sustainable Development in Johannesburg and the 2005 World Summit Outcome.

88. His delegation welcomed a number of positive developments in 2010, including the start of the biennial cycle of the Commission on Sustainable Development which had shown that real progress could be made in that area despite the global economic crisis. It was important to ensure that the objectives set out in the thematic cluster of issues addressed during the eighteenth session of the Commission on Sustainable Development were duly reflected in the decisions of the Commission's policy session in 2011.

89. In May 2010, the Russian Federation had begun to participate in joint efforts to prepare for the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development, to be held in Rio in 2012, and intended to play an active and constructive role at all stages of the preparatory process. The work of the Preparatory Committee for the Conference should focus on developing balanced approaches to priority issues on the agenda, particularly the transition to a green economy, with a view to ensuring long-term sustainable development. His delegation would welcome decisions adopted by the General Assembly aimed at providing comprehensive support to ensure the success of the Conference.

90. UNEP continued to play a key role in resolving current environmental problems. In that regard, his delegation welcomed the outcome of the eleventh special session of the UNEP Governing Council/Global Ministerial Environment Forum and considered that UNEP still had untapped potential, including in the reform of United Nations environmental activities.

91. The Russian Federation, which had always worked constructively alongside other partners in the international forest process, intended to play an active role in the work of the ninth session of the United Nations Forum on Forests in January 2011. In its view, the decisions reached at that session should adequately reflect the contribution made by boreal forest to ensuring sustainable development and combating climate change.

92. His country would also continue to be actively engaged in global efforts to reach a post-2012 climate agreement under the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, taking into account the outcome of the fifteenth session of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention in Copenhagen. However, the stabilization of greenhouse gas emissions in the atmosphere would be possible only with the participation of all members of the international community, bearing in mind the extent to which they contributed to climate change and their current abilities to combat it. Moreover, the fight against global warming should be seen in a broader context of efforts to develop a green and low-carbon economy, which required a qualitative leap forward towards energy efficiency and resource conservation.

93. It was important to continue to search for solutions to such global problems as maintaining biodiversity and combating desertification. In that context, his delegation welcomed the decisions adopted at the tenth meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity and the ninth session of the Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification.

94. The Russian Federation attached great importance to international cooperation aimed at natural disaster mitigation and prevention. It was essential for the international community to improve the quality of its coordination and to introduce and use state-of-the-art technology on a broader scale in order to combat natural and man-made disasters. The effective provision of humanitarian assistance was also

largely contingent upon enhancing assessment and early warning, preparedness, response and mitigation, including at the national and local levels. The additional expenditures incurred for disaster preparedness would ultimately be lower than those required to rebuild destroyed infrastructure. In that context, his delegation called for swift progress to achieve the objectives set forth in the outcome documents of the World Conference on Disaster Reduction held in Hyogo in 2005.

95. **Ms. Štiglic** (Slovenia), speaking on behalf of the Green Group, comprising Cape Verde, Costa Rica, Iceland, Singapore, Slovenia and the United Arab Emirates, said that the Group aimed to draw attention to challenges such as climate change, sustainable water management and the need to promote renewable energy, which all required effective global governance. Global warming was a key challenge that affected every aspect of sustainable development, including global interdependence and the need for concerted international efforts. In view of the catastrophic consequences of unmitigated climate change, the Group called on all countries to contribute to a successful outcome in Cancún, as an important step towards reaching a global, comprehensive and legally binding agreement to address climate change.

96. Water issues should be given more visibility, since water management played a central role in climate change adaptation and was a nexus between economic development and environmental sustainability. Climate change had a direct impact on the natural water cycle and the availability of water resources. The lack of water was a reality for one in three people in the world and its scarcity would further increase the likelihood of conflicts. The Group therefore stressed the importance of improving water management through good policies, technological improvements and grass-roots behavioural changes. It encouraged all countries to implement the goals of Agenda 21 and to take ambitious steps at the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development in 2012.

97. Since the main cause of global warming was the excessive use of fossil fuels, the Group was committed to the development of clean, renewable and efficient energy. Renewable energy was also necessary to achieve long-term energy security, which was essential for economic and social development.

98. **Mr. Saduakassov** (Kazakhstan) said that a stable climate was crucial for sustainable development. Climate change was not only responsible for a greater number of natural disasters, it also had serious socio-economic consequences, including increased disease, death and hunger, which directly threatened the achievement of the MDGs. It was therefore essential for all members of the international community to take urgent steps to stop global warming. In that respect, he urged the international community to move forward within the framework of the Bali Road Map.

99. For its part, Kazakhstan was building a low-emission economy. It had therefore drawn up legislation aimed at introducing energy efficient technologies and reducing carbon-intensive development. His Government was also working on legislation for the development of a carbon emissions exchange market and had adopted a national law on renewable sources of energy.

100. Kazakhstan, which was actively engaged in negotiations aimed at climate change prevention and mitigation, had recently committed to reduce its greenhouse gas emissions by 15 per cent by 2020 and 25 per cent by 2050. Having also applied to be a country included in Annex B to the Kyoto Protocol, Kazakhstan looked forward to support from the international community in that regard during the forthcoming discussions at the sixteenth session of the Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change in Cancún, Mexico.

101. His delegation welcomed the new strategic plan recently adopted at the tenth meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity in Nagoya, Japan, and also supported the business and biodiversity initiative aimed at mainstreaming the sustainable management of biodiversity in the private sector.

102. In the context of the current International Year of Biodiversity, he particularly wished to stress the importance of the UNESCO Man and the Biosphere programme, including the concept of biosphere reserves. Furthermore, as a party to all of the major conventions related to biological diversity, Kazakhstan was actively working to safeguard and promote biodiversity, including through monitoring of the Caspian Sea and an increase in the size of its specially

protected national areas. The latter would cover 6.4 per cent of the national territory of Kazakhstan by 2030.

103. **Ms. Waffa-Ogoo** (Gambia) said that the Global Code of Ethics for Tourism guided sustainable tourism development and served as a frame of reference for all stakeholders engaged in the tourism sector with a view to enhancing its benefits while minimizing its negative impacts. Tourism could potentially eliminate the root causes of unrest and conflict by fostering socio-economic development and poverty reduction through the creation of decent employment opportunities for women, young people and other vulnerable groups. Since tourism posed many environmental and socio-cultural challenges to host communities, her Government had taken concrete steps to implement key elements of the Code, particularly those relating to sustainable tourism development and protection of the environment and socio-cultural heritage.

104. Sustainable tourism development required empowering communities to make decisions that took into consideration the long-term economy and the environment while ensuring equal opportunities for all stakeholders. In that regard, her country had developed a people-centred ecotourism policy and action plan; had established several successful partnerships between the public and private sectors, as well as among non-governmental organizations and host communities; and had adopted legislation to ensure a healthy environment, to preserve natural resources and to improve the quality of life for everyone within its borders. The Wild Life Act currently protected over 6 per cent of the national territory.

105. Recent flooding in several countries in West Africa had shown that climate change was an issue of the present and not just the future. Her delegation therefore urged developed countries to muster the political will necessary to ensure an ambitious outcome to the Cancún Climate Change Conference. It also called for flexibility in the negotiations on the draft protocol on access and benefit-sharing, as well as the opportunity to adopt an ambitious post-2010 strategic plan.

106. **Mr. Jawhara** (Syrian Arab Republic) recalled that the oil slick that had spread over the entire Lebanese coast as a result of Israel's premeditated bombing of the oil storage tanks of the Jiyeh electric power plant during the Israeli aggression against Lebanon in the summer of 2006 had caused a grave and

continuing environmental and economic disaster. Owing to the prevailing winds and sea currents, the oil slick, documented by satellite images, UNEP reports and numerous other international entities, had spread north to her country, polluting extensive portions of its coast. Despite repeated General Assembly resolutions (61/194, 62/188, 63/211 and 64/195) calling on Israel to assume its responsibility for prompt and adequate compensation to the Government of Lebanon and other countries directly affected by the oil slick, such as the Syrian Arab Republic, Israel had yet to acknowledge its responsibilities, a matter regarding which the Secretary-General had expressed grave concern in his most recent report on the matter (A/65/278).

107. Israel's failure to implement the relevant General Assembly resolutions in blatant defiance of the will of the international community was an inseparable part of its policy of non-compliance with international resolutions. During the current session the Assembly must therefore make every effort to convey to Israel its clear condemnation and outright rejection of such hostile and irresponsible behaviour, and reiterate the demand that Israel assume responsibility for prompt and adequate compensation to Lebanon and the Syrian Arab Republic for the environmental damage caused by the spread of the oil slick.

108. **Mr. Mohamed** (Maldives) said that small island developing States were continually challenged by a lack of financial, technical and human resources. The global financial crisis had affected them particularly adversely owing to their openness to the global economy and their reliance on a narrow range of income-generating industries such as tourism. In addition, trade liberalization had increasingly precluded the use of trade policies as development strategies, resulting in severe negative economic impacts. Many small island developing States relied heavily on exports and imports of essential goods, which made them extremely vulnerable to external shocks such as upheavals in commodity markets.

109. The commitments made in 2005 at the International Meeting to Review the Implementation of the Programme of Action for the Sustainable Development of Small Island Developing States remained largely unfulfilled. His delegation therefore urged all development partners to honour all commitments related to those States without delay.

110. Country-specific profiles should be developed to account for the special vulnerabilities of small island developing States. For example, their accession to the World Trade Organization should be facilitated but they should also receive special consideration in trading arrangements owing to their limited ability fully to integrate into the global economy.

111. It was also crucial to review the shortcomings in institutional support currently governing the international aid delivery system so that it could address the economic, social and environmental particularities of countries in special situations, which currently were excluded from access to financing.

112. Most small island developing States were highly vulnerable to natural disasters, climate change and epidemics of vector-borne diseases. It was important to adopt an approach that addressed climate change adaptation and disaster risk reduction simultaneously. Small island developing States urgently required the assistance of developed countries to address those challenges, particularly through the fulfilment of commitments to transfer technologies, methods and instruments.

113. His Government was therefore advocating the establishment within the United Nations system of a designated category of small island developing States, which should be allowed access to dedicated and concessionary financing. Those countries could not achieve sustainable development unless their unique status was taken into account.

The meeting rose at 12.55 p.m.