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Provisional summary record of the 40th meeting

Held at the Palais des Nations, Geneva, on Friday, 22 July 2011, at 10 a.m.

President: Mr. Grauls (Vice-President).....(Belgium)

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* Items considered together.

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In the absence of Mr. Kapambwe (Zambia), Mr. Grauls (Belgium), Vice-President, took the Chair.

The meeting was called to order at 10.10 a.m.

The President declared open the general segment of the substantive session of 2011 of the Economic and Social Council.

Implementation of and follow-up to major United Nations conferences and summits
(A/65/728-E/2011/72, A/66/76-E/2011/102, E/2011/L.27 and E/2011/L.32)

(b) Review and coordination of the implementation of the Programme of Action for the Least Developed Countries for the Decade 2011–2020 (E/2011/L.16 and E/2011/L.31)

Implementation of General Assembly resolutions 50/227, 52/12 B, 57/270 B and 60/265

Mr. Seth (Director, Office for Economic and Social Council Support and Coordination, Department of Economic and Social Affairs), said that the future of follow-up mechanisms to United Nations conferences had become the subject of considerable debate in the previous few years. The functional commissions and subsidiary bodies of the Council had long carried out much of the follow-up to United Nations conferences. Recognizing the inherent problem of duplication therein, given that many cross-cutting issues were addressed in more than one conference, Member States had pushed for a more integrated approach, as set out in resolution 57/270 B of the General Assembly (A/RES/57/270 B), which had led to the establishment of an annual integrated follow-up report. However, Member States were increasingly of the view that the report had been made redundant by other mechanisms, such as the follow-up that the functional commissions continued to carry out and the Council's Annual Ministerial Reviews (AMRs), which provided a follow-up framework for the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs).

The Council had decided in 2010 to review the scope, content and periodicity of the report in the context of a wider review of General Assembly resolution 61/16 on strengthening the Council (A/RES/61/16). A decision on the future of the report was, however, still pending. Several proposals had been made, among them the option of producing the report every five years, rather than annually, to coincide with the five-year review cycle of the MDGs.

The draft decision (E/2011/L.27) contained a request that the Secretary-General prepare a note to the 2012 substantive session of the Council on the scope and periodicity of future reports. The Rio+20 summit, which would be held in Rio de Janeiro in June 2012, was likely to have a deep impact on approaches to development issues and therefore also on the future of integrated conference follow-up in the context of resolution 57/270 B. A final decision should therefore be deferred until after the summit.

Mr. Diarra (Under-Secretary-General and High Representative for the Least Developed Countries, Landlocked Developing Countries and Small Island Developing States), presenting an oral report on the outcome of the Fourth United Nations Conference on Least Developed Countries (LDCs), which had been held in Istanbul in May 2011, said that the importance of allowing LDCs to lead their own development programmes, as well as moving from the current market-driven agenda to development policies focused on people had been underlined at the conference. For the first time, the private sector had been fully involved in the programmes of a major United Nations meeting.

The Istanbul Programme of Action for the Least Developed Countries for the Decade 2011–2020 contained eight priority areas that addressed development in LDCs in a

comprehensive manner. Its prime focus was on building productive capacity and linking it to human and social development. There was a need to develop infrastructure, increase investment and undertake structural transformation. Technological innovation and technology transfers to LDCs would be keys to success and development partners had undertaken to enhance technical support for them. They would also provide concessional start-up finance for firms in LDCs that invested in new technologies. In the context of South-South cooperation, developing countries had undertaken to improve technology assistance arrangements with LDCs.

LDCs and their development partners would study the feasibility of a system of stockholding to deal with food emergencies. The Istanbul Programme of Action also called for responsible international investment in agriculture, the elimination of export subsidies for agricultural products and the improvement of rural markets.

Doubling the LDCs' current share of global exports by 2020 was another ambitious target. The timely introduction of duty-free and quota-free market access for LDCs, in line with the Hong Kong Ministerial Declaration, had been agreed upon, along with a commitment to reduce or eliminate other arbitrary or unjustified non-tariff barriers and measures that distorted trade. The proportion of Aid for Trade allocated to LDCs would be increased, as would support for the Enhanced Integrated Framework. The Programme of Action called for a reduction in the dependence of LDCs on commodity exports, efforts to improve productivity and diversify production, measures to combat commodity price volatility, and improved corporate accountability, including through the Extractive Industries Transparency Initiative (EITI). The Programme of Action reiterated undertakings to meet the MDGs of LDCs by 2015.

In the light of the vulnerability of LDCs to economic shocks, natural disasters and the effects of climate change, development partners had undertaken to support national facilities for crisis mitigation and resilience in LDCs, promote clean development mechanism projects and assist people who were displaced as a result of extreme weather events.

LDCs had committed themselves to improving the economic climate in their countries and their development partners had undertaken to double the US\$ 38 billion of Official Development Assistance (ODA) currently flowing to LDCs by 2015 and consider further increases thereafter. They had also agreed to fund the timely implementation of the Heavily Indebted Poor Countries (HPIC) initiative and the Multilateral Debt Relief Initiative (MDRI), as well as putting into place other debt relief measures and adopting an array of instruments to promote investment in LDCs. Given the importance of remittances to LDCs, it had been agreed to simplify emigration and labour immigration procedures.

There had been agreement on the need to improve governance and accountability in the LDCs, through reform and efforts to combat corruption, and on an international level by promoting policy coherence, coordination between financial, trade and development institutions and the alignment of assistance with the national priorities of LDCs affected by conflict. The General Assembly would also establish a working group to study how to ensure a smooth transition for countries that graduated from LDC status and extend travel subsidies to LDC delegates for an appropriate period after graduation.

The Programme of Action established comprehensive monitoring mechanisms to measure the implementation by LDCs and their development partners of their respective undertakings. It also called for the mainstreaming of its provisions into the policies and development framework of all stakeholders. Regional bodies would carry out biennial reviews and various United Nations funds and programmes as well as other international organizations had already begun the process of incorporating the Programme of Action into their strategic planning. A draft roadmap for its implementation would be made public

shortly by the Office of the High Representative for the Least Developed Countries, Landlocked Developing Countries and Small Island Developing States (OHRLLS).

General discussion

Ms. Handrujovicz (Argentina), speaking on behalf of the Group of 77 and China, expressed concern about the inadequate implementation of the Programme of Action for the Least Developed Countries for the Decade 2011–2020 (Brussels Programme of Action), particularly in respect of alleviating poverty. Least developed countries had specific needs and interests that required a particular approach with regard to policy space and the nature and magnitude of support. Internationally agreed development goals could only be met if development partners honoured their commitments in a timely manner.

Macroeconomic reforms undertaken in LDCs had been improving those countries' economic performance, particularly in the provision of universal primary education, until the onset of the global economic and financial crisis. Unfortunately, the crisis had shown that those achievements were precarious. It was therefore particularly crucial for development partners to provide the support they had promised.

In view of the recent adoption of the Istanbul Programme of Action, the Group of 77 and China wished to emphasize that the role of developed countries as development partners was crucial for investment in physical and human resources, poverty reduction and the promotion of growth and sustainable development. Increased flows of official development assistance to LDCs from developed countries and multilateral financial institutions were crucial for achieving a quantum leap in LDC development. Developing countries were proud to support the Istanbul Programme of Action through South-South cooperation. That new commitment to LDCs would add considerable value to cooperation over the coming decade.

Mr. Henczel (Poland), speaking on behalf of the European Union (EU); the candidate countries Croatia, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Montenegro and Turkey; the stabilization and association process countries Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina and Serbia; and, in addition, Georgia, Republic of Moldova and Ukraine, said that the EU had always been at the forefront of the international community's efforts to support the LDCs, and over the past decade had nearly tripled its development aid, which had totalled 15 billion euros in 2010.

While aid must remain a linchpin in the continued efforts to lift LDCs out of poverty, it alone was insufficient: an appropriate environment for sustainable development must also be fostered. The quality, not just the quantity, of aid was therefore particularly important. Efforts should be made to ensure that all policies were in line with aid and development effectiveness agendas. The EU had delivered on its commitments to provide duty-free and quota-free access to all imports from LDCs through the Everything But Arms initiative, and in January 2011 the rules of that initiative had been revised to make them simpler and more conducive to development.

The EU had also taken significant steps to improve aid effectiveness and policy coherence for development, and was assessing the feasibility of innovative financing mechanisms with significant revenue generation potential. Many EU development initiatives undertaken over recent years specifically targeted the poorest and most vulnerable countries, which were not on track to meet the MDGs, were struggling with food security, or were suffering the negative impacts of financial crisis. The majority of those countries were LDCs.

In order to move towards the implementation of the Istanbul Programme of Action, the EU would consider how to further its bilateral cooperation with LDCs, with full respect for the principle that those countries should have ownership of their own development. The

EU was considering new ways of investing in partner countries and working with emerging donor countries, the private sector, civil society and local authorities to further the development agenda. Consideration was also being given to how to ensure that aid was targeted at areas where it could be of the greatest benefit, in order to ensure that over time fewer countries would be classified as “least developed”.

Mr. Bairagi (Nepal), speaking on behalf of the group of the least developed countries, said that the actions undertaken to implement the Brussels Programme of Action must form the basis for the implementation of the Istanbul Programme. Structural constraints had impeded LDC development efforts, and most LDCs were therefore not likely to meet the internationally agreed development goals, including the MDGs. The mutually exacerbating economic, financial, food and fuel crises, as well as the disproportionate impacts of climate change, had significantly eroded the development progress made by LDCs over recent years.

In order to halve the number of countries categorized as “least developed” by 2020, LDCs must be effectively integrated into the global economy. Their resilience must be built through targeted international support, in order to help them withstand internal and external shocks, as well as other crises and challenges. LDCs must have adequate and predictable financial and technical support to adapt to the effects of climate change.

Development was, first and foremost, the responsibility of national Governments. Although LDCs had undertaken enhanced commitments in all priority areas of the Istanbul Programme of Action, their lack of financial resources constituted an obstacle to development and rendered them highly dependent on external funding. The year 2015 would be an opportune occasion for development partners to review their commitments with a view to increasing the overall flow of resources to LDCs. Substantial efforts were required to ensure the debt sustainability of LDCs, including through innovative measures. The provisions of the Heavily Indebted Poor Countries (HIPC) initiative should be extended to non-HIPC countries with rapidly increasing debt burdens.

LDCs should have increased market access to enable them to reap the benefits of globalization. All trade-distorting measures and barriers, including subsidies, should be removed. The effective implementation of Aid for Trade was particularly important for building the sustainable trade capacity of LDCs. Foreign direct investment in LDCs should be encouraged by fostering an enabling domestic environment, as well as ensuring the provision of external support. International economic, financial and trading systems must operate in a coherent, coordinated and consistent manner to respond to the specific development needs of LDCs. South-South and triangular cooperation for development would complement traditional North-South cooperation.

Quantified targets could be used to promote the effective implementation of the Istanbul Programme of Action and its follow-up, monitoring and evaluation at the national, regional and international levels, and the Council’s Annual Ministerial Review in 2015 would be an important occasion to review progress. The Programme should be integrated into the national development policies of LDCs and their development partners, as well as into the strategic plans and operational activities of international organizations, including international financial institutions and the World Trade Organization. The real success of the Programme of Action would be judged on the basis of its contribution to visible improvement in the lives of millions of people living in LDCs. The LDCs were committed to the implementation of the Istanbul Programme of Action, and called on all development partners, United Nations agencies and other multilateral organizations, the private sector, civil society and other stakeholders, to play their respective roles actively and effectively. LDCs offered considerable human and natural resource potential for world economic growth, and meeting their development needs was therefore in the interests of the international community as a whole.

Mr. Scherbak (Russian Federation) said that implementation of the United Nations Development Agenda and other development initiatives resulting from international conferences should be harmonized in accordance with the provisions of General Assembly resolutions Nos. 50/227, 52/12 B, 57/270 B and 60/265, and should make use of the potential of the Economic and Social Council to serve as a key coordination mechanism for the United Nations system. The Russian delegation had actively participated in the review of the implementation of General Assembly resolution No. 61/16 on Strengthening of the Economic and Social Council (A/RES/61/16). One of the main undertakings during that review should have been to define more precisely the content of the different stages in the Council's substantive session, in particular the coordination segment. Unfortunately that subject had received little consideration. The Russian delegation had also hoped to have a more thorough discussion of the possibility of refining the agenda and programme of work of the Council's substantive session. That issue should be considered further during the Council's session in 2012, taking into account the relevant conclusions and recommendations of the Secretary-General.

The Russian Federation welcomed the outcome of the Fourth United Nations Conference on the Least Developed Countries, and considered that the agreements reached in Istanbul would help to strengthen international cooperation in support of the social and economic development of LDCs. Accountability of donors and LDCs would be central to the successful implementation of the Istanbul Programme of Action. Russia was committed to multilateral cooperation for development and was ready to engage in constructive cooperation with all partners, including the private sector and civil society.

The Russian Government was taking practical steps to cooperate with LDCs: it had donated more than US\$ 400 million in ODA annually for the past four years, and had written off external debts to the tune of several billion dollars. It had increased its support to the World Food Programme since 2010 with a view to strengthening cooperation to achieve food security, and had made significant contributions to strengthening international trade potential for LDCs. Preferential conditions had been set for importing from LDCs, in order to assist in the development of exports of traditional goods from those countries, such as handicrafts and agricultural produce. The Russian Federation had also contributed US\$ 50 million to the World Bank in support of vulnerable countries and sectors.

Joint efforts by the whole international community were required if favourable conditions for development were to be fostered in LDCs. South-South and triangular cooperation had an important role to play in addition to traditional North-South lines of assistance, and the United Nations must ensure that an effective system was in place for collecting and analysing data on South-South cooperation.

Ms. Fernández (Cuba) said that her delegation wished to underline the importance of continued respect for General Assembly resolutions Nos. 50/227, 52/12 B, 57/270 B and 60/265. General Assembly resolution No. 61/16 should be used to maintain the negotiated results arrived at in the different segments of the ECOSOC, rather than to open up new discussions that might not lead to specific commitments. Steps should be taken to strengthen the role of the Council as the main body for promoting economic cooperation, conducting policy review, and issuing recommendations on economic and social development. The Development Cooperation Forum should examine trends in international cooperation for development, including political and financial strategies, and the promotion of dialogue between Member States as an effective means of supporting cooperation.

The current global economic situation was characterized by severe financial, food and fuel crises. Increased food and fuel prices were threatening the future of LDCs and were a source of potential instability and conflict. The Council was the most appropriate forum for discussions on how to address those threats, in which specialized agencies, as well as financial and trade institutions, should be encouraged to participate. Efforts should

be made to strengthen cooperation between the Council, the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD), the World Trade Organization and the Bretton Woods institutions.

It was increasingly unlikely that the number of people living in hunger would be halved by 2015. Food insecurity was the consequence of an international economic order that not only maintained but also deepened poverty, inequality and injustice. Industrialized countries were not paying sufficient attention to the most vulnerable in society. Cuba would continue to support any efforts to realize the right to food. Developed countries should meet their commitment to allocate 0.7 per cent of their GDP to ODA. International cooperation should be strengthened and unrestricted in order to help overcome the effects of the economic and financial crisis and reduce its negative impact on human rights for those living in extreme poverty and hunger.

Ms. Stone (Australia) said that, following the strong political commitments at the Istanbul Conference and the adoption of the Istanbul Programme of Action, the ambitious goal of graduating one half of LDCs out of that category by 2020 would require much effort. Australia had recently contributed 2 million dollars to the Enhanced Integrated Framework (EIF) and looked forward in particular to the consolidation of efforts in the Pacific region. Australian foreign aid would be doubled by 2015, including by expanding aid programmes in Africa and South Asia, using the Istanbul Programme of Action as guidance. Australia would also push for incorporation of the Programme priorities in the work of different international forums and processes, including the development agenda of the G-20. Cooperation between United Nations Member States, agencies and other key development partners must provide a strong framework for the implementation of the Programme.

Ms. Beck (Solomon Islands) said that the international community must focus on timely and effective implementation of the Istanbul Programme of Action. LDCs remained vulnerable and susceptible to external economic and social shocks, and the impact of the global food crisis and climate change had reversed some hard-earned development gains. Over the past decade, all LDCs had been hit at some time by man-made or natural disasters, and recovery took years.

The international community and LDCs must cooperate in the framework of the Istanbul Programme of Action to eradicate poverty, build productive capacity and promote economic opportunities for the poorest. Financial and technological investment in smallholder farms could facilitate a shift to commercial agriculture, which would enable LDCs to feed their own people. The Technology Bank for LDCs agreed that the Programme of Action could facilitate access to and transfer of technology to enhance productive capacity.

Like many LDCs, Solomon Islands was a post-conflict country facing challenges in many areas, including those of infrastructure, education, health and sanitation, food security, and human and productive capacity-building. It required assistance to improve service delivery in rural areas, home to most of the islands' population. Such challenges further exacerbated the impact of the global food, energy and economic crises.

Climate change was another major problem threatening the very survival of LDCs like Solomon Islands. Urgent action was required to ensure that LDCs gained access to adaptation and mitigation resources and technology to support national efforts to deal with the impact of climate change. Coastal erosion, salination of water resources, and the loss of fishing grounds and marine biodiversity posed serious threats to livelihoods. The frequency of disasters had increased and droughts, floods, rising sea levels and high tides compromised water and food security.

Current pledges for greenhouse gas reduction to address climate change fell considerably short of benchmarks, and it was unfortunate that many countries were opting out of a second commitment under the Kyoto Protocol. Those developments weakened multilateralism and left LDCs and Small Island Developing States (SIDS) with an uncertain future.

Fuel costs accounted for one third to one half of LDCs' national budgets, largely owing to their remoteness and small-scale economies, which were unable to absorb external shocks and depended heavily on primary commodity trade to pay for expensive imported fuel. Transfer of technology and resources for renewable energy development was therefore crucial.

Trade was a prerequisite for LDC access to the global economy. Conclusion of the Doha Round, uniform and simplified rules of origin, preferential treatment for LDC products, the removal of non-tariff trade barriers for LDC products, and predictable Aid for Trade were crucial to improving LDC market access. South-South and triangular cooperation should also support LDC development.

A comprehensive midterm review of the Istanbul Programme of Action at the Economic and Social Council Substantive Session 2015 would help to harness global partnerships to further implementation of the Programme. She urged all primary stakeholders to incorporate the Programme in their provisions.

Ms. Adam (Maldives) said that Maldives had been the third country to graduate from the list of LDCs. The change in status entailed the loss of important benefits. The country's import-based economy remained fragile to external shocks, and while Maldives was slowly recovering from the financial crisis, the impact of a looming global food crisis was already being felt.

Small Island Developing States (SIDS) and small island LDCs were particularly affected by environmental degradation, as their productive capacities were inextricably linked to their environment and the sustainability of fragile ecosystems. In those countries, high per capita incomes often veiled economic vulnerability and structural shortcomings. Continued international support was needed to ensure that small island states that had graduated from LDC status could sustain economic progress and remedy structural vulnerability. The absence of a sound institutionalized strategy and concrete measures to support smooth transition could reverse decades of development progress. Abrupt withdrawal of international support disrupted the development process and must be avoided.

The European Union decision to extend its duty-free, quota-free market access regime for any graduating LDC for at least three years was therefore greatly appreciated. Similarly welcome was the call by the General Assembly in A/RES/65/171 for additional contributions to the Trust Fund for the Least Developed Countries to defray the cost of representatives from the least developed countries participating in the meetings of the Intergovernmental Preparatory Committee for the Fourth United Nations Conference on the Least Developed Countries and in the Conference itself.

However, piecemeal efforts in that regard were insufficient: there were clear and objective criteria for identification of LDCs, and the process of phasing out special support measures for LDCs needed to be equally coherent. Programmes for LDCs must include measurable goals and targets and a mechanism must be set up to monitor the progress of LDCs after graduation. In addition, smooth transition measures must be institutionalized within the United Nations system to help LDCs adapt to their change of status without reversing their progress.

Mr. Jaiswal (India) said that in order to implement the collective decision of the international community to graduate one half of LDCs by 2020, support must be scaled up. Additional measures of international assistance should be based on the Istanbul Programme of Action. Increasing official development assistance was crucial.

The Council and development partners had recently pledged to increase humanitarian aid in Africa and elsewhere. The same level of enthusiasm and commitment was in order when it came to development goals and the priorities identified in the Istanbul Programme of Action. The United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development (Rio+20) would be of vital importance to the future of development, and the special needs of LDCs should be taken into account in the preparation of the Conference.

Broadband was set to become a transformational technology for development, with a major impact on education and service delivery modalities. India had recently launched the India-Africa Virtual University and a virtual education initiative in support of LDCs in the region. His country's commitment to the cause of LDCs was reflected in the one-billion-dollar line of credit for projects and programmes in the framework of the Istanbul Programme of Action, and the five-million-dollar grant for follow-up activities under the Programme.

Mr. Song Shangzhe (China) said that LDCs relied on the international community to overcome structural impediments to development. Although LDCs had achieved economic and social progress since the adoption of the Brussels Programme of Action in 2001, per capita gross national income and the Human Development Index in those countries still ranked among the lowest in the world. Seventy-five per cent of the 880 million LDC population were poor, structural vulnerabilities had not been eliminated entirely, and the financial crisis had further exacerbated development challenges. In the light of that situation, the international community must step up its support to that group of countries.

At the Istanbul Conference the international community had reaffirmed its commitment to LDCs. The Istanbul Programme of Action set forth clear priorities; and full, timely and comprehensive implementation must transform those commitments into concrete action. Implementing partners must fully respect national ownership of development processes, align international assistance with national development strategies, and respect LDCs' development choices. The package of support measures for LDCs should focus on productive capacity-building, trade, agriculture and primary commodities, all of which were crucial to sustainable development. Timely delivery on ODA commitments was also important. ODA was the most effective direct support and the biggest source of external funding for LDC development. He called on donors to implement their ODA commitments made under the Istanbul Programme of Action.

Effective mechanisms must be set up to monitor the implementation of the Programme. Relevant international organizations should integrate the Programme priorities in their mandate, taking account of division of labour and the comparative advantages of each agency. It was also important to increase the resources of the United Nations Office of the High Representative for the Least Developed Countries, Landlocked Developing Countries and Small Island Developing States (UN-OHRLLS) to enhance its supervisory and implementation capacities.

China was a long-standing supporter of LDC development, including through South-South cooperation. In 2010 half of Chinese foreign aid had gone to LDCs and that share would be increased in the future. China stood ready to deliver on its commitments made at the Istanbul Conference to support LDCs through foreign aid, agricultural development, livelihood support, human resource training, trade preference, debt relief, and economic and trade cooperation in order to enable LDCs to benefit from development opportunities.

Ms. Chanda Chizanga Kondolo (Zambia) said that most of the targets set in the Brussels Programme of Action had not been met owing to a number of challenges and shortcomings, which had been highlighted in the preparations for the Fourth LDC Conference (LDC-IV). It was hoped that, with the necessary political commitment and through specific and targeted support, LDCs would meet the internationally agreed development goals, including the MDGs, along with the targets set out in the Istanbul Programme of Action. She thanked the Office of the High Representative for starting the process of producing a common roadmap for implementing the Programme of Action. She hoped that by 2020 the structural transformation in the LDCs would be complete and that they would be effectively integrated into the global economy.

Mr. Hayashi (Japan) said that the Japanese Government was committed to implementing the Istanbul Programme of Action, which would guide the LDCs and the international community in a spirit of cooperation and national ownership towards the goal of sustainable development. He stressed the importance of trade and investment and South-South cooperation.

Mr. Sammis (United States of America) said that the United States was committed to the success of the Istanbul Programme of Action. In his delegation's opinion, the statement delivered by Argentina on behalf of the Group of 77 and China had laid one-sided emphasis on the obligations of the developed countries. Moreover, in his view the importance of South-South trade was insufficiently reflected in United Nations documents. Although it was important for the developed countries to maintain and even increase their commitment to development cooperation, the LDC-IV had demonstrated the full complexity of the issue in a changing world. He asked Mr. Diarra for his views on his Office's priorities and those of the LDCs.

Mr. Karki (Observer for LDC Watch) said that he welcomed the attention paid to enhancing productive capacity in the Istanbul Programme of Action and the report of the Secretary-General. It was crucial to create jobs for young people while making sustainable use of natural resources. LDCs should diversify their economies, placing the rights of marginalized people at the centre of economic policy. Greater investment in education would enable the citizens of LDCs to participate fully in economic, social and political life. Although many LDCs were making progress towards the MDG target for primary education, there were still few opportunities at the higher levels, which prevented young people from contributing to the economies of LDCs. Greater ambition would be needed if at least half of LDCs were to graduate by 2020. The current crisis in the Horn of Africa was an additional challenge to the implementation of the Istanbul Programme of Action, in which he wished to see greater focus on vulnerability.

The industrialized countries must make unconditional cuts in their carbon and greenhouse gas emissions in accordance with the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change. Moreover, they should meet the full cost of climate change adaptation and the shift to sustainable systems in the LDCs. The debts of LDCs should be immediately and unconditionally cancelled in conjunction with a move to responsible financing. Official development assistance, with adequate and predictable funding, must help to make development effective while respecting national sovereignty and supporting people-owned policies.

There should be an effective follow-up strategy for LDC-IV, with regular reviews of progress to generate political will. Its mechanisms should involve civil society, the private sector and other actors. The governments of LDCs and their development partners should be held to account for their roles in meeting the aims of the Istanbul Programme of Action. NGOs would continue to raise awareness of the challenges facing LDCs and the need for a people-centred approach to development, with a view to ending poverty and suffering.

Mr. Diarra (Special Adviser for Africa and High Representative for the Least Developed Countries, Landlocked Developing Countries and Small Island Developing States) said that the Council seemed unanimous that the international community should do all it could to help the LDCs to graduate by 2020 in line with the Istanbul Programme of Action. There was a collective commitment to enhance support for the LDCs in a spirit of solidarity and with a view to guaranteeing global security. He agreed that there should be a follow-up and monitoring mechanism to ensure that the economies of the LDCs were constantly strengthened. A number of financial initiatives had already been taken to enable countries like the Maldives to participate in international conferences. He welcomed the flexibility shown by the European Union in extending the “Everything But Arms” arrangements. The General Assembly would be establishing an ad hoc working group on smooth transition strategies for the LDCs in their graduation process.

He recalled that the United Nations Office of the High Representative for the Least Developed Countries, Landlocked Developing Countries and Small Island Developing States (OHRLLS) was taking part in the inter-agency coordination mechanism of the United Nations Secretariat under the auspices of the Department of Economic and Social Affairs (DESA). It had participated fully in the preparation for Rio+20 and would continue to take an active part in the intergovernmental process. The priorities for the LDCs concerned the main aspects of sustainable development: the economic impact; human capacity-building; and environmental protection and biodiversity. The Istanbul Programme of Action should be fully mainstreamed into both of the priorities set for Rio+20, namely the green economy and the institutional framework for sustainable development. He felt that paying attention to two subjects in particular, renewable energy and water resource management, would have a long-term impact on growth and peaceful development in the LDCs.

Draft decision entitled “Role of the Economic and Social Council in the integrated and coordinated implementation of and follow-up to the outcomes of major United Nations conferences and summits” (E/2011/L.27)

The President said that the draft resolution contained no programme budget implications.

Draft decision E/2011/L.27 was adopted.

Draft decision entitled “Report of the Committee on World Food Security to the Economic and Social Council” (E/2011/L.32)

Ms. Montel (France) drew attention to the fact that the English version of paragraph (b) in the document differed slightly from the version agreed upon after lengthy negotiations.

The President said that the draft resolution contained no programme budget implications.

Draft decision E/2011/L.32, as orally corrected, was adopted.

Draft decision entitled “Programme of Action for the Least Developed Countries for the Decade 2011–2020” (E/2011/L.31)

The President said that the draft resolution contained no programme budget implications.

Draft decision E/2011/L.31 was adopted.

The President said that, in the light of the adoption of draft resolution E/2011/L.31, he would take it that draft resolution E/2011/L.16 was withdrawn by its sponsors.

It was so decided.

The President drew attention to the note by the President of the General Assembly circulating the summary report of the 2010 parliamentary hearing (E/2011/72) and the note by the Secretary-General transmitting a note by the Chair of the Committee on World Food Security on the reform of the Committee and on progress made towards its implementation (E/2011/102) and suggested that the Council should take note of them.

It was so decided.

The meeting rose at 12.15 p.m.