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## Second Committee

### Summary record of the 23rd meeting

Held at Headquarters, New York, on Wednesday, 7 November 2012 at 3 p.m.

*Chair:* Mr. Talbot . . . . . (Guyana)  
*Later:* Mr. Islam . . . . . (Bangladesh)

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*The meeting was called to order at 3.10 p.m.*

**Agenda item 20: Sustainable development (A/67/341)**

- (a) **Implementation of Agenda 21, the Programme for the Further Implementation of Agenda 21 and the outcomes of the World Summit on Sustainable Development and of the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development** (A/67/206 and A/67/348; A/CONF.216/16)
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*Video messages concerning the challenges of small island developing States from Mr. Denzil L. Douglas, Prime Minister of Saint Kitts and Nevis, and Mr. Jean-Paul Adam, Minister for Foreign Affairs of Seychelles, were shown.*

1. **Mr. Seth** (Director, Division for Sustainable Development, Department of Economic and Social Affairs) said that the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development held from 20 to 22 June 2012 in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, had resulted in an ambitious set of commitments, which must be followed up with tangible results. He hoped that delegations would soon agree on the constitution of an open working group on

the sustainable development goals. The Secretariat had sent a questionnaire on the topic to all Member States, and the deadline for responses had been extended to 16 November 2012. In accordance with the outcome document of the Conference, entitled "The future we want" (General Assembly resolution 66/288, annex), the Secretariat would prepare input for the working group, which would be supported by a United Nations inter-agency technical support team convened by the Department of Economic and Social Affairs and the United Nations Development Programme.

2. The outcome document had established a universal intergovernmental high-level political forum, which would meet at the beginning of the 68th session of the General Assembly and would ultimately replace the Commission on Sustainable Development. It called on the General Assembly to launch an open, transparent, and inclusive negotiation process to define the format and organizational aspects of the forum. The international community should create a space for all major groups to participate, share national experiences and strengthen the science-policy interface. It was his understanding that the President of the General Assembly would appoint facilitators for the process.

3. The outcome document had recognized the importance of the green economy and decided to strengthen and upgrade the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP). The Secretariat was working to prepare toolboxes, best practices and evaluation methodologies to help advance a green economy. It was cooperating closely with all stakeholders to develop a virtual knowledge platform for Member States and other major actors.

4. The outcome document requested the Statistical Commission to launch a programme of work in order to develop broader measures of progress to complement gross domestic product. It was his understanding that the Statistical Commission would consider that request at its forthcoming session in February 2013.

5. The outcome document had adopted the ten-year framework of programmes on sustainable consumption and production patterns (A/CONF.216/5, annex). He was confident that, in deciding how to operationalize the framework, the Committee would take into account the importance of all three dimensions of sustainable development.

6. Lastly, the Secretariat stood prepared to support the intergovernmental committee that would be convened in order to propose options on an effective development financing strategy.

7. He introduced under sub-item (a) the report of the Secretary-General on options for a facilitation mechanism promoting the development, transfer and dissemination of clean and environmentally sound technologies (A/67/348), which had been submitted pursuant to the outcome document and provided an overview of proposals made by 22 organizations and bodies of the United Nations system. The report recommended the constitution of an intergovernmental preparatory working group, serviced by the Department of Economic and Social Affairs and supported by a pool of experts, in order to work out institutional details with a view to achieving an operational technology facilitation mechanism. The decision on the way forward rested with Member States.

8. He introduced under sub-item (b) the report of the Secretary-General on the review of United Nations system support to small island developing States (A/66/218), which drew attention to potential areas for improvement, particularly strengthening the role of the Inter-Agency Consultative Group on Small Island Developing States; the report of the Secretary-General on concrete recommendations to enhance the implementation of the Barbados Programme of Action for the Sustainable Development of Small Island Developing States and the Mauritius Strategy for the Further Implementation of the Programme of Action for the Sustainable Development of Small Island Developing States (A/66/278); and the report of the Secretary-General on the sustainable development of the Caribbean Sea for present and future generations (A/67/313); under sub-item (h), the report of the Secretary-General on harmony with nature (A/67/317); and, under sub-item (i), the report of the Secretary-General on the International Year of Sustainable Energy for All, 2012 (A/67/314) and the report of the Secretary-General on the promotion of new and renewable sources of energy (A/67/318).

9. **Ms. Wahlström** (Assistant Secretary-General for Disaster Risk Reduction and Special Representative of the Secretary-General for the implementation of the Hyogo Framework for Action), speaking by video link from Geneva, introduced under sub-item (c) the report of the Secretary-General on the implementation of the International Strategy for Disaster Reduction

(A/67/335) and highlighted its salient points. The report included an update on international cooperation to reduce the impact of the El Niño/La Niña. Since its issuance, the impact of Hurricane Sandy had yet again highlighted the issues at hand. Around the world, the number of people affected by disasters and related economic losses had increased alarmingly. The risk to both public and private investments was growing most rapidly in low and middle income countries. Over the following decades, trillions of dollars would be invested in infrastructure, especially in low and middle income countries, and the nature and location of those investments would be critical.

10. The United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development had made reducing risk a core element of the post-2015 development agenda, thereby underscoring the need for a universal, action-oriented framework for disaster risk reduction. The international community was coordinating its approach, and a series of events would be held in order to facilitate that process.

11. The report recommended, inter alia, that Member States should conduct national-level multi-stakeholder consultations to take stock of the lessons from managing disaster risk and securing development planning and investments and share those lessons at the fourth session of the Global Platform for Disaster Risk Reduction in 2013; share at the Global Platform for Disaster Risk Reduction in 2013 the progress made on the implementation of the commitments undertaken at the previous sessions of the Global Platform for Disaster Risk Reduction; and establish and further develop national disaster loss databases, disaster risk mapping and financial tracking systems in order to support decision-making across all levels.

12. In its forthcoming work, the international community should draw on the extensive knowledge and lessons generated from the implementation of the Hyogo Framework for Action. Member States had provided vital support to the United Nations Office for Disaster Risk Reduction, and a large number had reported on their progress in implementing the Hyogo Framework. The current development model was clearly inadequate, and practical and proven measures should be taken to incorporate risk reduction in the sustainable development agenda.

13. **Mr. Ferreira de Souza Dias** (Executive Secretary, Convention on Biological Diversity),

speaking via video link, introduced under sub-item (f) his report on the work of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity contained in chapter III of document A/67/295 and briefed the Committee on the outcomes of the eleventh meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention, which had taken place after the submission of the report.

14. The meeting had been held from 8 to 19 October 2012 in Hyderabad, India. It had focused on practical measures and financial support for countries to implement national biodiversity plans to meet the Strategic Plan for Biodiversity 2011-2020 and the Aichi Biodiversity Targets. Developed countries had agreed to double funding to support efforts in developing countries towards meeting the internationally agreed Biodiversity Targets and the main goals of the Strategic Plan. Using a baseline figure of the average annual national spending on biodiversity between 2006 and 2010, developed countries had committed to doubling biodiversity-related international financial flows by 2015. The meeting had set targets to increase the number of countries that had included biodiversity in their national development plans and prepared national financial plans for biodiversity. All States parties had agreed to substantially increase domestic expenditures for biodiversity protection over the same period. Those targets, and the progress made in implementing them, would be reviewed at the following meeting of the Conference of the Parties in 2014.

15. For the first time, developing countries including India and several African States had pledged additional funds above and beyond their core assessed contributions towards the work of the Convention. The meeting had launched the Hyderabad Call for Biodiversity Champions, which would accept pledges from Governments and organizations in support of the Strategic Plan. The Government of India had committed over \$50 million as part of that initiative. The Global Environment Facility had for the first time been provided with an assessment of the financial resources required to meet developing countries' needs for implementing the Convention. A number of decisions had been taken with a view to enhancing practical support for the parties. For instance, the Convention, Global Environment Facility, United Nations Development Programme and UNEP had created a new online forum of national biodiversity strategies and action plans, which would provide

accessible, focused information such as best practices, guidelines and learning tools. The meeting had agreed to a number of measures to encourage the main economic sectors, such as business and development organizations, to integrate biodiversity objectives in their plans and programmes.

16. Marine biodiversity had been another major area of focus. In order to meet the Aichi biodiversity target of ensuring that 10 per cent of marine areas were protected by 2020, the meeting had decided to compile a varied list of marine areas of ecological or biological significance. The list would be transmitted to the General Assembly for consideration by mechanisms linked to the United Nations Convention on Law of the Sea. Parties to the Convention had called for more research into the potential adverse effects of underwater noise from ships on marine and coastal biodiversity, and expressed concern at the adverse effects of marine litter. The meeting had recognized the growing impact of climate change on coral reefs, which would require significant investment. Fisheries management agencies had been urged to play a stronger role in addressing the effects of fisheries on biodiversity.

17. The parties had provided guidance on the preparations for the entry into force of the Nagoya Protocol on Access to Genetic Resources and the Fair and Equitable Sharing of Benefits Arising from their Utilization. They had agreed that a third meeting of the Intergovernmental Committee for the Nagoya Protocol would be needed in the following two years. 92 parties to the Convention had now signed the Protocol and eight had ratified it; he urged all remaining parties to ratify the Protocol as soon as possible.

18. The meeting had adopted a number of other decisions regarding indigenous and local communities, protected areas and measures to promote Aichi Target 15. It had called for enhanced collaboration between the Convention and United Nations climate change initiatives. It had requested the Intergovernmental Science-Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services to contribute to assessments of the realization of the Aichi targets. Lastly, at a parallel summit, participants adopted the Hyderabad Declaration on Subnational Governments, Cities and other Local Authorities for Biodiversity.

19. **Mr. Chenje** (United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP)), speaking on behalf of the

Executive Director of UNEP, introduced under sub-item (g) the report of the Governing Council of UNEP on its twelfth special session held in Nairobi from 20 to 22 February 2012 (A/67/25) and highlighted its salient points.

20. Introducing the report of the Secretary-General on the oil slick on Lebanese shores (A/67/341), he said that, in accordance with paragraph 6 of General Assembly resolution 66/192, the report now also explored the value of the experience of the United Nations Compensation Commission in terms of defining environmental damage in a case such as the present oil slick, in measuring and quantifying the damage sustained and in determining the amount of compensation payable in respect of it.

21. Turning to the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development, he drew the attention of the Committee to paragraph 88, which invited the Assembly to adopt a resolution strengthening and upgrading UNEP, and to paragraph 226, which invited Member States to designate a Member State body to take any necessary steps to fully operationalize the framework. In accordance with the outcome document, UNEP was enhancing its partnerships with Governments, other United Nations agencies, civil societies, local authorities and business. One particular area of action was corporate sustainability reporting, which was referred to in paragraph 47 of the outcome document. In cooperation with UNEP and the Global Reporting Initiative, a Group of Friends of Paragraph 47 had been convened in order to foster cooperation between Governments. In accordance with paragraph 66 of the outcome document, UNEP was working together with other United Nations partners to build on the existing green economy advisory services.

22. **Ms. Main Sancha** (United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC)) introduced under sub-item (f) the report of the Executive Secretary of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change on the United Nations Climate Change Conference, Durban, South Africa, 2011, contained in chapter I of document A/67/295. The Conference had confirmed that a second commitment period under the Kyoto Protocol would start in January 2013. It had reaffirmed the mitigation pledges made by 89 developed and developing countries. Governments had identified a path towards a future legal climate framework that would be applicable to all parties. The infrastructure needed to

support developing countries in a fully functioning climate regime had been improved significantly. Perhaps most importantly, a strong message had been sent that the level of ambition should be raised even further. At the forthcoming Climate Change Conference, to be held in Doha from 26 November to 7 December 2012, Governments would have an opportunity to adopt the second commitment period and ensure its implementation; determine how to implement the commitment of financial support to developing countries; and take the necessary steps to continue moving towards a global agreement by 2015.

23. **Ms. Tohme** (Lebanon) said that her Government particularly appreciated the report on the oil slick on Lebanese shores. It was important to quantify the environmental damage incurred and measure the cost of compensation.

24. **The Chair** invited the Committee to engage in a general discussion on the item.

25. **Mr. Goddard** (Barbados), speaking on behalf of the Caribbean Community (CARICOM), said the increasing frequency and intensity of such extreme weather events in the region was alarming and placed the link between such phenomena and climate change beyond dispute. The Caribbean had been badly affected by Hurricane Sandy with 70 people losing lives, thousands of houses destroyed and infrastructure damage worth up to \$300 million one year after Hurricane Irene.

26. The people most affected by such events contributed least to climate change with estimates suggesting that the economic cost of climate change to Caribbean small-island developing States (SIDS) could be 14 per cent of GDP annually by 2025 and 39 per cent by 2050. Such estimates were likely conservative as they had been made prior to findings on accelerated sea-level rises. Climate change must be placed at the top of the global agenda and ongoing negotiations under the UNFCCC given a renewed sense of urgency and ambition. The eighteenth session of the Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change and the eighth session of the Conference of the Parties serving as the meeting of the Parties to the Kyoto Protocol (Doha Climate Change Conference) should prioritize ensuring the world could meet globally agreed goals in 2020, including efforts to implement a legally binding second commitment period under the Kyoto Protocol; agreeing

the scope and modalities for the 2-degree-objective review with a view to strengthening it well below 1.5 degrees; establishing a mechanism to address loss and damage due to climate change; scaling up commitments from developed countries to \$100 billion by 2020; and through meaningful efforts to close the pre-2020 mitigation ambition gap to minimize and avoid potentially catastrophic climate change effects.

27. The sustainable development and protection of the Caribbean Sea required an integrated management approach involving all relevant stakeholders. The implementation of the Caribbean Sea Commission was crucial to further progress and required the support of the international community via finance, technical support and capacity building. While establishing global sustainable development goals (SDGs) was a means of pursuing focused, coherent action, they must be science-driven, evidenced based and defined through a robust technical process. The new framework must build on lessons learnt from the MDGs and incorporate areas such as oceans, food security, social inclusion and energy. CARICOM would play an active role to ensure the perspective of SIDS was taken into account, with a number of States wishing to serve on the open-ended working group on the sustainable development goals, which must be constituted as soon as possible.

28. Broader measures needed to be developed to complement GDP in assessing development progress. To that end, the work of the Statistical Commission must be open and transparent to ensure the interests of all Member States were taken into account. CARICOM was pleased to note that key principles guiding efforts to strengthen the institutional framework for sustainable development were reflected in the Rio+20 outcome document and would engage constructively to establish a universal, intergovernmental, high-level political forum, which would provide for, inter alia, follow-up and review of progress towards sustainable development and commitments contained in the Barbados Programme of Action and Mauritius Strategy. CARICOM was also committed to strengthening the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP). As for a third international conference on SIDS in 2014, CARICOM fully supported the draft resolution of the Group of 77 and China. The preparatory process must involve a robust assessment of implementation gaps and new and emerging challenges facing SIDS and thus required the support of the international community. To

bolster support, 2014 should be designated as the international year of SIDS.

29. High dependence on imported fossil fuels threatened economic viability, as there could be no sustainable development or progress towards the MDGs if economic fortunes were driven by commodity markets. For that reason, CARICOM fully supported the Sustainable Energy For All initiative, which it hoped would be endorsed in 2012.

30. **Mr. Idris Ismail Faragalla Hassan** (Sudan), speaking on behalf of the Group of Arab States, said that the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development had reaffirmed the principle of common but differentiated responsibility and underscored the need for a more comprehensive approach to the world's problems, particularly the eradication of hunger. It was therefore worrying that developed countries were making increasing attempts to avoid their economic and social commitments.

31. The Group welcomed the report of the Secretary-General on options for a facilitation mechanism promoting the development, transfer and dissemination of clean and environmentally sound technologies (A/67/348), particularly the recommendation regarding the constitution of an intergovernmental preparatory working group.

32. The UNFCCC, particularly the principle of common but differentiated responsibility, remained the main forum for multilateral trade negotiations and efforts to combat climate change. It was therefore essential to make the Doha Climate Change Conference a success and to implement the commitments reached at previous conferences, particularly the adoption of a second commitment period under the Kyoto Protocol. It was unacceptable for any State to withdraw from the Protocol. The Group therefore urged those parties that had opted out of the second commitment period to reverse that decision. In order to bridge the shortfall for the period 2012 to 2020, funding should be progressively increased in order to reach \$100 billion by 2020.

33. In view of the importance of renewable energy for sustainable development, the Group welcomed the convening of the Abu Dhabi Sustainability Week to be held from 13 to 17 January 2013, which would include the third session of the General Assembly of the International Renewable Energy Agency and the World Future Energy Summit 2013.

34. The Arab region was particularly vulnerable to desertification, which endangered agriculture and the realization of the internationally agreed development goals. The international community should adopt a comprehensive approach, raise awareness of the issue, build national capacities and support technology transfer to combat desertification. It should foster implementation of the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification in Those Countries Experiencing Serious Drought and/or Desertification, Particularly in Africa, by providing the necessary resources for projects to combat desertification in developing countries, including Arab countries.

35. The international community had an obligation to protect the rights of peoples under occupation, particularly the Palestinian people and the Syrian Arab people in the occupied Golan. The outcome document of the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development included a commitment to remove the obstacles to the full realization of the right of self-determination of peoples living under colonial and foreign occupation, which continued to adversely affect their economic and social development as well as their environment, and were incompatible with the dignity and worth of the human person.

36. The Group took note of the report of the Secretary-General on the oil slick on Lebanese shores (A/67/341). The Committee must give that topic its due importance. The report showed that Israel had deliberately ignored repeated General Assembly resolutions requesting it to assume responsibility for prompt and adequate compensation to the Lebanese and Syrian Governments. Those countries' efforts to achieve sustainable socioeconomic development had been hampered by the environmental disaster caused by Israel's barbaric attack on the Jiyeh power plant in Lebanon in July 2006.

37. **Mr. Khan** (Indonesia), speaking on behalf of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN), said the achievements of Rio provided a solid foundation on which to build through continuous, concrete actions and the full support of the entire international community. In terms of the Rio+20 outcomes, it was imperative that SDGs reflected an integrated and balanced treatment of the three sustainable development pillars and that the addressed inequality. The high-level political forum should lead to the fulfillment of sustainable development commitments and contribute to the reform of the principal United

Nations development arm. Appropriate financing and transfer of technology were fundamental to achieving sustainable development, yet remained undefined. Clear expectations were needed for the outcomes of the working group on financing and the United Nations system's efforts to establish a mechanism promoting the development, transfer and dissemination of environmentally sound technologies.

38. An important objective was establishing a framework enabling developing countries to take a technology leap. Technology transfer should ultimately strengthen developing countries' capacities and help them towards satisfying the three pillars of sustainable development. Establishing an actionable financing mechanism would be an important step and a departure from the past, which had failed to deliver on ample promise, but the priorities of developing countries must be adequately reflected. Given the economic landscape, innovative financing should be sought, while implementation of commitments continued on the basis of common but differentiated responsibilities. Building trust would be vital to smooth progress and the outcomes of deliberations could be an important measure in that and should bolster the Rio+20 follow-up and associated processes.

39. **Mr. Benmehidi** (Algeria), speaking on behalf of the Group of 77 and China, said sustainable development provided the framework to address multifaceted economic development, but it should be strengthened and not allow its basic principles to be renegotiated or retracted. An integrated and more systemic approach was needed and should be prioritized. It was incumbent on the General Assembly successfully and promptly to launch the Rio+20 follow-up process and ensure a balanced representation of developing countries, effective and full implementation of the outcomes and provide developing countries with adequate resources. Development partners should provide new and increased financial resources, technology transfers and capacity building to ensure the full and prompt realization of actions. Regional commissions had a key support role in that regard.

40. Climate change threatened not only the prospects of developing countries but also their very existence. The Group looked forward to a successful and comprehensive outcome at the Doha Climate Change Conference and urged for the full implementation of the Durban Platform for Enhanced Action and a

balanced linkage between mitigation, adaptation and means of implementation. The United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD) required renewed commitment and urgent actions from Member States, with the support of the United Nations system and all stakeholders, in order to achieve a land-degradation-neutral world. Commitments to coordinate monitoring of land degradation and restoration of degraded lands needed to be implemented according to national priorities, circumstances and development strategies. The unsustainable use of biodiversity also risked increasing poverty and undermining development, thus prevention needed to be promoted and relevant policies implemented. In that regard, developed countries should contribute to the Hyderabad Pledge on biodiversity established at the eleventh meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity (Conference on Biological Diversity) in Hyderabad.

41. The Group was particularly committed to supporting particularly SIDS, which were acutely and critically vulnerable to climate change and required greater and urgent assistance in implementing the Barbados Programme of Action and Mauritius Strategy and the continued support from the United Nations system in overcoming emerging sustainable development challenges and in convening the third international conference for sustainable development of SIDS in 2014. Africa was also particularly vulnerable to climate change and sustainable development there remained elusive. Its situation was exacerbated by continued loss of biodiversity and desertification, land degradation and persistent droughts, especially in the Horn of Africa and Sahel regions. The international community needed to ensure the full and timely delivery of development commitments, including increased ODA, capacity building and technology transfer.

42. Disaster risk had accumulated faster than economic growth over the preceding decade. While the midterm review of the Hyogo Framework for Action had revealed progress towards resilience, risk management systems and national and international decision-making required further critical development, including disaster loss accounting and integrated risk modeling to support development and investment planning. The Group continued fully to support the International Strategy for Disaster Reduction and its policy guidance and subsequent coordination.

43. **Mrs. Daniel** (Nauru), speaking on behalf of the Alliance of Small Island Developing States (AOSIS), said Hurricane Sandy provided an important occasion to reflect on climate change as people's reluctance to leave their homes symbolized the struggle facing SIDS as sea levels rose. The plight of such countries, though far from the media spotlight, should not be forgotten and should receive due resources to adapt to climate change and aid disaster recovery. A third international conference on SIDS and the international year of SIDS planned for 2014 would draw attention to the challenges they faced and be an opportune time to rethink how to address their special needs and vulnerabilities effectively.

44. Many SIDS were far from universal attainment of the MDGs and progress had been uneven. The anticipated SDGs, if they were to be universal, should address the particular needs of SIDS. AOSIS called for an ambitious outcome of the third international conference on SIDS, renewed global commitment to SIDS and real progress on the ground. The United Nations system must enhance assistance in preparation for the conference, which must ensure the participation of all AOSIS members throughout if it were to have any credibility. AOSIS called on partners to make voluntary contributions to ensure the success of the conference and international years of SIDS. All countries, led by developed countries, should intensify efforts to match the threat of climate change to sustainable development and prioritize the pre-2020 mitigation ambition, setting a workplan to close the ambition gap, mobilizing the means of implementation and adopting an ambitious, legally binding second commitment period under the Kyoto Protocol.

45. **Mr. Zampetti** (Observer for the European Union), speaking on behalf of the acceding country Croatia, the candidate countries the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Montenegro, Iceland and Serbia, the country of the stabilization and association process and potential candidate Bosnia and Herzegovina and, in addition, Ukraine and the Republic of Moldova, said the European Union was determined fully to contribute to the implementation of the Rio+20 outcomes, whose follow-up offered many opportunities. Success, however, depended on all partners participating and working together.

46. The European Union would fully engage in discussions on the SDGs and seek to promote inclusive green economies in poverty eradication and sustainable



development and strengthen relevant policies and cooperation with partners. The Rio+20 follow-up and post-2015 development agenda should advanced in a consistent, coherent and coordinated manner in order to set the stage for global governance, poverty eradication and sustainable development efforts. Unmet needs still remained, such as access to health, education, employment and decent work and improving gender equality. The new framework should reflect the aspirations of the poorest, contain important issues covered in the Millennium Declaration but omitted from the MDGs, and guide the way towards new partnerships.

47. SDGs should be advanced without detracting from MDG and integrated in the post-2015 development agenda. SDGs must address key global challenges, promote sustainable development for all countries, fully encompass the three pillars of sustainable development in a balanced and mutually reinforcing manner and possibly be linked to concrete targets and indicators. SDGs needed to be universally applicable, but allow for differentiated approaches among and within countries. Improving the current framework was a collective endeavour, which should be inclusive, involve all relevant stakeholders and have a robust science-policy interface. However, it should be kept simple with a limited set of goals that were action oriented and easy to communicate and implement.

48. The International Labour Organization (ILO) was important in promoting the often understated social aspect of sustainable developing via labour rights, social protection and decent income, which were key contributors to stable growth, enhancing social inclusion and reducing poverty.

49. Climate change was also important and universal issue. The common challenge was to create low-emission economies and use climate action as a catalyst for sustainable development, thus the Durban Platform for Enhanced Action should be fully implemented. The Doha Climate Change Conference must continue the success of previous years and pave the way for a single, global and comprehensive legally binding agreement applicable to all parties by 2015. The ambition gap needed to be closed to stay on track with the 2-degree objective, particularly in the transition to the new legally binding document.

50. The European Union welcomed the successful outcomes of the Conference on Biological Diversity in Hyderabad and remained committed to substantially increasing financial, human and technical resources from all possible sources, including innovative financial mechanisms, for biodiversity. That should be balanced with the effective implementation of the Convention on Biological Diversity against an established baseline and reporting framework.

51. The European Union was mainstreaming disaster risk reduction and climate change adaptation across policies and financial instruments. Central to its humanitarian aid and development cooperation was supporting partners' resilience strategies, integrating research results and addressing structural vulnerabilities. It looked forward to negotiating the modalities of the conference on SIDS and anticipated a focused, efficient and effective preparatory process leading to a successful conference in 2014 addressing the particular needs of SIDS and strengthening and coordinating United Nations efforts in that regard.

52. **Mr. Weisleder** (Costa Rica), speaking on behalf of the Green Group, said a viable response to climate change, sustainable development, renewable energy and sustainable water management required consideration of their interconnectedness. While humanity had long been aware of its impact on the environment, action had been lacking as the effects worsened each year. Awareness needed to translate into sustained global action against greenhouse gases. A lack of capacity to adapt to risks had left the vulnerable even more so, particularly SIDS and low-lying countries.

53. Water management was central to climate adaptation and the link between economic development and environmental sustainability and therefore required greater visibility. The Rio+20 outcome document, which offered a path well-being through better management of natural resources and the planet in general, required immediate action. The SDGs must balance all three dimensions of sustainable development and address cross-cutting issues and give due attention to vulnerability impacts, energy and water in the discussion of climate change and in the elaboration of the post-2015 development agenda and momentum towards a global climate agreement must be maintained during the Doha negotiations.

54. **Mr. Sareer** (Maldives) said evidence continued to mount showing a link between climate change and unusual weather patterns, of which there had been many extreme and devastating examples around the world and in Maldives in 2012, such as the report of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change. Maldives had spoken of the threat of climate change some 25 years previously and now it had become global issue. As one of the most vulnerable, despite its greenhouse gas concentration accounting for less than 0.01 per cent of global emissions, Maldives faced climate change as a matter of survival and security. In that regard, the Government had committed to achieving a low carbon economy and was targeting an energy mix of 60 per cent solar and 40 per cent wind and biomass, without raising the cost to consumers, and had launched a five-year investment plan to that end, as well as an import regime to promote the use of electric cars. Maldives had already eradicated CFCs and expected to be the first country to phase out HCFCs. However, it needed assistance and knowledge transfers from the international community.

55. Concrete actions were needed to consolidate gains and establish future goals in keeping with the 2-degree objective. Greenhouse gas and green energy targets could be achieved by implementing of the Rio+20 outcome document and the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) and promptly adopting and implementing the second commitment period under the Kyoto Protocol. Maldives welcomed the increased focus on low-lying countries within the Rio+20 outcome document and Sustainable Ocean Initiative, which would hopefully create a platform for universal stakeholder collaboration and expedite the attainment of common goals.

56. While it had achieved five of the eight MDGs, Maldives was making relatively slow progress towards environmental sustainability due to a number of challenges common among SIDS. Nevertheless, the Government had been formulating a framework, with stakeholder and United Nations assistance, to guide the country to timely MDG attainment. However, work must continue beyond 2015. The SDG initiative was welcome, but its success depended on the political will of stakeholders. SDGs should cover consumption patterns, promote sustainable human settlements, water resources and renewable energy and be applicable to all countries.

57. **Mr. Maksimychev** (Russian Federation) said the implementation of the Rio+20 outcome document would be a key factor in consolidating international MDG attainment efforts and forming a post-2015 development agenda. In that regard, the intergovernmental development of the SDGs and a prompt, yet fair and pragmatic decision on the establishment of the open-ended working group should be prioritized. Determining the optimal modalities for the high-level political forum was also important, but particularly so was ensuring its creation enhanced the existing architecture and fully replaced the United Nations Commission on Sustainable Development, thereby strengthening the ability to balance the integration of the three sustainable development pillars. Bolstering UNEP's role in formulating a global environment agenda, promoting environmentally sustainable development and raising awareness of the condition of ecosystems was welcome, while universal membership in its governing council would enhance oversight.

58. A post-2012 international climate cooperation regime should take into account the Durban Platform for Enhanced Action, whose successful implementation required all Member States to participate according to their own individual capacities and climate impact. The Doha Climate Change Conference must approve a clear programme of action towards adopting a universal post-Kyoto agreement by 2015.

59. The Russian Federation was committed to the implementation of internationally agreed goals in the support of SIDS and called for the implementation of the Barbados Programme of Action and Mauritius Strategy and constructive cooperation with partners to determine effective modalities for the third international conference on SIDS in 2014.

*Mr. Islam (Bangladesh), Vice-Chair, took the Chair.*

60. **Mr. Sul Kyung-hoon** (Republic of Korea) said coherent, coordinated follow-up measures and meaningful progress were required to seize the historic opportunity provided by Rio+20 and thus a matter of priority. The transition towards a green economy had already brought structural changes to the global market and preparing for such changes was important. To ease the transition process, the Global Green Growth Institute promoted partnerships between developed and

developing countries and the public and private sectors.

61. The SDGs should holistically and coherently encompass the three pillars of sustainable development, be built on achieving the MDGs and form the core of the post-2015 development agenda, thus crucially ensuring a single coherent development agenda. The process must be inclusive, transparent and ensure the participation of all Member States and stakeholders. Promptly establishing the open working group and ensuring synergy with the High-level Panel on the Post-2015 Development Agenda was paramount.

62. Defining the format and organizational aspects of the high-level political forum for improving sustainable development governance was also necessary. Focus should be on clarifying functions, roles and responsibilities and improving the effectiveness of the United Nations system. It should prioritize pertinent, practical issues, including reviewing SDG progress and follow-up on financing for sustainable development, and avoid superficial discussions and duplication. UNEP should be strengthened to ensure universal membership in its governing council, secure, stable and adequate financial resources and coordination among multinational environmental agreements. Achieving sustainable development required resources from diverse sources which should be used as effectively and efficiently as possible. Discussions should be more forward-looking and realistic and ultimately reflect the changing development landscape. Technology transfer and capacity building were also crucial, thus the report on a mechanism to facilitate that was welcome, but a concrete outcome was ultimately needed.

63. **Mr. Elmajerbi** (Libya) said that the outcome document of the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development underscored the importance of a strengthened institutional framework for sustainable development which responded coherently and effectively to current and future challenges and efficiently bridged gaps in the implementation of the sustainable development agenda. His delegation stressed the importance of the General Assembly, as the main body for discussion and decision making, and of the Economic and Social Council as the main body for economic and social policy review.

64. Many countries, particularly in Africa, continued to face difficulties in realizing the Millennium

Development Goals (MDGs). The international community must make a concerted effort to comply with the commitments made at the relevant United Nations conferences. Desertification was a particular concern, including in his own country, which was an active participant in meetings of the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification and cooperated with neighbouring countries to address the issue.

65. In view of the urgent need to address climate change and curb greenhouse gas emissions, his delegation hoped that the Doha Climate Change Conference would reach a comprehensive agreement on all of the issues at hand. All relevant stakeholders must take action to implement the Hyogo Framework for Action, the Strategic Plan for Biodiversity 2011-2020 and the Aichi Biodiversity Targets.

66. His delegation welcomed the outcomes of the eleventh meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity held recently in Hyderabad. Sufficient resources must be allocated to new and renewable energy sources, including clean fuel sources, as well as the sustainable use of traditional energy sources.

67. **Mr. Khalil** (Egypt), endorsing the points made by the representative of the Sudan on behalf of the Group of Arab States, said that the Committee must take tangible actions to implement the outcomes of the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development. Of particular importance were the establishment of an intergovernmental open working group to develop the sustainable development goals; a working group to examine the options for financing sustainable development; a high-level political forum to replace the Commission on Sustainable Development; and a facilitation mechanism promoting the development, transfer and dissemination of clean and environmentally sound technologies. The international community should focus on creating an inclusive, fair and sustainable and post-2015 development framework.

68. It was worrying that the intergovernmental open-ended working group had yet to be established. Negotiations on the issue must begin without further delay. With that end in mind, his delegation called on the President of the General Assembly to appoint two facilitators, one from the developing States and one from the developed States. The working group to examine the options for financing sustainable

development and the mechanism to facilitate technology transfer must also begin work as soon as possible.

69. The repercussions of climate change had affected the entire planet, including New York, which had recently been hit by Hurricane Sandy. Climate change no less dangerous than nuclear weapons, and it was a more imminent threat. Withdrawal from the Kyoto Protocol should therefore be seen in the same light as withdrawal from the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty.

70. **Mr. Bhattarai** (Nepal) said that the Rio+20 outcome document supported the Istanbul Programme of Action as the sustainable development agenda for least developed countries. However, its faithful implementation required enhanced support via multi-stakeholder partnership. The ultimate goal of sustainable development must be poverty eradication, which would promote more reliable and far-reaching solutions, particularly in the context of the post-2015 development agenda and SDGs. Ensuring mutual reinforcement of the three pillars of sustainable development would contribute to that end on a sustained and equitable basis. The green economy was also a factor in inclusive, equitable growth and promoting sustainable consumption, particularly so in Nepal, which benefited from large natural resources and incredible biodiversity.

71. People-centred development was necessary for creating social and economic infrastructure for sustained growth, social progress and environmental protection, particularly by empowering women and indigenous and isolated people. Climate change disproportionately affected the socioeconomic development process and lives of people in least developed countries dependent on agriculture. The Green Climate Fund needed to be made fully operational as countries with fewer resources and greater vulnerabilities to climate change required suitable adaptation and mitigation measures. With desertification, land degradation and drought particularly threatening, comprehensive global support for the implementation of the UNCCD was critical to sustainable development. Mountains and mountain people, which constituted 12 per cent of the global population, were especially vulnerable to climate change. Therefore, sustainable mountain development must be fully integrated into the SDGs and post-2015 development agenda. Nepal sought to forge partnerships with mountain countries to share expertise

and mobilize international support. However, all national and regional efforts and global partnerships needed to be upgraded and due international attention accorded to issues in setting the SDGs and post-2015 development agenda in order to ensure sustainability for all, especially the most vulnerable.

72. **Mr. Pedersen** (Norway) said that, while the SDGs should build on the MDGs and be concrete and measurable, they must be innovative and universal, integrate the three pillars of sustainable development and involve the close cooperation of the United Nations system, Member States and diverse stakeholders. Norway was eager to contribute and called for the establishment of the working group.

73. Strengthening the United Nations system by replacing the Commission on Sustainable Development with a high-level political forum was crucial. The forum must be more effective, with universal membership not sufficient in itself: it needed the mandate and tools to promote national and international implementation of the Rio+20 outcome document. UNEP should also be strengthened and steps taken to ensure its new governing body met for the first time in February 2013.

74. The Sustainable Energy for All initiative could have an immense impact on poverty reduction and economic growth, thus the cooperation among the United Nations, World Bank and private sector in the area was welcome, as partnership was key to sustainable energy goals, which would benefit areas such as gender equality, women's empowerment and economic development. Access to reproductive health was also vital, both to promoting development and reducing morbidity, mortality and disability after disasters. In terms of disaster risk reduction, closer integration of prevention and preparedness and development activities were required to enhance efficiency and save more lives.

*The meeting rose at 6.05 p.m.*