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Special Ministerial Meeting of the Economic and Social Council: Building the Future We Want

Provisional summary record of the 50th meeting

Held at Headquarters, New York, on Monday, 24 September 2012, at 3:30 p.m.

President: Mr. Koterec. (Slovakia)

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The meeting was called to order at 3.40 p.m.

Special Ministerial Meeting of the Economic and Social Council: Building the Future We Want

Opening statement by the President of the Council

1. **The President** said that the redesign of the multilateral system for development was a particularly timely issue to be discussing on the heels of the Rio+20 Conference. The outcome document of that Conference had called, among other things, for a strengthening of the Economic and Social Council. The large presence of Ministers and other high-level officials at the meeting sent a strong message in support of the Council's key role in achieving a balanced integration of the three pillars of development.

2. As the economic recovery slowed, countries suffering from unemployment, particularly among youth, were threatened by social unrest. Income inequality was increasing in the richer countries, while in the poorer countries, rising food prices were having disastrous effects, especially for children. National solutions alone were not sufficient in the face of such challenges. A more effective multilateral system for development was needed, and the role of the United Nations within that system needed to be defined.

3. There was general agreement on the need for a more sustainable development model with more effective incentives and enhanced monitoring and accountability. The United Nations, and even more specifically, the Economic and Social Council, was a natural focal point for those efforts. As the new multilateral framework emerged, the Council's job was to help put in place a consultative framework that ensured a truly global approach, and to use its ties with nongovernmental organizations and academia to help disseminate knowledge and implement green-growth technologies. Towards that end, the Council's work mechanisms and engagement with other actors needed to be redesigned to achieve greater policy coherence across the economic, social and environmental pillars of development.

Statement by the President of the General Assembly

4. **Mr. Jeremić** (Serbia), President of the General Assembly, said that a more dynamic Economic and Social Council making fuller use of its powers under

the Charter could make an even stronger contribution to advancing the economic and social aspects of the global development agenda. Rio+20 had highlighted the need for greater coordination and coherence in pursuit of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), even as planning was beginning for the development agenda beyond 2015. The General Assembly had been tasked by Rio+20 with preparing a high-level forum to be launched at the beginning of the next session, establishing a working group to propose a list of sustainable development goals, and creating an intergovernmental process to propose options on an effective financing strategy. He particularly looked forward to hearing the views of the Council on that last question, as well as any other suggestions for maximizing the impact of the United Nations on the global development agenda.

5. Improved global economic governance would require enhanced collaboration among the United Nations, the international financial and trade institutions, and informal associations such as the Group of Twenty. He looked forward to receiving input from the Council on how the General Assembly could play more active role in that collaboration. The goal was not to infringe on, but rather to complement existing efforts. The Outcome of the Conference on the World Financial and Economic Crisis and its Impact on Development, which had been endorsed by the sixty-third session of the General Assembly, had stressed that the needs of developing countries and the environment should be at the top of the development agenda. He hoped that a revitalized Economic and Social Council would contribute to making the sixty-seventh session of the General Assembly one that would be remembered for moving the global development agenda forward and establishing a more inclusive global economic discourse.

Address by the Secretary-General of the United Nations

6. **The Secretary-General** said that the ministerial meeting was an important opportunity to address the need for a more effective multilateral system for sustainable development that addressed both immediate concerns and broader sustainable development challenges. The economic, social and environmental pillars of sustainable development needed to be integrated into policymaking at all levels.

7. There were several areas where the Economic and Social Council could make an important contribution to that effort. A coordinated solution needed to be found to the global jobs crisis that addressed the issue of youth unemployment and ensured the full participation of women in the labour force. Donor countries needed to honour their commitments to the developing world and not allow fiscal austerity to undermine support for poverty reduction and achievement of the MDGs. Food and nutrition security needed to be placed at the top of the development agenda in order to meet the Zero Hunger Challenge launched at Rio+20. The Green Climate Fund needed to be made operational, and support should continue for the Sustainable Energy for All initiative. The Doha Round needed to be revived with a view to rolling back the disturbing rise in protectionism.

8. In the coming year, he would be presenting the findings of his High-Level Panel on the United Nations Development Agenda beyond 2015. The work of that panel would be closely coordinated with the intergovernmental working group on sustainable development goals. As the processes on the development agenda beyond 2015 and the sustainable development goals moved forward, he urged the Ministers to seize the opportunity to demonstrate that the multilateral system for development could work.

Statement by the Under-Secretary-General for Economic and Social Affairs

9. **Mr. Wu Hongbo** (Under-Secretary-General for Economic and Social Affairs) said that the ministerial meeting was taking place simultaneously with three very important processes: the follow-up to Rio+20, the intensification of work on the United Nations development agenda beyond 2015, and the ongoing process of strengthening the Economic and Social Council in accordance with General Assembly resolution 61/16.

10. Rio+20 had acknowledged the vital importance of an inclusive, transparent, reformed, strengthened and effective multilateral system of development. Such a system should promote a shared analysis of issues and challenges that facilitated agreement on objectives, and should address the policy coherence deficit by integrating the economic, social and environmental pillars of development.

11. The Council had a vital role to play in strengthening the sustainable development governance system. Its democratic structure and inclusiveness gave it a certain legitimacy, which had been demonstrated time and again by its ability to promote international dialogue on a wide variety of issues. The Council was well-placed to continue its leadership in reviewing implementation of the global development agenda, integrating the three pillars of development, and contributing to the development agenda beyond 2015. To enhance its contribution to those goals, however, the Council would need to implement substantial changes in its agenda-setting and working methods that would require significant political engagement.

Panel discussion on the theme “An inclusive, strengthened and effective multilateral system for achieving sustainable development – What steps are needed?”

12. **The President** introduced the panel discussion on the theme “An inclusive, strengthened and effective multilateral system for achieving sustainable development – What steps are needed?” The discussion would be moderated by Mr. David Steven, Senior Fellow at the Center on International Cooperation, New York University. The panelists would be Mr. Gert Rosenthal, Permanent Representative of Guatemala to the United Nations and former President of the Council; Mr. Timothy Wirth, President of the United Nations Foundations; and Mr. Munir Akram, former President of the Council.

13. **Mr. Steven** (moderator) said that the Secretary-General had just stressed several pressing challenges, including addressing youth unemployment, shifting the world towards a green-growth trajectory in an open trade system, and working for achievement of the MDGs while also formulating the development agenda beyond 2015. The President of the General Assembly, the Under-Secretary-General, and the President of the Council had called for greater policy coherence across the economic, social and environmental pillars of development. The purpose of the panel was to discuss ideas for systemic reform of the Council that would allow it to contribute more effectively to the achievement of that goal.

14. **Mr. Rosenthal** (Panelist) said that the 2008 economic crisis, during which the world’s largest economies had taken action through the Group of 20 rather than the Bretton Woods Institutions or the

United Nations, had made clear that new multilateral institutions were necessary to ensure coordination in the implementation of global economic and social policy. The only question was what those new institutions would look like, and what role, if any, the United Nations and its Economic and Social Council would play within the new system.

15. Some arrangement akin to the Group of Twenty was necessary, so that major players could have a forum for collective decisions that affected the global economy. However, contrary to the thinking that emerged from Rio+20, it was not necessarily best to bring all economic, social and environmental issues under the aegis of a single centralized institution. Whatever new arrangements emerged, the United Nations would have an important role in convening summits, conducting analytical work and fostering debate on public policy, and was particularly well-placed to play a robust role in the area of broad-based sustainable development.

16. The remaining question had to do with the specific role of the Economic and Social Council within the United Nations system. The Rio+20 outcome document had reaffirmed that the Economic and Social Council was a principal body for policy review, policy dialogue and recommendations on issues of economic and social development. In order to fulfill those functions, the Council needed to revitalize its convening power, do a better job of coordinating the activities of its subsidiary bodies, and resolve the overlap between its agenda and that of the General Assembly. In that regard, he hoped that the new high-level political forum envisaged by the Rio+20 outcome document as a replacement for the Commission on Sustainable Development would fall under the aegis of the Council rather than the General Assembly. That would give the Council an important role in linking the development agenda beyond 2015 with the formulation of sustainable development goals as called for by the Rio+20 outcome document.

17. **Mr. Wirth** (Panelist) said that a review of the Council's history revealed several significant accomplishments. In the 1960s, its intellectual work had succeeded in integrating the previously fragmentary issues of economics and trade into the United Nations system; in the 1970s, the Council had helped coordinate the system for provision of official development assistance, while its support for the eight major world conferences held in the 1980s and 1990s

had had a great impact on States' cooperation on issues such as human rights and population. More recently, through its deliberations, the Council had helped to shape the Millennium Development Goals and was helping make the environment a relevant aspect of the development agenda. That distinguished history demonstrated the ways in which the Council functioned most effectively — when it was focused on outcomes rather than on managing internal procedures.

18. The Council should strive to continue carrying out its function of communicating complex issues to the international community by providing political and intellectual leadership in support of four critical objectives: shaping the development agenda beyond 2015; supporting the Secretary-General's proposal to integrate energy concerns into all aspects of United Nations activities; defining the role of the private sector in development, including by devising guidelines for managing partnerships with economies in the developing world; and facilitating understanding throughout the world of gender issues and their bearing on the work of the United Nations. The Council played a critical role as a convener of the international community. It should employ that power to provide leadership and ideas in the fields of governance and economics.

19. **Mr. Akram** (Panelist) said that strengthening the Council had been an outstanding objective for decades. The need for policy coherence at the international level was greater than ever before; the Council was the only organ with the legitimacy to provide guidance on the effective implementation of the major decisions taken by the international community in recent years. In order to fulfill that important role, the Council required changes in three distinct areas. First, instead of seeking to reform its agenda through a piecemeal process, the Council should devise an entirely new agenda based on agreed goals — the Millennium Development Goals, the internationally-agreed development goals adopted at world conferences, and the sustainable development goals emerging from Rio+20 — while taking into account the financial, food and environmental crises and other real-life circumstances. Secondly, in order to be an effective decision-making body, the Council membership should be decreased to 27 members. That number would allow for representation of small and large States using a system of permanent and temporary members, based on democratic principles. Unlike the Group of 20, the reformed Council's

decisions would be taken within the legitimate framework of the United Nations.

20. Lastly, the Council should draw upon the secretariats of the entire United Nations system, as well as the Bretton Woods institutions and autonomous organizations, in order to create a global secretariat for the Economic and Social Council. Each institution would then have a stake in the work of the Council and participate in the implementation of the decisions. That proposal was feasible given that the Secretary-General presided over inter-agency processes.

21. **Mr. Steven** (Moderator) drew attention to questions asked by individuals who were participating in the discussion through social media networks. They wished to know what civil society and activists could do to advance the sustainable development agenda; how the latest technological progress could be used to address global sustainability challenges; what lessons had been drawn from efforts to achieve the Millennium Development Goals and how they could be applied in devising the agenda development beyond 2015; and whether sustainable development could be considered to be inclusive development.

22. **Mr. Lajčák** (Slovakia) said that the multilateral system would only continue to be driven by shocks if a sectorial approach to development was adopted. Instead, the Council should respond to emerging development challenges by pursuing an approach that integrated the three pillars of sustainable development, based on both short- and long-term objectives.

23. The Council could improve its intellectual leadership and organization and thus influence the multilateral system by organizing more events that responded directly to global crises, such as the outstanding youth conference entitled "Creating a Sustainable Future: Empowering Youth with Better Job Opportunities" that had been organized by the Council in May 2012. In order to serve as a hub for addressing emerging issues, the Council should first put forward an analysis of potential risks, drawing on its system-wide reach, including United Nations special funds and programmes, to identify cross-cutting issues. In addition, the Council's convening power could be better leveraged to include other stakeholders, such as the private sector and civil society organizations, to analyze risks and solutions.

24. With its universally-accepted legitimacy, the Council could serve as a forum where agreements

would be facilitated effectively; to do so it would need to adopt the greater flexibility and simple working methods employed by other groups. It was important to recall that the Council was the principal body mandated to coordinate the integrated follow-up to the outcomes of major United Nations conferences in the economic, social, environmental and related fields. The Rio+20 outcome document (A/RES/66/288) had recognized the key role to be played by the Council in integrating the three pillars of sustainable development; enhancing the Council's mechanisms, such as the Development Cooperation Forum and the annual ministerial review, could serve to improve its relevance in responding to global challenges.

25. **Ms. Saad** (Egypt) said that responding to climate change must be a high priority on the international development agenda; the issue was particularly relevant when discussing the environment pillar of sustainable development. Discussions of reform of the Council must take into account its role as defined by the Charter. While Member States could seek to improve the Council's functioning as a deliberative forum that convened diverse stakeholders and raised public awareness, they should not attempt to make it a body that issued mandates, such as the Security Council.

26. **Mr. García-Margallo** (Spain) said that the experience of Spain in the European Union had demonstrated that austerity measures alone could not fully mitigate the effects of financial and economic crisis; job creation must also be a major policy priority. The issue of debt sustainability and the sustainability of growth measures were also relevant factors that must be considered. Furthermore economic reforms should not result in an undue burden for lower-income sectors of society and should incorporate environmental concerns. Energy policy in particular should aim to find the energy mix with the least harmful environmental impact.

27. Spain had experience in coordinating emergency humanitarian assistance and attached particular importance to the response to the crisis in the Sahel region.

28. **Mr. Gómez-Robledo** (Mexico) said that it was important to determine the role of the Group of Twenty in multilateral processes, given that it had demonstrated a great capacity to deliver results, while, at the same time, many were questioning whether the

work of the Council had any real impact. Nevertheless, it should be noted that the Millennium Development Goals initiative had largely succeeded in prompting States to launch and coordinate national-level development programmes. In Mexico, the structure provided by the Goals, together with the support of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), had succeeded in breaking the cycle of poverty in the country's poorest state. The fact that Rio+20 had succeeded in establishing the need to integrate the three pillars of sustainable development within the development agenda beyond 2015 could be considered another success.

29. The question remained whether, with the world in the midst of economic crisis, economic growth and trade expansion would come from developed or developing countries. He asked the panelists whether the participation of civil society and the private sector would restore the international community's sense of ownership over the development agenda. In addition, he wished to know to what degree the Council should coordinate with the Bretton Woods institutions and other agencies involved in development, such as the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD).

30. As the 2012 Chair of the Group of Twenty, Mexico had striven to make the Leaders' Summit in June 2012 a transparent process that had included the perspectives of non-member States and stakeholders. Although informal mechanisms could not replace the United Nations machinery, which provided legitimacy in so far as it involved the universal participation of Member States, such mechanisms had succeeded in overcoming obstacles to advancing the development agenda. Improving dialogue between United Nations bodies and informal mechanisms, such as the Group of Twenty, would facilitate the reform of the Council; the process of reforming the United Nations human rights machinery, which had included Member States as well as other stakeholders, was evidence of the effectiveness of such an approach. He asked the panelists to suggest ways in which diverse stakeholders could contribute and foster a sense of collective ownership over the development agenda beyond 2015.

31. **Mr. Wirth** (Panelist) responded that, given the tremendous credibility and legitimacy of the United Nations, convening individuals and organizations from outside of the United Nations system to participate in deliberations on issues such as climate change, energy

and sustainable development would simply be a matter of providing an invitation and the appropriate forum. Leading economists and thinkers would be eager to participate in, for example, a conversation on the future of the international development agenda or on the relationship between the United Nations and the Group of Twenty.

32. **Mr. Khan** (Indonesia) said that in order to ensure coordinated follow-up to major United Nations conferences, the Council must connect with all relevant stakeholders, including United Nations programmes, funds and agencies, in order to avoid duplication and ensure resources were allocated effectively. Recalling that the Rio+20 outcome document called on the Council to identify the appropriate United Nations entities responsible for follow-up activities, he noted that the Council might require a session dedicated to that task. The development agenda beyond 2015 must be focused on poverty alleviation, sustainable and equitable development and strengthened global partnerships.

33. In order to strengthen its capacity, the Council should improve its coordination with the functional commissions. In addition, the Council's operational activities and coordination segments should be adjusted so as to improve dialogue between the Council, members of the executive boards of United Nations funds, agencies and programmes, and the heads of the functional commissions. The Council should also aim to strengthen the contents of its annual report to the General Assembly, with a view to creating synergies between policy guidance and operational activities.

34. A clear definition of "policy coherence" and the best means to measure it in the context of sustainable development was needed. As a multi-stakeholder forum, the Council should foster discussions that included high-level representatives of civil society and the private sector.

35. **Mr. Magnette** (Observer for Belgium) said that a focus on structural aspects of the Council was essential to achieving the ambitious objectives emerging from the Rio+20 deliberations. Recalling that the Rio+20 outcome document called for the creation of an intergovernmental high-level political forum to replace the Commission on Sustainable Development, he stressed that the Council must be involved in developing the new body so as to avoid a duplication

of functions. The Council's annual ministerial review should be strengthened with a view to better connecting development policy with operational activities. The Council should also aim to work more closely with the United Nations Secretariat and with the executive boards of United Nations funds and programmes. Lastly, the Council should strive to maintain transparency and dialogue with civil society and ensure that all countries, in particular the least developed countries, were included in its decision-making processes. He called on Member States to devise a timeline for reforming the Council, proposing the May 2013 session of the Commission on Sustainable Development as a deadline for a substantive plan of action.

36. **Mr. Boolell** (Mauritius), noting that talks on trade and economics were often conducted within sectoral and restrictive forums, said that any international framework devised to address financial, economic, trade and development issues must include a universal membership. The United Nations was responsible for ensuring policy coordination between sectoral forums, setting the principles and guidelines for specific negotiations. In order to ensure the economic security of all, the Organization must reform its working methods and readjust its focus on political and economic issues.

37. Specifically, the Council must be granted the prominent role it was originally intended to play. The concept of development needed to be broadened in order to make institution- and capacity-building, including the development of regulatory frameworks and data collection, a major priority. Coordination within the multilateral system was key to eliminating duplication and overlapping jurisdictions and ensuring concerted efforts towards agreed goals. The Council was critical to ensuring United Nations oversight over the implementation of decisions taken by the multilateral system; that would involve the establishment of a system to monitor and evaluate actions taken and discuss obstacles encountered during implementation.

38. **Mr. Machado** (Brazil) said that the centrality of sustainable development in the current and future United Nations agenda had been a main theme of the discussion. The Rio+ 20 Conference had set a clear agenda for economic development, social inclusion and environmental protection; the main question that remained was how best to use the Council's resources

to respond to the challenges of improving governance in sustainable development. The outcome document "The Future We Want" suggested that the United Nations system would need a high-level sustainable development forum to look into coherence and coordination, key tasks in the role of the Council to be faced and debated.

39. **Ms. McClean** (Barbados) said that critical issues had been raised regarding the review and strengthening of the Council. The structure of the system must be open, inclusive and transparent in order to ensure that all voices and interests were recognized. Social media had a contribution to make in moving beyond formal structures. It was critical for the Council to become outcome-driven and to build in a monitoring and evaluation system in order to avoid duplication of effort and take ownership of the economic and social agenda.

40. **Mr. Steven** (Moderator) said that a number of themes seemed to be emerging from the discussions. First, it was important to look across silos and build a coherent picture of the Council's role. Second, a number of speakers had talked about how to focus the agenda and concentrate on priorities. Third, there had been discussion of greater use of the Council's convening power to reach out to new actors. Fourth, a system of monitoring, evaluation and accountability tied to the delivery of outcomes was needed.

41. **Ms. Warsi** (United Kingdom) said that the outcome document of the recent Rio Conference had underlined the role of the Economic and Social Council in bringing together the economic, social and environmental pillars of its actions. It was the appropriate forum to enhance and reinforce cooperation between the World Bank and the United Nations and would have a key role in follow-up to the MDGs, as it was well-placed to bring the United Nations family together to share information and best practices.

42. It was time to accept that the Council had not always fulfilled its potential and to meet the challenge of finding ways to complement other United Nations organs and preventing issues from being lost in lengthy debates. The reform of its functions could be realized by building on its strengths, in particular through emphasis on engagement with external partners including youth, academia and the private sector. It must broaden and deepen such engagement in order to

remain relevant. There was no need for the proliferation of new bodies if existing ones became more efficient. The current Ministerial Meeting represented a good first step in that direction.

43. **Mr. Pielbags** (Observer for the European Union) said that the European Union was committed to effective multilateralism as a central element of its external action and would continue to work with its partners towards the effective implementation of the outcomes of the recent summit meetings and the MDGs. The Economic and Social Council provided an important mechanism for oversight and coordination in the economic, social and environmental fields. It could build on its convening power to ensure coherence among its subsidiary bodies, funds and programmes in their response to the summit outcomes and produce a coherent policy vision for the post-2015 development agenda.

44. The Development Cooperation Forum was an example of a body that should be enhanced to foster dialogue on the effectiveness of aid to development. The Council should also capitalize on its multi-stakeholder nature to improve the public perception of the United Nations system.

45. **Ms. Cousens** (United States of America) said that her delegation valued the Economic and Social Council as a platform to exchange ideas and learning from national experiences towards the next generation of the global development agenda. The conversation on multilateral institutions must adapt to the challenges of the twenty-first century at the national, regional and international levels.

46. Current trends presented both opportunity and risk. In a world expected to be home to 8.3 billion people by 2030, there would be rising demand on resources. Some 3 billion people would be under 30 years of age, and the proportion of elderly was also expected to rise. Accelerating urbanization led to social and environmental problems associated with poverty and pollution. Despite innovations, non-communicable diseases represented a growing challenge as well. It had long been demonstrated that reducing the gender gap reduced poverty, but women still faced social and legal barriers to full participation in society. The Council and its subsidiary bodies could bring focused and sustained attention to such issues; for example, women's role in sustainable rural development could be a common thread throughout the system, from the

Commission on the Status of Women to the Commission on Science and Technology for Development.

47. New ways of cooperation on global issues must be found, including partnerships with the private sector, other multilateral organizations, NGOs and civil society. A renewed commitment to science and evidence and informed decision-making was needed, along with innovative working methods and flexibility, especially at the beginning of the process of setting a new development agenda for 2015 and beyond. The Council was a key player in that discussion because of its policy breadth. The new approach should emphasize convergence and integration.

48. **Mr. Chaudhry** (Pakistan) said that reform had long been a theme of discussions in the Council, involving two key words: inclusive and effective. The Council must reinvent itself by repositioning itself to be in the right place at the right time. It was a question of pressing its advantage by bringing in other stakeholders, the Bretton Woods institutions for instance, rather than attempting to duplicate General Assembly debates. The recent Rio conference had asked the Council to take a central role in promoting sustainable development. He suggested that realignment of the current segment-based approach, limiting the focus to the three core principles, could help to increase its effectiveness.

49. **Mr. Akram** (Panelist) emphasized that the world was facing multiple crises, and the dangers being faced from the financial, food, population and environmental crisis could not be diminished. No real forum could address all those issues in an integrated way. However, such crises must be addressed before they became so serious that they resulted in armed conflict and ended up before the Security Council. The Charter had provided such a forum in the Economic and Social Council; it was up to Member States to decide how to utilize it.

50. It must not be forgotten, especially since the financial crisis, that Governments had a critical role in dealing with it. As all countries interacted in the Council, there was a compelling reason to use it as a forum to arrive at answers to questions like the financial bailout of the poorest countries. The private sector and civil society must also be brought in. He commended Brazil for the inclusiveness it had fostered in the Rio+20 process and the direct links that had been

made between the Group of Thirty and the work of the Council.

51. *Mr. Koterec, President, resumed the Chair.*

Ministerial dialogue

52. **Mr. Mitchell** (Bahamas), speaking on behalf of the Caribbean Community (CARICOM), said that its members had been pleased to note that the principles they had identified in preparation for the Rio Conference on Sustainable Development, which included greater integration and coherence between the economic, social and environmental dimensions of sustainable development, high-level political attention to it and implementation of the Barbados Programme of Action for the sustainable development of small island developing States, had been reflected in the outcome document of the Conference.

53. Measures taken to strengthen the Council should take into account the need to adapt to emerging challenges and its role in the post-2015 development agenda. Such measures should also account for the relationship between the Council and future sustainable development goals and the need to enhance its visibility and strengthen linkages between its work and regional and national processes. CARICOM therefore agreed that there was a need to improve the preparatory process for the annual ministerial review at the regional level by enhancing the participation of the regional economic commissions and taking into account the critical roles played by the sub-regional commissions. Furthermore, expanded coordination between the Council and the General Assembly should aim to minimize duplication and maximize synergy between the cross-cutting themes addressed in both bodies and ensure that issues were addressed in the body best suited for the task.

54. The Economic and Social Council had a critical role to play in the follow-up to the major United Nations conferences and summits in the economic, social and related fields. Improved coordination between its agenda and the broader United Nations agenda was needed and should be monitored on a regular basis. Methodologies for enhancing coordination between the Bureau of the Council and the corresponding bureaux of the various funds and programmes would also improve the relevance of its work to their activities.

55. In an international economic and financial climate of crisis, and against the backdrop of intensified challenges to the environment as a global commons, the need for coordinated, effective and sustained international cooperation was more imperative than ever. The success of the response of those and other emerging challenges depended on the ability of institutions to deliver the types of assistance that would have a real impact on people's lives.

56. **Mr. Shrestha** (Observer for Nepal) said that no country by itself had the capacity to overcome the global economic, social and environmental challenges of recent years without concerted support and cooperation at regional and global levels. The recently adopted outcome document of the Rio Conference recognized the role of the Economic and Social Council as a principal body for policy review, dialogue and recommendation on issues of economic and social development as well as for monitoring the progress of all internationally-agreed development goals. It should continue to play a dynamic role in the overall coordination of its funds, programmes and partner agencies for effective mainstreaming of the three dimensions of sustainable development.

57. A more robust Council could mainstream the implementation of the Istanbul Programme of Action for the Least Developed Countries for the Decade 2011-2020. To that end, his delegation fully supported the strengthened relationship between the Council, the General Assembly, the Bretton Woods institutions and the World Trade Organization, which would entail a multi-stakeholder approach. The least developed countries, the most vulnerable members of the global community, expected the fulfilment of all commitments relating to sustainable development, giving consideration to mutual responsibility and accountability regarding official development assistance, trade, technology transfer and capacity-building. He had full confidence that the Council would accord due priority to the concerns and interests of the least developed countries, as it was obvious that the achievement of global development goals would otherwise remain elusive. Their voices must be heard in international standard-setting and decision-making forums.

58. **Mr. Canfin** (France) said that the preparation of the post-2015 development agenda and the follow-up to the recent conference on sustainable development required greater coherence and effectiveness of

collective action in the international community. It was noted at the Rio Conference that governance of sustainable development was fragmented and that the Commission on Sustainable Development had not fully played its role in that area.

59. There was general agreement on the role of the Economic and Social Council in coordinating and providing coherence among agencies, funds and programmes in the development field. The Charter of the United Nations had given it a broad and comprehensive mandate, which appeared best suited to achieving balance among the three aspects of sustainable development. Its central role as a coordinating body should be reaffirmed, and it should be revitalized to become the implementing organ of the integrated road map for sustainable development adopted in Rio.

60. An inclusive, integrated and shared vision of sustainable development was highly important. In order for the Council to gain credibility, civil society must become even more closely involved in its work. Such participation was a priority for France; hearings with civil society on international solidarity and development would be held during 2012, the first such policy review in 15 years.

61. A major focus would be to seek convergence between the Millennium Development Goals and the sustainable development goals; it was not a question of adding new goals. In his view, combating poverty must remain the top priority for the international community. But in order to fight poverty effectively, it was also clear that climate change, drought, urbanization and the spread of slums in some countries must also be addressed. France would like to see a modernized Council able to meet the new challenges that had arisen.

62. **Mr. Al-Thani** (Qatar) said that the Rio+20 Outcome had reaffirmed that the Economic and Social Council was a principal body for policy review, policy dialogue and recommendations on issues of economic and social development and for the follow-up to the MDGs. He was confident that the Council had the experience and expertise necessary to carry out those functions, and hoped that ideas emerging from the discussion would be of help in integrating the three pillars of sustainable development.

63. **Mr. Rinkēvičs** (Latvia) said that the debate on the multilateral system had gained pace since Latvia

had become a member of the Council, but progress had been limited. Every country needed to fulfill its commitments to make the United Nations stronger and more effective. Strengthening the rule of law should be a fundamental principle of the international system. He hoped that the Special Ministerial Meeting would send a strong political message to that effect.

64. Access to education, which was essential to sustainable development, should be the top priority, as no resource was more valuable than an educated nation. In Latvia, access to education was universal. Most schools were accessible to children with disabilities, municipalities provided free school lunches to children from low-income families, and the State provided life-long learning opportunities to groups at risk of social exclusion.

65. Sustainable development depended on an environment-conscious economy. His delegation therefore welcomed the outcome of the Rio+20 Conference relating to the green economy and the eradication of poverty. His Government had adopted the Latvia 2030 Sustainable Development Strategy. It aimed to make best use of national capital, including environmental resources.

66. The functioning of the United Nations development system should be transformed; despite its strengths, improvements were possible at the level of institutions and recipient countries. His delegation welcomed the establishment of the High-level Panel of Eminent Persons to advise the Secretary-General on the development agenda beyond 2015, and believed that it would lead to tangible commitments.

67. The Millennium Development Goals had reinvigorated worldwide development action. The Latvian Presidency of the Council of the European Union in 2015 would evaluate progress and contribute to the development agenda beyond 2015, which should remain people-centred, focused, time bound and simple. More cross-sectoral and inter-agency interaction was needed. Normative and operational mandates of United Nations agencies should be merged, along the lines of UN-Women, a major reform success story. The Secretary-General had identified gender equality and women's empowerment as priorities for his 2012-2017 term, and as a member of the UN-Women Executive Board until 2015, his Government stood ready to promote those priorities. The United Nations should focus on helping women

combine their professional and family lives, and on fighting domestic violence and human trafficking. His Government's efforts to increase women's economic and political participation had been successful, with 65 per cent of higher education graduates and 23 per cent of members of parliament being women.

68. His Government was ready to support the United Nations development system through the Council, UN-Women and the High-level Panel of Eminent Persons on the development agenda beyond 2015. It hoped that the international community's efforts would result in a more efficient United Nations, ready to meet the challenges of that agenda. The Member States should remain united to make the future they wanted and become the United Nations they wanted.

69. **Mr. Bach** (Observer for Denmark) said that the outcome document of the Rio+20 conference had provided new inspiration on global governance for sustainable development. His delegation supported a strong mandate for the high-level political forum referred to in the outcome document, to keep Member States accountable and give leadership for sustainable development. The outcome document also called for a stronger Council to follow up on the decisions taken in Rio. It gave the Council an opportunity to reinforce its role, and to improve its effectiveness and outreach as a multi-stakeholder organization. The Council was therefore in a position to integrate the three dimensions of sustainable development.

70. The Council's relevance would, however, depend on its ability to deliver valuable input and effective follow-up. His delegation hoped to see a revitalized Council promoting sustainable development, including the global transition towards a green economy. The division of labour among United Nations bodies should be clear in order to ensure the Council's relevance. System-wide coherence was essential; duplication should be avoided and attention paid to the individual mandates of United Nations institutions. The Council's sustainable development work should be coordinated with the broader United Nations agenda. The Council could build on its convening power and substantially benefit the sustainability agenda. A stronger Council could be achieved within the current mandate by optimizing current structures.

71. **Mr. Holmås** (Observer for Norway) said that in the absence of decision-making powers and substantial funding, relevant debates and appropriate responses

were needed, and the issues should be treated with the respect they deserved.

72. The two greatest current challenges were poverty, affecting more than a billion people earning less than the World Bank poverty threshold of \$1.24 per day and stemming from unequal power distribution, and climate change, which threatened to destroy human beings' way of life. Those huge challenges could be addressed only if the international community acted together. The United Nations and the Council should become a forum at which world leaders could agree on solutions. Unless Member States took that responsibility, the Council could not play an effective international role.

73. Economic growth had lifted many countries from the low- into the middle-income bracket, but the number of poor people remained the same. Growth was thus benefiting only a minority, while the rest received too small a share. In richer countries, the financial crisis had also taken its toll. While 20 years previously it had been possible to divide the world into rich and poor countries, rich and poor were now found in all countries. The situation had become more complex, and wealth redistribution policies should be rethought. Aid would continue to be important, and his Government remained committed to allocating 1 per cent of gross national income to official development assistance. Aid was not enough, however, and was not sustainable; innovative financing mechanisms were needed. Countries should be able to tax the income of companies on their soil, so that the money would benefit the whole population, not just the elite. There were enough resources in the world to meet everyone's need, but not everyone's greed. Wealth should be shared within and among nations. To that end, leaders needed to become better diplomats, making compromises rather than adhering to a fixed position.

74. The Council and United Nations should be strengthened not for their own sake but for the sake of the people of the world. There was no Plan B because there was no Planet B.

75. **Mr. Steven** (Moderator), responding to the comments of the Observer for Norway, said that the fight against poverty was a United Nations success story which should be recognized. Rates of poverty were falling much faster than predicted, and Millennium Development Goal 1 (Eradicate extreme hunger and poverty) would be met in 2015.

76. The development agenda beyond 2015 and the geography of poverty between 2015 and 2030 were areas in which the Council could look further into the future. Projections suggested that 880 million people would be earning less than \$1.24 per day in 2015. The Council could build up a unified picture of possible scenarios for 2020 and 2025 drawing on multiple disciplines, and produce a consensus on how best to proceed.

77. **Mr. Tuomioja** (Finland) said that while the discussions on strengthening the Council had been ongoing for some time, the urgency of finding solutions had increased. The outcome document of the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development had given the Council a vital role in integrating the three dimensions of sustainable development and in the future high-level political forum. The need to agree on the development agenda beyond 2015 added urgency. The future and role of the Council, whose mandate was at the intersection of the three dimensions of sustainable development, were relevant to those discussions.

78. The Council's advantage in strengthening the multilateral system of global governance was that it brought nations and stakeholders together to discuss sustainable development. The discussions at the 2012 substantive session and side events had been valuable because of the participation of stakeholders, which had enabled the debate to move on and new perspectives to be found.

79. If the Council assumed a more robust role, however, concrete decisions would need to be taken at its meetings. One of the most valuable features of the United Nations system was the link between normative and operational functions, and it was thus only against concrete goals that the Council could be mandated to carry out its follow-up tasks and create better operational arrangements. One of the most important questions in the coming years would be the 2015 development framework and sustainable development goals.

80. Once those goals had been set, there were a number of ways in which the Council could be strengthened. Citizens, including the marginalized and vulnerable, should be involved not only in the setting of cooperation goals, as in the case of the United Nations Development Group' consultations on the agenda beyond 2015, but also in ensuring that

development made an impact, following up on progress and programming for future activities.

81. At the Rio+20 Conference, it had been decided to establish a universal intergovernmental high-level political forum on sustainability. If that forum was organizationally part of the Council, however, it was not clear whether or not the Council's current membership, based on regional representation, was broad enough to ensure that the views of all were taken into account.

82. The Council needed better cooperation with financial and trade institutions. To be effective, the sustainable development goals would require economic policy measures by Governments, such as incentives and taxes to promote sustainable consumption and production, or the granting of concessions for natural resource use. The three pillars of sustainable development were linked, and required cooperation between multilateral organizations. To play a stronger role in international governance, the Council therefore needed to interact more with the Bretton Woods institutions, the World Trade Organization and others.

83. He acknowledged the efforts by United Nations bodies to improve their efficiency. It was essential for goals and working methods to be reflected consistently throughout the United Nations system, with attention paid to political goal-setting and the clear articulation of instructions at the operational level. The Council had been strengthened a number of times in the past, but no more bodies should be added to its structure. The focus should be on making best use of the current system while enhancing the Council's role in the area of sustainability.

84. The Council was as dynamic as its members allowed it to be. The question was whether the members wanted to make every effort to enhance its role and were convinced of the benefits of doing so. He hoped that the discussions would be a serious policy-making effort rather than an academic exercise.

85. **Mr. Ranawaka** (Observer for Sri Lanka) said that the outcome document of the Rio+20 Conference had laid the foundations for future work, but the commitments made there should not remain just a blueprint. His delegation welcomed the decision to introduce an inclusive and universally acceptable process to address the sustainable development goals, and the establishment of an open working group on those goals and the development agenda beyond 2015.

The discussions at the Special Ministerial Meeting should contribute to that process.

86. While his Government supported the sustainable development goals, they should be defined in line with the United Nations development agenda as a whole, in particular the Millennium Development Goals and the development agenda beyond 2015. They should be implemented in compliance with the principle of common but differentiated responsibilities. Developed countries would thus have greater responsibility in helping developing countries achieve those goals.

87. The Council's reforms should make existing United Nations structures more responsive to crises with global impact. The General Assembly, the Council and the United Nations Environment Programme also needed comprehensive reform for the best possible sustainable future, in line with the outcome document. The Council's deliberations should also feed into the reform of international financial institutions, since adequate financial and technical support was essential in order to reap the expected benefits.

88. Recipes for a green economy would not be effective unless their consequences for the traditional sustainable economic practices of developing countries were recognized. The transition should not perpetuate poverty and social inequality. The Council reforms should therefore comply with the principles of the Rio+20 outcome document and the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, which stated that the sustainable economic growth of developing countries was a priority in addressing environmental challenges.

89. His Government had used unique methods to protect the environment while striving for development. The National Action Plan for Haritha Lanka Programme was providing solutions to economic and environmental challenges, and the National Council for Sustainable Development had been established. His Government had contributed to the Sustainable Human Development Index by incorporating into the Human Development Index elements relating to the environment and quality of life, such as carbon emissions, biocapacity, the ecological footprint and poverty. His Government's policy was based on the principles of energy, economy and the environment, and had internalized environmental practice. The strategy being adopted

took into consideration economic, social and other factors, along with environmental degradation.

90. Urgent global action was required to address the challenges of sustainable development. Exchanges of ideas must be translated into action. The international community must reinvigorate bodies such as the Council to allow them to consolidate consensus.

91. **Ms. Holguín Cuéllar** (Observer for Colombia) said that the international community had reaffirmed its commitment to strengthening the Council, which was increasingly relevant in a globalized world. The Council should focus on substance rather than text, favouring exchanges which allowed new options to be explored instead of becoming bogged down in discussions which prevented transformative change. Its work should therefore be centred not on negotiated results but on specific recommendations produced by small drafting groups and reviewed by the Council members.

92. It was difficult for economic, social and environmental work to be translated into complete responses since the three areas were generally addressed separately. Broader reference frameworks were therefore needed to link them together.

93. She proposed that the Council's work should be organized around the development challenges of eradicating poverty, overcoming inequality and introducing sustainable patterns of consumption and production. Those challenges comprised many economic, social and environmental questions, and were greater as a whole than the sum of their parts.

94. The Council received and produced much information that was valuable but of no help in understanding the scope of its work. Continuous evaluation was needed so that members could see how their work was translated into effective support for implementation. The States required focused input to evaluate the system as a whole. Her delegation therefore proposed that a preparatory process should be established for the Council's substantive sessions. In May each year, United Nations bodies would complete a questionnaire which would provide an overview of the Council's work. The questions could cover the main achievements and challenges of the preceding year, barriers to progress, opportunities for increasing support to implementation, and responses to crises. In June, the Department of Economic and Social Affairs and the regional economic commissions would

evaluate the questionnaires to identify trends, common concerns, and ways of improving coordination. The Department of Economic and Social Affairs would prepare a concise global report, and the regional commissions would prepare regional reports. The regional dimension should be strengthened since it was closest to national priorities and frequently yielded the most cost-effective ways of improving coordination.

95. The evaluations would be an essential contribution to the Council's discussions, a simple process which would become central to its work, guaranteeing continuity and allowing the members to assess progress, obstacles, opportunities and challenges in a dynamic but substantive way. The questionnaire could be revised on the basis of changing international and regional contexts.

96. The high-level segment was currently held before the Council's substantive session, which limited its scope, prevented it from being focused on results and did not allow it to validate the Council's work. Her delegation therefore proposed that the high-level segment should be held at the end of each session and that one of its main functions should be the final approval of recommendations.

97. She proposed a theme for the 2013 substantive session. Since the Millennium Development Goals were to be reviewed that year, and the discussions of the open working group on the sustainable development goals and the High-level Panel of Eminent Persons on the development agenda beyond 2015 were to move forward, the Council's 2013 sessions were a unique opportunity to take account of the reviewed Millennium Development Goals and discuss how the lessons learned could shape the development agenda beyond 2015. Her proposed approach related to the general architecture and scope of that agenda, and the work on the objectives, targets and indicators of the sustainable development goals.

98. She hoped that her delegation's proposals would serve as a basis for discussions on the future of the Council, which should be given working arrangements and tools based on implementation and action, and should avoid abstract, rhetorical and negotiated processes.

99. **Ms. Moni** (Bangladesh) said that her delegation had welcomed the chance to be part of the discussions leading up to the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development in June 2012, during which

the States Members had agreed that the Council would in future play a greater role in the coordination and follow-up of decisions taken at international conferences.

100. The strengthening of the Council was in the best interests of Member States, in particular those trying to emancipate their people from poverty, disease, disasters and climate change. As a member of the Group of the Least Developed Countries, her Government acknowledged the Council's role in supporting those countries by providing an inclusive forum for policy dialogue on economic and social development. Productive capacity and sustainable economic growth should be promoted for the least developed countries. Her Government hoped that the Council would maintain the momentum created by the Fourth United Nations Conference on the Least Developed Countries, held in Istanbul, Turkey, in May 2011, by further integrating the priorities of those countries into the global development agenda.

101. The Council should continue to monitor the implementation of the Istanbul Programme of Action and mainstream the priorities of the least developed countries, in particular at the annual ministerial review and the Development Cooperation Forum. A Council body should be created for finance ministers to discuss economic matters, to minimize the tendency for the United Nations to become sidetracked from its areas of competence. The timing of that body's meetings could be coordinated with the calendars of the United Nations and Bretton Woods institutions. The Council should also address climate change and food security, challenges which disproportionately affected the least developed countries.

102. The Council should review its role following Rio+20 and in the development framework beyond 2015. It should ensure that sustainable development goals were centred on the priorities of the least developed countries, and seize the opportunity created by the Rio+20 outcome document to ensure that its relationship with the proposed sustainable development council was characterized by coherence and coordination.

103. Capacity-building, energy availability and access to modern energy resources were critical to the least developed countries, and should be reviewed by the Council as the development agenda beyond 2015 and the sustainable development goals were put in place.

The least developed countries deserved particular attention and support in the global development framework. The Council should work in partnership with the high-level political forum on sustainable development.

104. **Mr. Marles** (Australia) said that his Government was committed to a strengthened multilateral system which would more effectively govern sustainable development, better integrating its economic, social and environmental dimensions. His delegation therefore welcomed the commitment at the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development to reform sustainable development institutions and strengthen the Council.

105. Since the Council was fundamental to integrating the dimensions of sustainable development, clear priorities should be identified for its work. The achievement of the Millennium Development Goals was a particular priority, a focus of his Government's aid programme and a matter which his Prime Minister would be pursuing through her appointment as Co-chair of the Secretary General's Millennium Development Goal Advocacy Group.

106. His Government supported the decision to establish a high-level political forum on sustainable development, which would not simply replicate the Commission on Sustainable Development or elements of the Council itself, but would provide ambitious leadership. The new forum could build on the Commission and its engagement with business and civil society, and involve the Bretton Woods institutions and the World Trade Organization more closely in sustainable development discussions. The forum should fit in with a coherent set of institutions including the Council, its subsidiary bodies and the General Assembly.

107. As part of the strengthened framework, the Development Cooperation Forum, which his Government valued highly since it provided a unique venue for debate on development cooperation, could provide key messages to the high-level political forum. The Third High-level Symposium, hosted by Australia in May 2012, had established that the Development Cooperation Forum was essential to the implementation of the Rio+20 outcomes. Its identity should be retained in the strengthened sustainable development architecture.

108. **Ms. Espinosa Garcés** (Ecuador) said that on the last day of the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development in June 2012 hundreds of young people had entered the conference venue to express their frustration with the outcome document, "The future we want", chanting the slogan "The future we want is not found here". The outcome document lacked the ambition needed for the survival of the planet and human society. Its weakest section was on the means of implementation of sustainable societies, which referred to financing, technology transfer and capacity-building for developing countries. Those countries were also, however, expected to assume ever-greater commitments.

109. The multilateral system therefore needed to meet the new challenges facing humanity, such as the contradictions between current production and consumption models and the planet's limited natural resources, the tensions between the speculative and real economies, and the paradox of economic growth alongside increased poverty and exclusion.

110. If progress was to be made on Council reform and the high-level forum which would replace the Commission on Sustainable Development, however, deeper institutional change was needed, ensuring representation at the highest political level, an appropriate regional balance and, in particular, the capacity to decide on, establish and monitor sustainable development policies. The relationship between the reformed Council and the high-level political forum had not been resolved. Doing so would require coordination and consistency.

111. Since it was substance which defined form, her Government had proposed a universal declaration of the rights of nature, which would establish a pact for the coexistence of society, the economy and nature. New mechanisms and revitalized institutions were needed to finance sustainable development. The Council should consider proposals for an international financial architecture comprising a new type of development bank, a fundamental question on which various Latin American countries were working. Existing innovative experience should therefore be brought together and given global impetus.

112. The Council should find ways to play the vital role assigned to it at Rio+20 of balancing the three dimensions of sustainable development. The cultural and political dimensions should be added to the

existing three, giving an integrated and comprehensive perspective. Sustainable development had previously been considered an environmental concern, and that fragmented view had prevented a cross-cutting approach. Whereas in the past contact points had often been environment ministries, her Government had created coordinating ministries to ensure a cross-cutting approach to public policy, investment priorities and decision-making.

113. For the Council to respond to emerging crises and strengthen its role as a platform for consistent public policies, the scope of such crises needed to be recognized. To that end, the Council should define a clear road map including the aims set out in Rio, such as ensuring compliance with agreements through binding commitments.

114. The principles of the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development, held in Rio in 1992, should be respected in defining the sustainable development objectives, which should balance the three dimensions, support the intergovernmental committee of experts on the sustainable development financing strategy, and consider alternative mechanisms such as a tax on international financial transactions and the “net avoided emissions” mechanism proposed by her Government. Alternative indicators should be developed to establish a metric for sustainable development. The technology transfer mechanism should be improved, with discussions to make intellectual property rights more flexible, and progress should be made on the universal declaration of the rights of nature, which should contain a comprehensive proposal to address multiple crises. To deal with the above questions, existing institutions should be transformed. The ultimate goal of the multilateral system was a world of social and environmental justice.

115. **Mr. Burkhalter** (Switzerland) said that there was strength in unity, and the multiple crises of recent years had reinforced the need for a strong multilateral system to integrate the three dimensions of sustainable development in a balanced manner. The Conference on Sustainable Development had shown that a two-track reform process, continuing and deepening the reform of the Economic and Social Council while putting in place a high-level political forum on sustainable development, would enable a more effective global architecture to be built, with the United Nations system as its sustainable strength.

116. Switzerland saw three main areas of focus. First, the Council’s overburdened agenda must be streamlined to focus on technical guidance, coordination and review of its subsidiary bodies and, from a political standpoint, to improve economic and social perspectives. Second, the respective roles of the Council and the proposed high-level political forum on sustainable development must be clearly defined to avoid duplication but to allow the work of those bodies to be complementary and mutually reinforcing. Lastly, that forum should build on the work of the Commission on Sustainable Development while providing for a more dynamic and forward-looking platform for high-level dialogue and agenda-setting.

117. **Mr. Guedon** (Gabon) said that his delegation welcomed the exhaustive evaluation of the Council’s mandate that would help a strengthened multilateral system respond effectively and agree on an integrated approach to the global challenges of sustainable development and examine the implementation of commitments. The desire to strengthen the Council’s role as the common platform for policy coherence required a review of the missions and mandates of multilateral organizations involved in the implementation of the outcome and recommendations of international development conferences. Donor support for such organizations should be encouraged, especially those with a major impact on poverty reduction.

118. In order to secure funding, the Council must place its subsidiary bodies in a standardized multilateral evaluation framework with a mandate to identify sectors where there was duplication and where it would be possible to combine organizations; evaluate the contribution of multilateral institutions in achieving development goals; and establish performance criteria that would lead to the elimination of the least successful multilateral institutions. Evaluations should, of course, take into account the viewpoints of beneficiary countries and their national development priorities. In order to avoid duplication and overlap, Gabon had reviewed its national development policy and had established the Emerging Gabon Strategic Plan as a tool for good governance.

119. **Mr. Gatilov** (Russian Federation) said that the Russian Federation had consistently advocated a higher-profile development coordination role for the United Nations, and, more specifically, the Council. The Council was an ideal forum for political dialogue

and for determining how to further economic and social development, particularly against the background of the Millennium Development Goals, and for centralizing United Nations system development activities, remaining accountable for consistency in the action of the Organization, Funds, Programmes and Specialized Agencies.

120. Accordingly, the Council should be used more effectively, within the bounds of the mandate conferred on it by the Charter of the United Nations, to coordinate implementation of the decisions of high-level conferences and meetings on economic, social and environmental matters, and to ensure balanced integration of all three dimensions of sustainable development. Translating into action the outcome of the Rio+20 Conference would require an alignment of United Nations efforts with national priorities and programmes and the global development agenda, with effective intergovernmental evaluation of progress. Those issues could be addressed at the substantive session of the Council.

121. Key tasks of the necessary reform of the Council included reinforcing its subsidiary bodies and cooperating effectively with international financial and trade institutions. The Russian Federation supported initiatives to ensure coherence between the work of the Council and that of the Group of Twenty and other major economic forums. Priority should be given to establishing the agenda and programme of work for the substantive session so as to avoid duplication of effort with the General Assembly.

122. **Mr. Otorbaev** (Observer for Kyrgyzstan) said that international cooperation must adopt new directions, pursuing sustainable development and mapping out development goals for the future. The Council was destined to play a leading role in that process.

123. In the wake of the Rio+20 Conference, Kyrgyzstan wished to express its support for using the green economy as a motor of sustainable development and as a means of promoting integration of its three dimensions: social, economic and environmental. Development of the green economy would help to harness production potential, provide opportunities for decent work and improve living standards.

124. Water resources were strategically important for sustainable social and economic development in Kyrgyzstan and the other States of Central Asia, which

should establish measures for effective, rational and mutually beneficial water use. Expanding the use of hydroelectric power in the region would address many current and future problems. Kyrgyzstan fully supported the sustainable development and greater protection of the ecosystems of mountain regions in developing countries, a matter emphasized at the Rio+20 Conference.

125. Climate change, a phenomenon which threatened the future of humanity, caused more frequent natural disasters and was seriously affecting ecosystems, water resources and food security, made Kyrgyzstan especially vulnerable as a developing, landlocked country with an area 90-per-cent covered by mountains. Rapid melting of the glaciers which provided most of the region's fresh water was a particular concern. Kyrgyzstan believed that the developed countries, historically responsible for the phenomenon, should make greater commitments to curb their emissions and provide financial and technical resources to help developing countries cope with and adapt to the consequences of climate change. Also of great concern was the presence in the region of large amounts of highly toxic waste left by the uranium extraction and other industries. Such waste threatened the environment and the lives of ordinary people.

126. The Council should undergo reform to enable it to adapt to the major changes in economic, social, environmental and humanitarian situations since the establishment of the United Nations. The Council should provide strategic and analytical leadership, be a forum for dialogue and partnership in the implementation of international policy, focus on peace and development, and establish mechanisms to monitor progress in the implementation of the outcomes of high-level United Nations conferences, including the Millennium Development Goals. It should have a greater role in coordinating international cooperation, exchanging best practices and promoting promising initiatives and targeted programmes.

127. **Ms. Chamorro** (Nicaragua) said that the Economic and Social Council and the General Assembly could regain their relevance by helping to solve the major problems facing humanity, including the failure to develop a new global economic and financial model that would prevent the chronic crises that the current model produced and rising greenhouse gas emissions leading to global warming. The Council should promote the achievement of the Millennium

Development Goals by 2015 while also defining sustainable development goals for 2015 and beyond and establishing the sustainable development forum recommended at the recent Rio conference. The Council should coordinate the efforts of the United Nations system as a whole in that area, in line with its mandate under the Charter.

128. The international response to many challenges had been inadequate and ground had been lost in several areas. Attempts had been made to avoid commitments made because of the international financial and economic crisis, including the commitment for new, additional and adequate funding for climate change, yet no agreement contained provisions suspending it in difficult times.

129. The countries of the South were seeking their own solutions to the multiple global crises. Regional integration was progressing rapidly in Latin America and the Caribbean, based on the principles of complementarity and recognition and compensation for imbalances within and among nations, as well as revolutionary solidarity. Because of the crisis in global capitalism, it was more important than ever for the South to accelerate its own transformation and development in order to achieve economic growth through job creation, reduction of poverty and inequality and popular involvement in the process. In Nicaragua, employment rates had risen by 40 per cent and extreme poverty had been halved over the past five years. Its Gini coefficient of income inequality had dropped from .41 to .34 and it had become the Central American country with the fastest growth rate. In addition, it was planning a major transportation project that would include a coast-to-coast rail line for a total investment of over \$27 billion.

130. Social cohesion and national unity, as well as hope and optimism, could be found in countries where economic and social structures were being transformed to create jobs and reduce poverty and inequality based on the values of social justice, equity, solidarity and respect for the rights of peoples. It was still possible to achieve that goal at the international level, and the United Nations, the General Assembly and the Council, with their universal representation, should play a fundamental role in that process.

131. **Mr. Rybakov** (Belarus) said that the current discussion would provide a basis for action by the Council to shape and implement the development

agenda beyond 2015, which should have sustainable development as its cornerstone. The Rio+20 Conference demonstrated the will of the world's States to come together to address global development issues. Implementation of the decisions of the international community required continuation of the efforts to strengthen the Council, which had a mandate suited to comprehensive handling of social, economic and environmental protection issues. Reform of the Council should be conducted in parallel with reform of the other principal organs of the Organization and of the United Nations system as a whole. Delay must be avoided, as the Member States simply had no time to agree amendments to the Charter.

132. In its existing efforts to bring about sustainable and balanced growth through macroeconomic coordination, the Council should ensure close adherence to the principles of free and fair trade, prohibiting the use of protectionist measures and unilateral economic sanctions. The Council's efforts in connection with middle-income countries were significant, as they would widen the circle of donor nations and help to revive the international economy. Progress towards sustainable development could only be achieved if the action taken to that end was transparent and open for all stakeholders. The same principles should underpin the development agenda for the coming years, so that globalization served the interests of all countries, without exception.

133. Aware of the urgent need to begin work, his delegation was concerned at the course of recent discussions on the constitution of an open working group on sustainable development goals. The senseless manoeuvring over the allocation of seats in the group must stop, and wisdom must prevail, or the agreements reached at the Rio+20 Conference would be in jeopardy.

134. **Mr. de Mistura** (Italy) said that the economic and financial crisis of 2008 had made the demand for global governance even more pressing. Existing international institutions had been perceived as ill-equipped to deal with the urgency of the new challenges, leading to an elevated profile for a non-institutional forum, the Group of Twenty. It had proven effective as a catalyst for global policy, but it had never been meant to replace the relevant international institutions. The United Nations, with its Charter bodies including the Economic and Social Council and its system of specialized agencies, funds and

programmes, continued to be an irreplaceable pillar of global governance.

135. While the General Assembly played a central role on a wide range of issues, the Council, by virtue of its broad mandate and network of subsidiary bodies, was a fundamental forum for system-wide coordination. Its strengths lay in its status as a Charter body with convening power, its competence in a broad spectrum of social, economic and environmental matters, expertise in development as well as more technical areas like statistics, such new platforms for discussion as the annual Ministerial Review, oversight of the funds and programmes, its working relationship with the Bretton Woods institutions and its openness to the private sector.

136. For the Council to fulfill its role effectively, however, further reforms were needed, namely a better division of labour with the General Assembly, strengthened coordination with other United Nations agencies, greater interaction with non-governmental actors, more flexible working methods and lastly, a significant reorganization of its calendar of meetings and work programme.

137. **Ms. Kos** (Observer for Croatia) said that the current global challenges required an effective, coherent and coordinated response, with the Council as the leader of the international development agenda. The Council's unique mandate to address the interlinked issues of conflict, poverty and development should be exploited and reinforced, in order to support integrated multilateral action for development. A precondition for the strengthening of the Council was greater system-wide coherence to ensure integration of all three dimensions of sustainable development. The challenge ahead was to improve the division of labour among United Nations bodies, based on their specific mandates and comparative advantages, while avoiding duplication of effort. There was scope for synergy between the agendas of the General Assembly, the Council, Funds and Programmes, as well as between the Council and the Peacebuilding Commission.

138. The Council's role in supporting effective follow-up of the outcomes of the major United Nations conferences and summits in the economic, social and environmental fields could be promoted through its coordination segment, while the goal of mainstreaming global sustainable development commitments into the programmes of United Nations Funds and Programmes

could be pursued in its operational activities segment. The Rio+20 Conference had brought many important commitments, but more work lay ahead to translate those commitments, enshrined in the outcome document, "The future we want", into action. The Council was at the centre of those efforts, aimed at shaping the development agenda beyond 2015.

139. **Mr. Molina** (Observer for the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela) said that the current meeting would help to achieve a stronger, more efficient, inclusive, transparent and democratic multilateral system. His country had consistently pressed for an in-depth reorganization of the United Nations system. It needed more than just reform, having outlived its current structure, which was no longer legitimate, no longer represented the interests and needs of most of the world's population, and had become an instrument of oppression, in which a few powerful countries had taken control of decision-making through the perverse use of a veto which had for years been undermining the will and sovereignty of States and peoples. For those reasons, the Council should be put at the centre of the Organization's activities, in a true process of democratization which gave it active and effective monitoring powers over the Secretariat and its programmes.

140. The Council was a valuable source of coherence and coordination in efforts to implement the outcome of the Rio+20 Conference through action covering the three dimensions of sustainable development. It must give fresh impetus for the formation of a new economic and social world order, leading to freedom from illiteracy and all forms of poverty, with access to education, health and shelter. The Council must truly lead action to achieve all human rights, rooted in the values of solidarity, justice, social inclusion, equity and citizens' participation. Its results must be measurable. A great challenge lay ahead for the Council. Political will was needed, and self-centredness and bias must be set aside. There must be dialogue and solidarity on matters which jeopardized the future of peoples and prevented them from achieving social development and full human rights and democratic freedoms.

141. **Mr. Zuain** (Argentina) said that the decisions of the Organization usually figured in news headlines because of the weighty matters discussed by the Security Council. However, the people of the world had more mundane concerns connected with economic and social development. Since the end of the Cold War,

it had become ever more clear that the United Nations in general, and the Council in particular, were ill-suited to dealing with such concerns. As the Charter of the United Nations had assigned the Council an essential role in those matters, a way must be found to improve its effectiveness and ability to further the three dimensions of sustainable development. To that end, its agenda, which covered a variety of topics so wide that meaningful results were unlikely, should be simplified. The Council should act as a sounding board, reflecting discussions in its own subsidiary bodies and in forums with limited membership, such as the Group of Twenty. It should provide a forum for active debate on the global economic and social situation, including socially inclusive economic growth, a path which Argentina had itself pursued successfully, and the achievement of decent work. International bodies such as the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD) should be included. The Council should be particularly careful to follow up the implementation of its own resolutions.

142. Argentina and other countries with emerging economies continued to lead the world growth tables, but had met obstacles in multilateral forums which sought to discourage and limit what those countries saw as legitimate use of public policy to rely on their dynamic domestic economies rather than the exported surpluses of the developed countries, whose restrictive fiscal policies were depressing global demand. By contrast, the same forums said nothing about the enormous sums in industrial and agricultural subsidies that powerful countries continued to grant, leading to harmful effects on developing economies, nor indeed about the very substantial fiscal stimulus packages established to respond to the international crisis. The true extent of global market distortion caused by those measures was still hard to gauge.

143. Only a system of global governance rooted in efficient, inclusive, representative and transparent decision-making, with clear and impartial rules, could provide effective solutions to global problems. Strengthening the role of the Council as a forum for debate and decision-making, with a tiered structure, could contribute to building such a multilateral system. However, success in that endeavour would depend on the political will of its members.

144. **Mr. Chaudhry** (Pakistan) said that the role of the Council as a hub of multilateral activity for sustainable development should be reinforced. That could be

achieved by making its agenda more targeted, by aligning its structures with the aims to be pursued and by improving its governance. However, the process of reform must be an earnest one if it was to succeed in reasserting the primacy of the United Nations in devising global strategies to meet current challenges. In practical terms, the current segment-based approach of discussions in the Council could be refocused on the three dimensions of sustainable development, and a review could be conducted of the value of concentrating the Council's activities in a single four-week session. The Council must interact productively with other relevant stakeholders, and ways must be sought to increase its executive powers. Pakistan would participate in discussion of any innovative ideas to enable the Council to address the issues connected with the three dimensions of sustainable development.

145. **Ms. Kaya** (Turkey) said that the role of the United Nations system in general, and that of the Council in particular, was central to dealing with global economic and social challenges and achieving the internationally agreed development goals, including the Millennium Development Goals. As the participants in the Rio+20 Conference had acknowledged, the current situation required an inclusive, transparent, strengthened and effective multilateral system. States must commit themselves to comprehensive, fair and sustainable development. While each country must assume ownership of national policies in that regard, particularly in pursuit of the Millennium Development Goals, comprehensive, fair and sustainable development was the common responsibility of the international community. It fell to the United Nations system, and particularly to the Council, with its mandate to promote people-centred socio-economic policies and the eradication of poverty and hunger, to support national efforts and commitments.

146. As an emerging donor of assistance and as a member of the Group of Twenty and of the Council, Turkey was deeply concerned at the current world situation in which the financial crisis and the implementation of economic policies without regard to social consequences were creating problems for developed and developing countries alike. The Millennium Development Goals, while simple in form, encapsulated the vision of the Millennium Declaration and had been highly effective in focusing global attention and attracting support. Efforts to fulfill them

must continue, but attention must also be directed to the development agenda beyond 2015, an area in which the Council played a valuable role.

147. The Rio+20 Conference had marked a major step forward in accelerating action for a healthier, more equitable and more prosperous world for all. Thanks to its unique ability to integrate the three dimensions of sustainable development, the Council was well placed to follow up the decisions of the Conference. The Council remained the United Nations system's central forum for coordination, guidance and policy coherence, promoting an effective response to emerging global challenges. As its role in addressing those challenges grew, it must be strengthened and revitalized. The Member States, meanwhile, must act with renewed solidarity and partnership to achieve tangible results.

148. **Mr. Puri** (India) said that globalization had magnified the impact of the current economic, social and development challenges on countries and communities throughout the world. A coordinated and coherent global response was required to address the effects of economic crisis, poverty, unemployment, food and energy insecurity and environmental degradation. As the principal United Nations body for policy review and dialogue on social and economic issues, the Council had a major role in shaping the response to those challenges. Moreover, it had been given central responsibility for coordination of the work of the United Nations system and its subsidiary bodies, and for ensuring follow-up of the goals and targets of major United Nations conferences.

149. Implementation of the outcome of the Rio+20 Conference must begin in earnest. The Conference had envisaged a central and strengthened role for the Council in integrating the three dimensions of sustainable development. In the light of that and the other functions assigned to the Council, its working methods and agenda must be reformed. It must avoid duplicating the work of other parts of the United Nations, streamline its oversight responsibilities, and ensure that its committees functioned in a coherent and transparent way. India looked forward to the review of the implementation of General Assembly resolution 61/16 on the strengthening of the Council. Reform was equally critical to achieving the Millennium Development Goals and to shaping the development agenda beyond 2015. Having performed commendably in following up implementation of the Millennium Development Goals, the Council must turn its attention

and expertise to working closely with the proposed high-level political forum to follow up the sustainable development goals.

150. Addressing the deficit in global governance lay at the centre of the sustainable development agenda, and must be a priority when undertaking reform of the Council's agenda. Global economic governance required the wide participation of developing countries, particularly in the decision-making structures of the Bretton Woods Institutions. The Council should play a pro-active role in achieving that aim.

151. **Mr. Berger** (Germany) said that the backdrop of global challenges required an examination of the Council's current institutional structure and working methods. The Council must be stronger, inclusive, effective and, at a time of budgetary restrictions, efficient. Innovative thinking should be used to develop and exploit its strengths and advantages, as the Council was uniquely placed to examine problems and monitor events from many angles and to coordinate activities of entities including its own subsidiary bodies and the specialized agencies. As a forum which included participants from civil society and the private sector, as well as academics and philanthropists, the Council was a good platform for discussion and exchange of best practices.

152. The General Assembly, in its resolution 64/289 on system-wide coherence, had set the Council a difficult challenge on which work must continue, particularly to ensure that the division of labour between the Council and the Second Committee of the General Assembly was understood and adhered to, in the interests of improving coordination and avoiding duplication. A good example of an effective division of labour between the Council and the Second Committee was the groundwork laid in the Council for the Quadrennial Comprehensive Policy Review, with contributions from the United Nations system, civil society and the private sector.

153. Finally, his delegation looked forward to taking part in the negotiation process leading up to the establishment of the high-level political forum included in the outcome of the Rio+20 Conference.

154. **Mr. Vitrenko** (Ukraine) said that the Council shouldered a substantial responsibility for the human and financial resources devoted by the United Nations system to achieving balanced integration of the three dimensions of sustainable development. It must be

made more effective, having already had its activities restructured by the introduction of the Annual Ministerial Review, which served as a powerful international platform to build an effective and inclusive multilateral system. Ukraine had made a National Voluntary Presentation in that context, and urged other States to do the same, not because the exercise provided an opportunity to report statistics, but because it helped to accelerate national policy implementation and contribute to a better, sustainable future.

155. Against the background of an ever-increasing number of United Nations mechanisms and instruments to collect data and keep track of statistical trends, his delegation believed that a results-based approach could best be achieved through the use of the current review mechanisms of the Council, including the “Development Strategies That Work” Database. However, Member States requiring support for their National Voluntary Presentations should receive appropriate technical assistance.

156. **Mr. Vermeulen** (Observer for South Africa) said that the concept note for the current meeting, and the panelists themselves, had raised important questions for the future of the Council. The Member States must launch a genuine debate on whether the mandate defined for the Council in the Charter of the United Nations was suited to addressing the challenges of sustainable development. They might find themselves forced to conclude that the international financial and economic institutions were in the control of powerful players outside the reach of the Organization, a situation never anticipated by its founders.

157. The Rio+20 Conference had reaffirmed the role of the Council in driving forward the debate on integrating the three dimensions of sustainable development. Against the background of a worldwide financial crisis, the major economies and the Bretton Woods institutions played a critical role in the search for solutions, but the Council continued to play a critical role in policy dialogue. Its engagement with those institutions and with the World Trade Organization should be strengthened, and it should be at the forefront of discussions on the reform of the international financial institutions.

158. The Member States must find ways to make the Council an active forum for policy debate on economic and social issues and therefore a source of relevant

policy guidance to the United Nations and its agencies, funds and programmes, in accordance with its Charter mandate. It was not enough to focus efforts only on the annual substantive session of the Council; initiatives like the current meeting, held during the General Assembly to take advantage of the presence of world leaders, should be repeated.

159. The adoption of the Millennium Development Goals had marked a collective commitment to addressing the challenges of underdevelopment. By placing the world’s poor, and particularly women, at the centre of the international development agenda, the Goals had resonated in the developing South, and particularly in Africa. In discussing the development agenda beyond 2015, the Member States should not give the impression that the Goals were being abandoned, but rather that their core and main direction was being maintained. The main challenge in implementing the Goals had been the unfulfilled commitments of developed countries and donors.

160. Multilateralism was vital to the international system, as it enabled countries with diverse interests to cooperate and collaborate in the face of common challenges. However, multilateralism must be strengthened and made more effective through reform of its institutions and practices, to ensure that they reflected the diversity of the Member States.

161. **Mr. Chuquihua** (Observer for Peru) said that his delegation welcomed the Council’s efforts to retake the initiative and marshal major sustainable development efforts. The Member States must reaffirm their trust in multilateralism by coordinating their policies on strengthening and supervising financial systems and on cooperation and technology transfer in pursuit of social inclusion and poverty eradication.

162. Overcoming the current challenges required the United Nations, with its key role in global governance and the sustainable development agenda, to be strong. That in turn required the Council to be strengthened and fully empowered for its role in integrating the three dimensions of sustainable development, providing coordination with the Bretton Woods institutions and the World Trade Organization, and reviewing the international development agenda, including that beyond 2015.

163. In addition, the Council played a vital part in coordinating the implementation of past commitments left unfulfilled since 1992, the implementation of the

new commitments resulting from the Rio+20 Conference, and the review of implementation of commitments relating to each dimension of sustainable development. Establishing and determining the functions of the proposed high-level political forum and reforming the Council's working methods were key to restoring the Council to its rightful position and to achieving "The future we want".

164. In establishing the development agenda beyond 2015, the Member States must reconcile the Millennium Development Goals and the Sustainable Development Goals in a way that prevented duplication of effort between the international community, the United Nations system, the private sector, civil society and academic circles. The development agenda must therefore fulfill the three basic conditions of being integrated, coherent and effective, and be adequately resourced to achieve the desired results.

165. **Mr. Sul Kyung-Hoon** (Republic of Korea) said the Rio+20 Conference had been a historic step in charting a path towards a more sustainable future, and the decisions of the Conference must be translated into action. As the target year for implementation of the Millennium Development Goals approached, the Member States must also determine the development agenda beyond 2015. In order for the United Nations to succeed in achieving such a sustainable future, the multilateral system must be made stronger and more effective.

166. The Member States, through the measures in General Assembly resolution 61/16, had sought to make the Council more effective and relevant. The innovations made had helped to revitalize that body, which, in the wake of the Rio+20 Conference, had acquired responsibility for achieving balanced integration of the three dimensions of sustainable development. His delegation supported the establishment of the high-level political forum, which should build political will to achieve sustainable development while also building consensus among stakeholders. That new mechanism should coordinate with the existing mechanisms, including the Annual Ministerial Review and the Development Cooperation Forum, to maintain coherence and avoid duplication.

167. The Council should be decisive, selective and focused to avoid trying to cover too many issues and to concentrate on those directly related to sustainable development. One of the targets of its attention should

be the transition to a green economy. Its organization of work should integrate the three dimensions of such development in a balanced way, and it should become more inclusive, by interacting with other forums and organizations, including civil society, non-governmental organizations and the private sector, in pursuit of sustainable development and poverty eradication.

168. **Mr. Ishii** (Japan) said that the agreement reached by the international community at the Rio+20 Conference created a need to balance the three dimensions of sustainable development, a task for which the Council, with its broad functions and powers, could serve as a driving force. As the rationale behind sustainable development was to consider the future, which in turn depended on the upcoming generations, the people-centred nature of the Council was another great advantage.

169. Backed by new technology for energy efficiency and renewable energy, the transition to a green economy could promote sustainable development and create the economic growth needed to lift millions out of poverty. The international community must now move from concept to action.

170. The Council, despite its existing advantages, could perform better, improving its relevance by having more focused debates and maintaining closer coordination with other United Nations bodies. Sustainable development provided the Council with an opportunity, because it provided a concrete agenda demanding a holistic approach.

171. **Mr. George** (Nigeria) said that, at the Rio+20 Conference, world leaders had acknowledged the importance of an inclusive, transparent, strengthened and effective multilateral system to address the urgent global challenges of sustainable development. The outcome document of the Conference recognized the role of the Council in achieving balanced integration of the three dimensions of sustainable development. The Council led global dialogue on matters including the Millennium Development Goals, climate change, financing for development, public health and humanitarian emergencies which were directly related to those three dimensions.

172. His delegation wished to see the Council seek global agreement on policies for building productive capacity and sustainable economic growth in developing countries; to focus on country-specific

economic models for sustainable, inclusive and equitable growth; to make periodic assessments of progress towards the international development goals and commitments, and to engage philanthropic organizations, the private sector and other entities in pursuit of those goals and commitments and to debate the general and sectoral issues challenging global development efforts. The Council should oversee system-wide coordination regarding sustainable development, and promote inter-agency and system-wide convergence and collaboration in knowledge sharing, policy dialogue, promotion of synergy and provision of technical assistance.

173. **Ms. Bárcena** (Executive Secretary of the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean), recalling that all five regional commissions reported directly to the Council, said that the importance of the timing of the current debate lay in the current economic crisis, which differed from previous such crises in subjecting the world, but developing countries in particular, to the effects of debt, trade, unemployment and depressed growth.

174. The time was right to reform the Council, which had been paralyzed in the past by conflicting interests and responsibilities, leading questions to be asked about its relevance and legitimacy relative to other bodies like the Group of Twenty, which seemed to represent multilateralism at an elite level. Reform of the Council should centre on ways to revive the United Nations development strategy from a position of universality and unilateralism without dictating to developing countries, pursuing shared prosperity and a narrowing of wide structural gaps in equality, income levels and distribution of wealth, technology, capital and financing. The reformed Council must have the power to act and to bring cohesion.

175. Reform required both continuity with the past and a break with it: continuity in the sense that progress towards the Millennium Development Goals must be preserved; a break in the sense that there must be a paradigm shift and a focus on sustainable development goals. Structural change must be put in place in order to alter the existing patterns of production and consumption. The Council must not forget that social and environmental issues could not be viewed in isolation, and that the underlying causes of problems in those fields were economic in nature.

176. For that reason, it must focus on achieving the Millennium Development Goals and their key aim of reducing poverty, with a gradual transition to the development agenda beyond 2015 and the sustainable development goals. Only in that way could poverty eradication be combined with greater equality; hunger eradication be combined with food security; lower maternal mortality be combined with reproductive rights; access to energy be combined with climate safety, and health for all be combined with universal social protection.

177. The Council could achieve progress by adhering to its mandate and leadership role, and by establishing a targeted agenda for 2013, perhaps divided into three parts: a coordination segment including a high-level preparatory meeting to provide overall guidance based on the outcomes of national, regional and global discussions ; an integration segment examining the activities and structure of the Council as a whole, and taking account of the proposed work of the regional and functional commissions, the specialized agencies and the Bretton Woods institutions; and the Annual Ministerial Review, which should plan out the transition from the Millennium Development Goals to the sustainable development goals; finally, a high-level segment, modelled on the suggestion of the observer for Colombia, which should discuss the development agenda beyond 2015.

178. The Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean was committed to supporting the Council's efforts to develop a new and universal development agenda through a bottom-up approach which progressed in turn from national to regional to global concerns and consultations.

179. **Mr. Hanif** (Department of Economic and Social Affairs), speaking on behalf of the Under-Secretary-General for Economic and Social Affairs, said that the contemporary challenges discussed by the current ministerial-level meeting, from the financial and sovereign-debt crises, to climate change and energy and food security, must be addressed in a sustainable way. That required the international system to become more effective in finding and implementing inclusive and transparent solutions built on the three dimensions of sustainable development.

180. The participants had together pointed to the need for greater coherence within the United Nations system and to the Council's critical role in implementing

sustainable development policies. Focusing on the way forward, they had discussed, with the help of the panelists, proposals for a stronger, more inclusive and more effective multilateral system aimed at advancing sustainable development, particularly in the context of the follow-up to the Rio+20 Conference. Among their conclusions were important messages. First was the need for greater international coherence of development policies, with more and better interaction between the Council, its subsidiary bodies and other international actors in the development field, and a focus of the entire structure of the Council on integration and stronger development results. Second was the need for more efficient and effective follow-up to major United Nations conferences and their commitments, with a close focus of that work on the three dimensions of sustainable development. Third was the need for the institutions involved in promoting sustainable development to complement each other and avoid duplication.

181. The discussions just concluded had shown that the Council was about to fulfill the pivotal international development role that it had been assigned. A stronger Council and a better institutional system with sustainable development at its core and operating within a strong, inclusive and effective international framework would help to translate the Organization's development agenda into action, particularly the development agenda beyond 2015

182. **The President**, thanking the participants and panelists, said that the discussion had led to reflection on the institutional underpinning which the Council needed to support and promote sustainable development. In addition, important and insightful questions had been put by those following the debate on social media. The difficult task ahead was to ensure the continued relevance of the Organization in general and the Council in particular in the response to emerging challenges and in shaping the new development agenda from Rio+20 to beyond 2015.

183. Particularly in the run-up to the review of General Assembly resolution 61/16, the Bureau of the Council stood ready to engage and consult with all Member State representatives on recommendations for future action to build a stronger and more effective multilateral system for sustainable development, with the Council at its centre.

184. Such a multilateral system should build on existing knowledge, expertise and lessons learned in all three dimensions of sustainable development, in order to find solutions to global problems, determine priorities for action and provide policy guidance. The Council's work must be reconciled with that of the General Assembly. Its decisions must be outcome-driven and provide for effective implementation, monitoring and evaluation. The timing of its sessions should be altered to give greater effect to its refocused agenda.

185. The Council's structure of subsidiary bodies, and its secretariat support, should be tailored to its post-reform needs. The high-level political forum should become an integral part of that structure. The Council should expand cooperation and collaboration with a growing range of development partners, including academic circles and the private sector and regional and subregional institutions. As the pursuit of sustainable development cut across many dimensions, sectors and stakeholders, no single organization or group could achieve the aims of the Rio+20 period and beyond. Lastly, the Council should monitor accountability for the results produced by all development actors, in order to establish a true partnership for development, linking policy and priority-setting with funding commitments, and ensuring integration between the normative and operational aspects of its work.

186. In Rio, the Member States had recognized that the Council was currently the only institution with the potential, mandate and legitimacy to exercise all the functions needed to support a more sustainable path for development. There must be a clear picture of the Council's strengths and weaknesses, and of the required reforms, which must not be piecemeal, but be guided by a global view, in order to develop a multilateral system that promoted coherence and consensus, and collective action. A stronger Council would help to design "The Future We Want", but also ensure that it was achieved.

The meeting rose at 8.40 p.m.