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Chair: Mr. Tafrov..... (Bulgaria)

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

Agenda item 5: Election of the officers of the Main Committees

1. **The Chair** said that the African States had endorsed the candidacy of Mr. Mario von Haff (Angola) for the office of Vice-Chair of the Committee for its sixty-eighth session.
2. *Mr. von Haff (Angola) was elected Vice-Chair by acclamation.*

Organization of work (A/68/250, A/C.3/68/1, A/C.3/68/L.1 and Add.1/Rev.1)

3. **The Chair** said that the letter from the President of the General Assembly concerning the agenda items allocated to the Third Committee was contained in document [A/C.3/68/1](#). The list of documents issued under each agenda item was contained in document [A/C.3/68/L.1/Add.1](#). Recalling the guidelines concerning the conduct of the Committee's work in chapter II of the report of the General Committee ([A/68/250](#)) and the provision in document [A/66/246](#) for webcasting of all formal meetings, he underlined the importance of punctuality and adherence to time limits for statements and rights of reply and to deadlines for submission of proposals and inscription on the list of speakers. He also highlighted specific guidelines contained in the General Committee's report concerning the need to reduce the number of resolutions adopted by the General Assembly and to ensure their brevity in order to maximize their political impact.
4. He proposed that the Committee should respect the timetable to the extent possible in order to maximize the time and resources available to the Committee, with the understanding that adjustments would be made as warranted. Delegations initiating draft proposals should inform the Secretary of the Committee or a member of the Bureau and those sponsoring draft resolutions that involved lengthy negotiations should prepare them as early as possible and observe deadlines scrupulously. Following past practice, the Committee would maintain a rolling list of speakers and delegations should be ready to take the floor earlier than scheduled, if necessary. Any speaker absent when scheduled to speak, would be placed at the end of the list unless a change of time had been agreed in a timely manner with another delegation. Statements

would be limited to 15 minutes for delegations speaking on behalf of a group of States and to 7 minutes for those speaking in a national capacity.

5. **The Chair** said he took it that the Committee wished to approve his recommendations.
6. *It was so decided.*
7. **The Chair** said he took it that, following past practice, the Committee wished to extend invitations to special procedures mandate holders of the Human Rights Council, Chairs of treaty bodies or working groups and others, to submit their reports to, and interact with, the Committee.
8. *It was so decided.*
9. The Chair said he took it that the Committee wished to approve the organization of work as contained in documents [A/C.3/68/L.1](#) and Add.1/Rev.1, subject to amendment.
10. It was so decided.

Agenda item 135: Programme planning

11. **The Chair** said that he had appointed Ms. Adriana Murillo Ruin of Costa Rica as facilitator for the draft resolution on the follow-up to the Fourth World Conference on Women.

Agenda item 27: Social development

- (a) **Implementation of the outcome of the World Summit for Social Development and of the twenty-fourth special session of the General Assembly (A/68/174 and A/68/215)**
- (b) **Social development, including questions relating to the world social situation and to youth, ageing, disabled persons and the family (A/68/61-E/2013/3, A/68/95, A/68/168 and A/68/169)**
- (c) **Follow-up to the International Year of Older Persons: Second World Assembly on Ageing (A/68/167)**
- (d) **United Nations Literacy Decade: Education for all (A/68/201)**
12. **Mr. Gass** (Assistant Secretary-General for Policy Co-ordination and Inter-Agency Affairs), speaking on behalf of the Under-Secretary-General for Economic and Social Affairs, said that the impact of the global

financial and economic crisis had brought to the fore the importance of decent work and job security, particularly as youth unemployment remained high. Various follow-up processes to the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development, including the International Year of Cooperatives initiative and the recently-concluded high-level meetings on disability and development and on achieving the Millennium Development Goals, highlighted the need for coherent development policies that operated at the nexus of social, economic and environmental sustainability. The involvement, recognition and priorities of youth, older persons, persons with disabilities and indigenous peoples were essential to securing a sustainable post-2015 development agenda.

13. Progress in improving social development on a global scale remained uneven. Inequality continued to have adverse impacts on health, nutrition, education, environmental sustainability, political participation and social and economic inclusion, and a comprehensive policy approach would be required to meet those challenges through growth-enhancing macroeconomic policies and inclusive social policies, while also ensuring environmental sustainability. Successful strategies included the Social Protection Floor initiative, agricultural growth and diversification of rural economies, fiscal stimuli and participatory decision-making.

14. Member States should intensify their efforts to achieve the Millennium Development Goals by 2015, a deadline less than three years away, while affirming a strong post-2015 development agenda to complete unfinished business and address new challenges.

15. **Ms. Bas** (Director of the Social Policy and Development Division, Department of Economic and Social Affairs), introducing the reports of the Secretary-General under agenda items 27 (a), (b) and (c), said that the report on implementation of the outcome of the World Summit for Social Development and of the twenty-fourth special session of the General Assembly (A/68/174) provided an overview of the discussions of the Commission for Social Development at its fifty-first session. The report highlighted the discussions on promoting the empowerment of people in achieving poverty eradication, social integration and full employment and decent work for all. It also addressed the progress achieved towards implementing programmes related to social groups and social integration and provided an overview of the types of

policies that promoted the empowerment of people. While the report noted that attention should be given to the consequences of exclusion of specific social groups, it concluded that the promotion of empowerment should go beyond group-specific approaches and focus on people-centred development. The report recommended that enhanced efforts should be made to address the root causes of poverty, inequality and social exclusion and that the United Nations post-2015 development agenda should give priority to social inclusion and protection, empowerment and participation.

16. The note by the Secretariat entitled “World social situation 2013: inequality matters” (A/68/125) analysed the impacts of social and economic inequality on achieving inclusive development. The unacceptably high level of inequalities should be addressed by a combination of growth-enhancing macroeconomic policies and redistributive social policies that took a comprehensive and universal approach.

17. The report on the preparations for and observance of the anniversary of the International Year of the Family in 2014 (A/68/61-E/2013/3) reviewed good practices in family policymaking in the areas of confronting family poverty and social exclusion, ensuring work-family balance and advancing social integration and intergenerational solidarity. It also highlighted growing acceptance of adequate work-family balance as important for productivity and noted that policies should be cross-cutting and should empower families rather than assume their functions. The report recommended better cooperation between all stakeholders to ensure family-oriented policy design, monitoring and implementation that would lead to more effective family-oriented policies and wider sharing of good practices.

18. The report entitled “The way forward: a disability-inclusive development agenda towards 2015 and beyond” (A/68/95) reviewed existing approaches to disability-inclusive development and suggested that the omission of the concerns of persons with disabilities in the existing international development framework had resulted in a lack of specific policy commitments and accountability mechanisms for ensuring that persons with disabilities were included in efforts to achieve the Millennium Development Goals. Despite that glaring omission, the report noted some efforts to address disability in national development agendas. Lastly, the report proposed steps for including

disability in development policies and recommended that accessibility should be a central consideration in the emerging post-2015 development agenda.

19. The report on cooperatives in social development and the observance of the International Year of Cooperatives (A/68/168) reviewed the observance of the year and discussed the contribution of cooperatives to social and economic development, highlighting that cooperative activities secured the livelihoods of as many as three billion people and contributed significantly to national economies. The wide range of activities organized throughout 2012 in observance of the International Year of Cooperatives raising awareness of cooperative enterprises and created a supportive environment for their growth and sustainability. The report also noted international efforts to strengthen cooperatives and their role in the development.

20. The report on promoting social integration through social inclusion (A/68/169) noted that the goal of achieving socially cohesive societies remained elusive, with many vulnerable groups still excluded from development benefits. Social protection — a socioeconomic right and a form of institutionalized solidarity — should be at the centre of coherent and integrated policy frameworks. One of the report's recommendations was that national institutions should be established in partnership with civil society and the private sector to implement, monitor and evaluate social inclusion policies.

21. The report on the follow-up to the International Year of Older Persons (A/68/167) examined three key areas in the implementation of the Madrid International Plan of Action on Ageing: access to decent work and employment for older persons, elder abuse and violence, and older adults and mental health. The report concluded that, 10 years after the adoption of the Madrid Plan of Action, older persons continued to face prejudicial attitudes and discriminatory practices in many societies.

22. **Ms. Jensen** (Director, United Nations Educational, Social and Cultural Organization Liaison Office, New York), introducing the report of the Director-General of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) on implementation of the International Plan of Action for the United Nations Literacy Decade (A/68/201), submitted under agenda item 27 (d), said that the

Decade had served as a global framework for catalysing focused and sustained efforts to promote literacy for all. Literacy had become a higher priority on the agenda of national, regional and international decision makers and had been integrated into broader policy frameworks in education and beyond. However, greater impact could have been achieved if literacy had been better integrated into the global development architecture, notably the Millennium Development Goals.

23. The Decade had set forth a new vision of literacy relevant to twenty-first century societies. The evaluation had revealed that over the previous decade, literacy as articulated in national policies and programmes had become a broader concept that went beyond reading, writing and functional literacy, encompassing a continuum of skill levels acquired throughout a lifetime. Globally, the Decade had been marked by steady progress in key areas related to the Education for All goals, as evinced by significant decreases in the number of youth and adult illiterates and primary-school-age children out of school. Increased mobilization of domestic and external resources for education and stronger political will had resulted in improved legal frameworks and integration of literacy into education and development policies. Furthermore, literacy assessments reflected a growing interest in understanding learners' abilities. Another positive development was increased recognition of non-formal education and efforts to bridge formal and non-formal education through equivalency and qualification frameworks.

24. As the global coordinator for the Decade, UNESCO had assisted Governments through such initiatives as the Literacy Initiative for Empowerment, the monitoring of progress by the UNESCO Institute for Statistics and capacity-building for literacy assessment and monitoring. Other UNESCO activities included the awarding of International Literacy Prizes, a global action week on Education for All and the work of goodwill ambassadors.

25. Despite the positive gains made, global literacy challenges persisted, reflected by alarmingly high rates of basic and functional illiteracy. In 2011, two-thirds of adult illiterates worldwide were women, a proportion that had remained unchanged for 30 years. If no special measures were taken, the pool of adult illiterates would continue to grow.

26. With regard to future action, the report called on all stakeholders to intensify collective efforts for enhanced education systems and interventions and to focus more sharply on youth and adult illiterates and on marginalized populations, in particular illiterate girls and women. The report proposed a three-pronged approach to literacy: improving the quality of basic education for children and adolescents; providing alternative learning opportunities for out-of-school children, adolescents and adults; and improving the quality of literacy teaching and learning. It also highlighted the need to reflect further on the concepts of literacy relevant to the contemporary world. Lastly, the report recommended that UNESCO should create a global multi-stakeholder partnership in support of national efforts to achieve the goals of the United Nations Literacy Decade.

27. **Mr. Daunivalu** (Fiji), speaking on behalf of the Group of 77 and China, said that despite significant progress in a number of areas, greater effort was required to achieve their shared goals in the field of social development. The Secretary-General's report (A/68/174) had shown that promoting the empowerment of people in achieving poverty eradication, social integration and full employment and decent work for all remained a global challenge. The Group fully shared the report's recommendation to include empowerment, through a range of actions, as a priority in the global development agenda beyond 2015. That was of particular importance, as multiple interrelated global crises and the challenges posed by climate change all had major negative implications for social development and undermined further the achievement of internationally agreed development goals.

28. In the light of those continuing challenges, implementation of the commitments made at the World Summit for Social Development was more urgent than ever. The Group reaffirmed its commitment to implementing the Copenhagen Declaration and Programme of Action and other social development initiatives adopted by the General Assembly at its twenty-fourth special session. In compliance with their obligations under international law, States should take further collective action to remove obstacles to the full realization of the right of peoples to self-determination, particularly those living under colonial domination and foreign occupation. The Group also welcomed the

outcome document of the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development.

29. International cooperation was crucial to the realization of internationally agreed development goals and the Group of 77 and China called for timely fulfilment by developed countries of their commitments with regard to official development assistance and the global partnership for development. A harmonized trade agenda should support measures for equal market access, in accordance with other international social development agreements, such as the World Trade Organization Enhanced Integrated Framework.

30. In a people-centred approach to empowerment, particular attention should be given to persons with disabilities. The recent High-Level Meeting of the General Assembly on the realization of the Millennium Development Goals and other internationally agreed development goals for persons with disabilities had provided an invaluable opportunity to review development policy from a disability perspective and strengthen commitment to ensuring the rights, inclusion and empowerment of persons with disabilities in emerging international development frameworks. Well-focused policies and action should also be put in place to address the ageing of the population and the discrimination, poverty, violence and lack of specific services which the elderly often faced.

31. The Group of 77 and China welcomed the continued focus on young people and called upon Member States, the United Nations system and relevant stakeholders to implement fully the recommendations contained in the outcome document of the High-level Meeting of the General Assembly on Youth: Dialogue and Mutual Understanding. Since the proclamation of the International Year of the Family in 1994, the international community had undertaken a range of activities and commitments in support of those objectives. Activities marking the twentieth anniversary should provide a useful opportunity to strengthen national family-centred policies and programmes.

32. **Mr. Haniff** (Malaysia), speaking on behalf of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN), said that the Association was working to establish a politically, economically and culturally cohesive and socially responsible community by 2015 and to

improve the quality of life based on the principles of sustainable development. To that end, the ASEAN Socio-Cultural Community Blueprint had identified seven priority areas for action, including poverty alleviation, tackling the negative impacts of integration and globalization, food security, access to health care and the control of communicable diseases.

33. The critical role of empowerment had been recognized at the Eighth ASEAN Ministers Meeting on Rural Development and Poverty Eradication. In its efforts to promote social justice and mainstream people's rights into policies and in all spheres of life, ASEAN was focusing on protecting the rights of disadvantaged and vulnerable groups, promoting the rights of migrant workers and developing corporate social responsibility.

34. Recent social protection initiatives included the adoption of the ASEAN Strategic Framework for Social Welfare and Development (2011-2015), the finalization of the Mobilization Framework that promoted disability-inclusive development, the establishment of the ASEAN Decade of Persons with Disabilities (2011-2020) and the adoption of the Bali Declaration on the Enhancement of the Role and Participation of Persons with Disabilities. In addition, the Second ASEAN Workshop on the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities had been held in February 2013 in Thailand, pursuant to the recommendations in the Secretary-General's report (A/68/95), and the ASEAN Declaration on Strengthening Social Protection had been adopted at the recently held Eighth ASEAN Ministerial Meeting on Social Welfare and Development. The annual ASEAN and Japan High Level Officials Meeting on Caring Societies, which would focus on the theme "Active Ageing" at its eleventh meeting, was a further indication of regional commitment.

35. The Eighth ASEAN Ministerial Meeting on Youth, convened in May 2013, had reiterated the important role of younger generations in boosting regional solidarity through voluntary community services. In addition to discussing youth unemployment, the Meeting had endorsed the "Bandar Seri Begawan Declaration on Youth Volunteerism and Entrepreneurship" as well as a number of initiatives designed to instil a sense of community. Other activities supporting youth included the ASEAN Youth Volunteer Programme and the First ASEAN Youth Entrepreneur Seminar and Exposition.

36. **Mr. Charles** (Trinidad and Tobago), speaking on behalf of the Caribbean Community (CARICOM), said that the region continued to be affected by the adverse impact of the global economic, food and energy crises, compounded by new, multifaceted and interconnected challenges that impeded progress in achieving social development goals. The World Economic Situation and Prospects 2013 report acknowledged a spilling over of economic woes from developed to developing countries and predicted that the next two years would be fraught with uncertainty and risk. Social development could not be considered in a vacuum, but as part of the wider sustainable development agenda. CARICOM had long ago adopted a people-centred approach to development and continued to launch initiatives to support vulnerable groups in the region.

37. CARICOM shared the Secretary-General's view that meaningful participation was essential to empowerment and was increasing its efforts to ensure the full integration of all citizens into society and the participation of all stakeholders in decision-making and other processes that influenced public policy for development. The significant strides made by CARICOM in the area of human and social development since its establishment had been highlighted at the 24th meeting of the CARICOM Council for Human and Social Development, which had provided a forum for regional policy-makers to discuss their vision for the region and focus attention on particular sectors.

38. Diversification of the region's economies was another means of facilitating the empowerment of the people. One initiative encouraged citizens in rural areas to engage in agricultural activities for enterprise development in addition to subsistence farming. Guyana was currently hosting the Twelfth Caribbean Week of Agriculture to promote the agricultural industry and trade in the region.

39. CARICOM continued to implement policies and initiatives to support the role of the family in social development and was preparing to celebrate the twentieth anniversary of the International Year of the Family in 2014. It also supported the move towards a disability-inclusive development agenda and many member States had signed or ratified the relevant Convention and the optional protocol thereto. Additionally, CARICOM Heads of Government had decided at their meeting in July 2013 to begin a regional dialogue on the issues faced by persons with

disabilities and to convene a regional high-level meeting on the matter.

40. CARICOM, cognizant of the importance of young people as partners in development, had devised a Regional Strategy for Youth Development and in 2010, at the first Special Regional Summit on Youth Development, had declared its intention to recognize that role in national and regional strategies. It would continue to engage young people in decision-making through initiatives such as the CARICOM Youth Ambassadors Programme. The promotion and protection of the rights of older persons had also been a priority, with regional action guided by the Caribbean Charter on Health and Ageing. Member States continued to implement relevant policies and programmes to respond to the challenges faced by older persons and ensure their socioeconomic integration. CARICOM States had also been working to enhance their national statistical capacities to integrate changing demographics into economic and social planning.

41. Given the link between health and socioeconomic development, it was important to address the negative developmental impacts of non-communicable diseases. CARICOM therefore looked forward to collaborating with all partners to strengthen and facilitate multisectoral action to prevent and control non-communicable diseases and to prepare for the 2014 review and assessment of progress achieved in that area.

42. **Mr. Alemu** (Ethiopia), speaking on behalf of the Group of African States, said that the African Union had focused its efforts during the African Decade of Persons with Disabilities (1999-2009) on strengthening regional cooperation to support the full participation and equality of persons with disabilities and equal opportunities with regard to education, training and employment. The second Session of the African Union Conference of Ministers for Social Development had decided to focus on targets and indicators to measure outcomes. Despite recent progress, however, very few of the millions of Africans with disabilities had access to care, rehabilitation and education, and disability was still a survival issue in Africa. The African Union Disability Architecture, an initiative adopted at the third session of the Conference, consisted of legal, programmatic and institutional components: the Protocol on the rights of persons with disabilities; the Continental Plan of Action of the African Decade of

Persons with Disabilities; and regional agencies, member States and other stakeholders. The recently concluded high-level meeting on disability and development could provide crucial input for narrowing the gap between policy and practice and helping to realize the full and effective participation of persons with disabilities in society and development, through employment, equal access to basic services and strong social protection mechanisms.

43. With more than half of the total African population under the age of 35 years, millions of young Africans faced unemployment, underemployment and other challenges. The African Youth Decade (2009-2018) had therefore been proclaimed in order to advance the agenda of youth empowerment and development and support national youth policies and programmes. The African Group therefore welcomed the appointment of the Envoy of the Secretary-General on Youth.

44. The African Union Policy Framework and Plan of Action on Ageing in Africa, adopted in 2002, provided guidance for policymaking, since it was realized that advocacy efforts must support national policies, encourage consultation with older persons, and ensure appropriate allocation of resources. Furthermore, the Protocol to the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights on the Rights of Older Persons in Africa adopted in 2012 established the relevant obligations of States parties. The Group would continue to be actively engaged in all multilateral processes related to the promotion and protection of the rights of older persons.

45. The Group reaffirmed the central role of the institution of the family in development and its commitment to the African Union Plan of Action on the Family in Africa, which aimed to improve the situation of families and guide member States in developing structures, policies and programmes and capacity-building. However, those efforts were undermined by a number of challenges, including widespread poverty. The forthcoming anniversary of the International Year of the Family was thus a key opportunity to renew efforts to improve implementation and evaluation of the Plan of Action.

46. Poor social development indicators reflected the difficulties still faced by many African countries, such as increased income and non-income inequalities and persistent disparities in the progress made towards several Millennium Development Goals: for example,

Africa trailed the developing world in gender parity in education. Nonetheless, African countries had made notable efforts to address socioeconomic development through various social policies that included redistributive, protective and transformative elements.

47. **Mr. Maope** (Lesotho), speaking on behalf of the Southern African Development Community (SADC), said that while SADC countries had increased their efforts to achieve social development goals, real development would continue to elude them unless all stakeholders were integrated into all aspects of political, economic and social life. Poverty, one of the greatest challenges, was exacerbated by the ongoing economic, food, energy and climate crises. SADC was therefore redoubling its efforts to implement the Plan of Action derived from the Dar es Salaam Declaration on Food Security.

48. The varied responses to poverty among SADC member States reflected the increasingly urgent need for improved coordination, alignment and monitoring of programmes. The Regional Indicative Strategic Development Plan (1990-2015) enabled SADC to address poverty and development by enhancing civil society understanding of national and regional poverty eradication frameworks. The outcomes of the completed review of the Plan would inform the region's roadmap for reducing poverty, strengthening regional integration and ensuring sustainable peace and security.

49. With unemployment, particularly youth unemployment, remaining one of the biggest challenges in the region, several member States had adopted policies and programmes to establish and strengthen social protection systems. The region supported volunteerism and sustainable community service projects that reduced poverty and promoted economic growth while addressing unemployment.

50. HIV/AIDS was one of the biggest medium- to long-term global challenges to social development, as it contributed to higher mortality rates, increased health sector expenditure, and worsened poverty. The SADC Protocol on Health sought to counteract the ubiquitous high prevalence of HIV/AIDS by facilitating effective regional responses to the pandemic. Increased access to anti-retroviral drugs and greater awareness of the dangers of the disease had resulted in a decline in new infections in the region.

51. SADC prioritized the need to mainstream disability issues in regional strategies and development initiatives and thus welcomed the outcome of the recently concluded high-level meeting of the General Assembly, optimistic that the commitments made towards disability-inclusive development would be implemented effectively. In light of the role of regional integration and international cooperation in overcoming obstacles to development, there was a need for combined regional and international efforts to implement the social development agenda.

52. **Mr. León González** (Cuba), speaking on behalf of the Community of Latin American and Caribbean States (CELAC), said that despite progress in the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals, 1.2 billion people were living in extreme poverty, including 870 million who were malnourished. Hunger and poverty were egregious human rights violations and should be eradicated. Inclusive development strategies were needed to distribute the benefits of economic growth more equitably and meet the basic human needs of nutrition, health, water, sanitation, housing, and access to education and employment. Such social inclusion, which was essential to democratic societies, required a renewed commitment from Governments.

53. International cooperation, including the commitment by developed countries to allocate 0.7 per cent of their gross domestic product to official development assistance, as well as South-South and technical cooperation, was essential to development. There was an urgent need to reform the global economic system and implement new forms of international solidarity to ensure more inclusive societies. The States members of CELAC had implemented successful programmes for the social inclusion and empowerment of vulnerable groups and had consistently promoted their rights.

54. Young people, who accounted for a large proportion of the population in CELAC countries, should be given opportunities for education and training. The BYND 2015 Global Youth Summit, held in Costa Rica in September 2013, had made a valuable contribution to the discussions on the sustainable development agenda. The international community should support the social inclusion of elderly people and the implementation of the Madrid International Plan of Action on Ageing. CELAC commended the work of the United Nations Open-ended Working

Group on Ageing. At the twenty-fourth regular session of the Human Rights Council, CELAC had introduced a resolution proposing the appointment of an independent expert on the enjoyment of all human rights by older persons.

55. The Community was actively promoting the full social, political, economic and cultural inclusion of persons with disabilities and therefore welcomed the outcome document of the recent high-level meeting on disability and development. The Community also urged the Secretary-General to appoint a special envoy for persons with disabilities. The spread of non-communicable diseases was a concern for all countries, in view of their adverse effect on socioeconomic development. The post-2015 development agenda should be built on the foundation of the Millennium Development Goals and should adequately reflect all aspects of the three pillars of sustainable development.

56. **Mr. Vrailas** (Observer for the European Union), speaking also on behalf of the candidate countries Iceland, Montenegro, Serbia, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia and Turkey; the stabilization and association process countries Albania and Bosnia and Herzegovina; and, in addition, Armenia, Georgia and the Republic of Moldova, said that the European Union's response to the financial crisis reflected its belief in common political, social and economic values. To combat unemployment and inequality it had proposed the Europe 2020 strategy for sustainable, smart and inclusive growth. The Council of the European Union had adopted a recommendation on establishing a youth guarantee so that people under the age of 25 years would receive an offer of employment, continued education, an apprenticeship or a traineeship within four months of becoming unemployed or leaving formal education. It had earmarked €6 billion for its Youth Employment Initiative and, in June 2013, had approved the Social Investment Package to guide national reform within the Europe 2020 framework.

57. The development framework beyond 2015 should be based on a set of global goals and should ensure a rights-based approach addressing justice, equality and equity, good governance, democracy, the rule of law, gender equality and the prevention of violence against women. The European Union was committed to the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action and the Programme of Action of the International Conference on Population and Development.

58. The European Union would share best practices in youth employment through the United Nations World Programme of Action for Youth and the Envoy of the Secretary-General on Youth. It would continue to assist young people through its Strategy for Youth and its Youth on the Move initiative, and in its dialogues and development activities. Promoting the rights of older persons was also high on the agenda, and Governments should address age discrimination and elder abuse, while providing long-term care, social protection, decent work and health care to older persons.

59. All States members of the European Union had signed the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities. The European Disability Strategy 2010-2020 was designed to remove barriers to the social and economic empowerment of those persons. The European Union had contributed to the recent high-level meeting of the General Assembly on disability and development.

60. **Ms. Lawal** (Nigeria) said that her Government, as part of its efforts to implement the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, was making every effort to pass a disability act that would provide for the establishment of a national commission for persons with disabilities. Data obtained from the 2009 and 2010 baseline surveys on persons with disabilities had been used in the formulation of appropriate measures and strategies to ensure their inclusion in development. The Government was working with local and international organizations of persons with disabilities and was establishing structures to mainstream disability perspectives across all federal Government entities.

61. Her Government was surveying its correctional institutions with a view to improving its juvenile criminal justice system, and was strengthening the social development workforce. It was committed to ensuring that family issues were taken into account in development, and had implemented programmes to provide skills and grants to families and to reintegrate vulnerable migrant children. It was committed to international instruments on ageing and was taking concrete actions to realize their objectives. Her Government remained firmly committed to ensuring the inclusion of issues affecting all vulnerable groups in the national development agenda.

62. **Mr. Khalek** (Egypt) said that the post-2015 development agenda should focus on combating inequality, with priority given to education, literacy, social inclusion, empowerment, participation, employment, decent work and social protection. Family-focused policies should be an integral part of development efforts, and the Envoy of the Secretary-General on Youth should develop a global youth employment strategy. Disability-related issues should also be included in the development agenda beyond 2015. The Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities and the outcome document of the recent high-level meeting of the General Assembly on disability and development should be implemented. An international legal instrument on ageing should be established to eliminate discrimination against older persons.

63. His Government had stabilized basic commodity prices, increased the minimum wage, social allowances and pensions and eliminated public school tuition fees. It was planning reforms to address inequality, had established a special committee for social justice, was combating corruption and would cooperate with the international community to combat money-laundering.

64. **Mr. Rakovskiy** (Russian Federation) said that his delegation supported the establishment of a new global partnership for development to implement the decisions of the World Summit for Social Development and the twenty-fourth special session of the General Assembly, in coordination with the Millennium Development Goals. His Government had reduced the proportion of Russians living below the poverty line from 30 per cent in 2000 to 11.2 per cent, and was committed to combating inequality and poverty and raising living standards. To address the effects of the financial crisis, it was promoting employment and productivity, was stimulating small and medium-sized enterprises, and would continue to increase wages and pensions and expand the social protection system. A new State programme of social support would improve the regulatory base, introduce innovative work methods and provide support for non-profit organizations. His Government provided material support and health care to older persons and encouraged their involvement in society. Pensions had risen by 3.5 per cent per year over the preceding five years and by 10 per cent in 2013.

65. His Government was continuing implementation of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with

Disabilities through a \$5-billion dollar federal programme that was designed to ensure an accessible environment in terms of employment, education, services and facilities. It was also implementing a strategy based on the World Programme of Action for Youth, with an emphasis on employment, and provided young people with various forms of State assistance. The Government also provided support for low-income and young families and encouraged intergenerational solidarity, since stable societies depended on the strength of the traditional family.

66. **Ms. Frei** (Switzerland), speaking as a youth delegate, said that young people were a source of innovation and productivity but their potential was being neglected, with 75 million of them unemployed worldwide. Her Government therefore welcomed the high priority given to good education and employment practices in the report of the Secretary-General on the implementation of the World Programme of Action for Youth (E/CN.5/2013/7). The international community should ensure universal access to education, economic growth and job creation, in particular for disadvantaged young people; encourage self-employment and entrepreneurship; and respect their right to work. Closer collaboration between the public and private sectors was indispensable to make education more responsive to labour market needs.

67. The post-2015 development agenda should consider the interrelationship between economic growth, full and productive employment and decent work for all, together with ecological sustainability. The link between sustainable development and decent work for all had been recognized by the International Labour Conference at its 102nd session in June 2013.

68. Young people in conflict and post-conflict situations faced great challenges. Of the 57 million children without access to education, half lived in conflict zones. Education would enable them to overcome economic hardship and participate in society. The World Programme of Action for Youth encouraged young people to contribute to peace and security. Political participation could break the cycle of violence and opportunities for young people would unfold their potential as agents of change towards a peaceful future.

69. **Ms. Morgan** (Mexico) said that social inclusion was essential to the development agenda as a means of reducing poverty and inequality. Her Government planned to convene a meeting to promote a global view

of inclusion and to make progress in defining minimum human rights standards and their impact on development policies. The report of the Secretary-General entitled “The way forward: a disability-inclusive development agenda towards 2015 and beyond” (A/68/95) provided a road map for the inclusion of persons with disabilities in development. Her Government had supported the proposal made at the twenty-fourth regular session of the Human Rights Council for the appointment of an independent expert on the enjoyment of all human rights by older persons. The Government’s social development policy upheld basic human rights and established an affirmative action strategy to benefit children, women, indigenous persons, persons with disabilities and older adults.

70. Social inclusion could only be achieved by addressing all the dimensions of poverty, including health, education, basic services and housing. Seven million Mexicans still lived in extreme poverty, and the Government had therefore launched a campaign against hunger, stressing accountability and cross-cutting actions favouring families and communities. It was also essential to involve young people in the debates on social development.

71. **Ms. Phipps** (United States) said that the efforts of the Open-ended Working Group on Ageing and the independent expert on the enjoyment of all human rights by older persons should be complementary and avoid duplication. She requested further information regarding the work of the recently established Group of Friends coalition. More effort was needed to implement the Madrid International Plan of Action on Ageing, with a focus on assisting Member States to apply existing laws and policies rather than producing a new legal framework. Provisions for older persons should be included in the strategic plans of United Nations organizations.

72. The development agenda beyond 2015 should be inclusive of all, and persons with disabilities should both participate in and benefit from development. Robust domestic legislation and enforcement were the most effective way to improve their situation.

73. **Ms. Sariaslan** (Netherlands), speaking as a youth delegate, said that young people should complete their education so that they could be independent and participate in decision-making and ensure that women were protected from violence and gender inequality. The international community should prevent violence

against women, who played an essential role in poverty eradication, peacebuilding and development. Governments should honour their promises to young people, who had enormous influence on society, in particular through social media, and should be involved in policymaking. She urged delegations to appoint at least one youth delegate and called on youth representatives to organize a United Nations youth forum. Progress and prosperity were impossible without the full and equal participation of women and youth.

74. **Mr. Pulford** (Australia), speaking as a youth delegate, said that the international community should eliminate all forms of discrimination and establish equality. Combating discrimination was often mistakenly perceived as less important than global challenges such as ending poverty, addressing climate change and achieving peace and sustainable development; however, progress in eliminating discrimination often accelerated progress in those other areas. To build a world free of discrimination, the international community should consolidate the achievements of the Millennium Development Goals to devise equitable policies which reached all populations, including women, youth, indigenous peoples, marginalized groups, rural and remote communities and persons with disabilities, to ensure that their voices were heard.

The meeting rose at 1 p.m.