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Held at the Palais des Nations, Geneva, on Monday, 1 July 2013 at 3 p.m.

President: Mr. Osorio (Colombia)

Contents


Annual ministerial review: science, technology and innovation, and the potential of culture, for promoting sustainable development and achieving the Millennium Development Goals (*continued*)

National voluntary presentations

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The meeting was called to order at 3.05 p.m.

Annual ministerial review: science, technology and innovation, and the potential of culture, for promoting sustainable development and achieving the Millennium Development Goals (*continued*)

National voluntary presentations

The President said that, since 2007, 53 countries had delivered national voluntary presentations that had provided additional insight, during the Council's high-level segment, into their best practices and experience. Those presentations established a link between actions undertaken at the national level and international decision-making processes, thereby helping to strengthen certain regulatory and operational facets of United Nations development activities. They could be further enhanced by a mechanism for following up on additional progress achieved by implementing some of the recommendations arising from the discussions. A standardized analytical framework and regional knowledge-sharing networks would render the review more useful. Going forward, more robust participation in the process by United Nations country teams would also be desirable.

The President invited Mr. Manning (Chairman of the Board of the United Kingdom's Institute of Development Studies) to be the moderator for the national voluntary presentation of Peru.

Peru (E/2013/58)

Ms. Triveño (Observer for Peru), stated, in her capacity as Minister of Production, that Peru's GDP had increased at an average annual rate of 5.8 per cent between 2000 and 2013, which represented a 70.1 per cent increase in GDP per capita, driven by private investment, mainly in mining, and by brisk international commodities trading. Poverty had been halved over that same period. Despite that growth, the share of the manufacturing sector in GDP had remained virtually unchanged. Statistics showed, however, that the more industrialized a country or a region becomes, the less poverty there is. At the same time, compared with other countries, Peru had filed very few patent applications per capita, which was limiting its possibilities of industrial development. While the country was relatively competitive, it was not innovating as much as it should. Peru invested only 0.14 per cent of its GDP in research and development, compared to an average 0.5 per cent for Latin American countries and an average 2.2 per cent for Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) countries. Only a minor share of such investment came from the private sector and very little of it had to do with manufacturing. Exports were largely (80 per cent) dependent on primary products and natural resources and only rarely involved products with technological content. Only 11 per cent of manufacturing companies had formed ties with universities in 2009-2011 to organize innovation activities. In addition, only 1.5 per cent of employees of industrial enterprises had a university-level degree and most of them had graduated in management studies, not in innovation-related subjects. Progress was, nevertheless, being made: the number of scientific publications and patent applications filed had increased in the past few years and enterprises, while still investing little in basic research, were becoming more interested in innovation and modernization. Science, technology and innovation (STI) policies were being accompanied by major efforts in the education sector, especially with respect to

upgrading career possibilities for teachers, ensuring that children are in good health from the time they enter the school system, improving nutrition in schools, and providing study scholarships and incentives for the return of Peruvian researchers living abroad. In addition, US\$ 426 million in public funds have been set aside to help enterprises become more competitive and investments by companies in the training of technical staff and in research and development are now counted as expenses by the tax authorities.

Mr. Kagawa (Japan), speaking in his capacity as a reviewer, underscored the key part played by STI policies for the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) and sustainable development goals. Peru's achievements in terms of growth and poverty reduction indicated that its model was working. Japan was engaged in a number of cooperation projects in Peru, providing assistance in the areas of energy and innovation infrastructure, management of solid waste, development in the Amazon region, and improvement of disaster management equipment. Mr. Kagawa said he would like to hear more specifics regarding steps taken to overcome the low level of research and development in the private sector and about the areas of activity which Peru intended to prioritize.

Mr. Almeida (Brazil), in his capacity as a reviewer, said he would like to hear details regarding progress made in enhancing access to basic education, health care for pregnant women, and efforts to combat diseases like HIV/AIDS and malaria.

Ms. Cousens (United States of America), in her capacity as a reviewer, asked about the reforms that would be needed in secondary and vocational education to increase productivity and sustain the transition to a knowledge economy. Regarding the technological innovation centres mentioned in the State Party's report, she asked for further details about the way those centres interact with the private sector and the education sector in order to promote innovation. She also wanted to know how Peru identifies the sectors in which the country has a competitive advantage, in such a way as to step up its STI efforts in those areas.

Ms. Triveño (Observer for Peru) said that, in addition to tax authorities' recognition of research and development and vocational training expenses, a measure had recently been adopted that awards tax credits to enterprises providing training for technical staff, as a way of sustaining companies' commitment to research and innovation. As for the way in which competitive sectors are selected, she cited, as an example, Peru's production of a fruit with very high vitamin C content, *myrciaria dubia*, which it exports in large quantities in the form of pulp to Japan, because it lacks the know-how and research and development facilities that enable a country like Japan to manufacture extracts for food products with higher value-added. That is the kind of sector Peru seeks to develop, given its natural resources.

The policy implemented for pregnant women consisted of monetary transfers conditional upon those women going for the essential medical prenatal check-ups and financial assistance for those who resume work once the pregnancy is over. The purpose of technological innovation centres was, on the one hand, to enable the State to invest in certain forms of research that can subsequently be transferred to the private sector and, on the other, to provide standardization services and access to certain types of equipment that small production units lack. In the timber sector, for instance, enterprises in producing regions lack drying ovens and are therefore unable to manufacture products with a higher value-added based on that raw

material. As for standardization, the focus is on projects with a multiplier effect; for instance, public funds have been invested to patent a procedure for making surimi from giant squid that can also be applied to other varieties of shellfish.

The President invited Mr. Amin, Director General of the International Agency for Renewable Forms of Energy, to be the moderator for the national voluntary presentations of Viet Nam and Nigeria.

Viet Nam (E/2013/79)

Mr. Nguyen The Phuong (Observer for Viet Nam), speaking in his capacity as Vice-Minister of Planning and Investment, said that over the past 10 years his country's GDP had grown at an annual average rate of 6.4 per cent, which had enabled Viet Nam to emerge from the group of low-income countries. Viet Nam had achieved most of the Millennium Development Goals. In particular, it had halved the poverty rate as of 2002 and ensured primary education for all as of 2000. In 2006-2010, inequality between boys' and girls' access to education had been eliminated, and considerable progress had been made in reducing child mortality and improving maternal health. In the field of environmental protection, Viet Nam had been actively implementing the Agenda 21 action plan. Efforts made in the areas of science and technology had played an important part both in improving productivity and the competitiveness of the economy and in making headway in all areas relating to the Millennium Development Goals.

Viet Nam was focusing in particular on science, technology and innovation. It had made them a national priority and one of the linchpins of its socio-economic development strategy for 2011-2020. Numerous programmes were under way and each year more than 2 per cent of the national budget was allocated to science and technology. Viet Nam had also established a legal framework aimed at promoting science, technology and innovation, comprising in particular the science and technology act, the technology transfer act and the intellectual property act. Applied science and technology had helped Viet Nam progress from being an importer of basic foodstuffs to one of the world's principal exporters of numerous important agricultural products, such as rice, seafood, and coffee. Viet Nam had also taken advantage of the possibilities opened up by science and technology in health care, education and the environment, especially with a view to achieving the MDGs for those sectors. Nevertheless, compared to other countries, more progress was needed, as its development of science and technology had not sufficed to meet the needs arising from economic growth. Per capita investment in science and technology was still relatively low and the country was short on researchers and highly qualified personnel. Nevertheless, Viet Nam remained determined to honour all its commitments in respect of the Millennium Development Goals and would do so despite all the difficulties it faced, including the consequences of climate change and rising sea-levels — phenomena to which the country was particularly exposed and which were a major source of poverty. Viet Nam wished, in that respect, to benefit from the support of the international community and to step up its cooperation with it, with a view to furthering its implementation of the Millennium Development Goals.

Ms. Kittavong (Observer for the Lao People's Democratic Republic), in her capacity as a reviewer, welcomed the remarkable progress made by Viet Nam in respect of the Millennium Development Goals thanks to a series of judicious

strategies, policies and programmes. They included poverty reduction programmes and policies and macroeconomic policies that had generated numerous jobs and brought millions of people out of poverty; national policies and programmes that had ensured universal access to primary education and the establishment of schools in remote mountainous areas; programmes aimed at promoting gender equality within the framework of socioeconomic development; and programmes designed to ensure ecologically viable socioeconomic growth. As regards science and technology, in particular, the Vietnamese Government had envisaged them playing a decisive role in promoting growth and social development, as evidenced by the implementation of the National Programme for Energy Efficiency and Energy Savings in 2001-2015, the National Programme for the High-Tech Development by 2020, and the 2011-2012 Strategy for the Development of Science and Technology. Despite considerable progress towards achieving the Millennium Development Goals, Viet Nam has to overcome a series of difficulties, including the risk that a large number of households are at risk of relapsing into poverty. It would be interesting, in that regard, to have more information about how the Government plans to solve that problem in the long term. Finally, given that environmental protection and climate change figure on the list of most pressing problems to be faced in the coming years, and in connection with Viet Nam's efforts to achieve the Millennium Development Goals, the Lao People's Democratic Republic suggested that Viet Nam incorporate sustainable development principles in its policies and programmes and that it take climate change issues into account in the key areas of its development efforts.

Mr. Yoo Yeonchul (Republic of Korea), speaking in his capacity as a reviewer, said that Viet Nam was one of the countries that had achieved spectacular successes in recent years. Its entry into the group of middle-income countries in 2010 testified to its Government's and its people's robust commitment to development. However, a series of obstacles were capable of restricting that development, especially inequalities between regions and communities, lack of infrastructure, environmental degradation and governance shortcomings. On cooperation for development matters, the Republic of Korea tailored its policies to meet the needs of the country concerned and was keen to share the experience it had acquired. Thus, it was collaborating with Vietnamese authorities to implement comprehensive health, education, and poverty reduction development programmes in remote rural areas and minority communities. Finally, the Republic of Korea shared Viet Nam's view that science and technology are essential vehicles for development and for reaching the Millennium Development Goals. It was also lending support to the establishment of a Vietnamese Institute of Science and Technology aimed at boosting the country's capacity for multidisciplinary research: a prerequisite for acquiring the scientific and technological skills needed to stimulate growth.

Mr. Juthá (Observer for Mozambique), speaking in his capacity as a reviewer, welcomed the remarkable progress made by Viet Nam towards achieving the Millennium Development Goals thanks to the policies it had pursued, and despite a context of global economic and financial crisis. Mozambique would like to benefit from the experience acquired by Viet Nam and exchange information on most advisable practices, given that the two countries faced very similar challenges, particularly as regards poverty reduction. It was important, above all, to step up actions undertaken in agriculture and telecommunications, so as to help poor populations benefit from available technology. Finally, in light of the MDG target

date of 2015, Mozambique encouraged Viet Nam to expedite the implementation of programmes aimed at achieving the Millennium Development Goals.

Mr. Amin (Moderator) said he thought it was unusual for a country to have a legal framework governing science and technology and would like to hear further details about that, as he wondered whether that factor could play a key role in driving development. It would also be interesting to have more information on Viet Nam's legal framework with respect to intellectual property. Given Viet Nam's marked vulnerability to the effects of climate change, he invited that country's representative to say how Viet Nam was confronting the challenge and what role science and technology were playing in that regard. He said the Vietnamese delegation could also provide some indication of measures undertaken to remedy the country's infrastructure problems.

Mr. Nguyen The Phuong (Observer for Viet Nam) said that his country was one of those most affected by climate change and by rising sea levels. Every year, natural disasters undermined poverty reduction efforts and thwarted efforts to develop agriculture. In response and in order to reduce development inequalities, the Government was implementing the National Programme for the Sustainable Reduction of Poverty 2011-2015. That Programme was directed at the regions hardest hit by climate change and natural disasters, such as the mountainous regions in the North-West, the high central plateaus and the Mekong delta. That Programme was geared in particular to assisting the most vulnerable groups in those regions and ethnic minorities. As for the legal framework governing science, technology and innovation, he explained that it covered all aspects of relevant activities, ranging from research to the implementation of the techniques perfected. Four priority action areas had been selected: biology, automation, new materials, and information and communication. The laws on intellectual property, technology transfers and innovation facilitated and supported social and economic development and were partly a reflection of the growth achieved in recent years, which had freed up resources for poverty reduction. Concerning infrastructure, the 2011-2015 Development Strategy established three priority lines of action: strengthening and development of the institutional framework to render it more effective; implementation of a huge integrated infrastructure grid; and upgrading human resources.

Nigeria (E/2013/64)

Ms. Gbeneol (Nigeria), speaking in her capacity as Special Assistant to the President, described progress made by Nigeria towards achieving the Millennium Development Goals, with respect to poverty reduction; universal basic education; parity; efforts to combat maternal and child mortality; efforts to fight HIV/AIDS and malaria; water and sanitation; and global partnership for development. The principal factors driving the country's success in these areas were: better policies; higher school enrolment rates; economic outcomes; intersectoral cooperation; and the harnessing of science, technology and innovation to serve those goals. The principal obstacles had been very different degrees of engagement on the part of the authorities; a low level of beneficiary involvement; and the effects of climate change.

In allocating the benefits derived from debt relief and conditioned grants, the authorities had striven to reach those most in need. They had resorted to science,

technology and innovation to map poverty in the country, draw up an inventory of basic installations and evaluate needs, in order to improve the targeting of Government interventions. The telecommunication sector had been liberalized. All technical and scientific means had been deployed to deal with drought, floods and other natural disasters. The country's flourishing film industry had also been supported by public funds.

Mr. Simataa (Observer for Namibia), speaking in his capacity as a reviewer, welcomed the impressive progress made by Nigeria towards achieving the Millennium Development Goals, especially those set for health (maternal and child mortality), and the innovative financing strategies put in place for that purpose. Nigeria's actions had been consistent with the priorities established in the agenda for the African continent set forth in the global plan of action for science and technology of the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD) and the difficulties encountered had been similar to those of numerous African countries. Severe deficiencies in the teaching of mathematics and science, exacerbated by the dearth of infrastructure in those fields, explained the shortage of qualified researchers and scientists. National innovation systems on a continental scale could well be the way to fix that problem. Nigeria had the will and necessary political commitment to overcome obstacles and help sister nations, like Namibia, benefit from its exemplary success.

Mr. Shearman (United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland), speaking in his capacity as a reviewer, said that his country was determined to continue supporting Nigeria within the close bilateral cooperation already in place. The size, momentum, and other features of the country gave added importance to the progress it was achieving, which needed to be maintained and even expedited, particularly in the area of water and sanitation. He asked for further details on lessons drawn from the success of the telecommunication sector, which Nigeria could apply to other sectors of major importance for social, economic, and environmental development, such as agriculture. He would also like to know what steps Nigeria intended to take to improve the reliability of its national statistical data. He was interested in ascertaining how results achieved in one State impact and are used by other States in the Federation, and in measures taken to deal in a sustainable manner with the causes of poverty, including natural disasters, environmental pressures and insecurity. Finally, he asked what steps were being envisaged to deal with a number of issues relating to culture and behavioural patterns such as premature marriage and the preference given to the education of boys.

Mr. Amin (Moderator) enquired about the rationale for the new shift in the country's energy strategy, which would now be geared to renewable forms of energy, rather than oil. Noting the spectacular advances made in access to telephone services in Nigeria, he asked how the Nigerian Government saw the role of innovation in the area of telecommunications, as a driving force behind the future growth of the national economy. He wanted to know whether the film industry was really in a position to alter people's behaviour and raise awareness of the difficulties encountered in meeting the Millennium Development Goals, or whether it was really about entertainment.

Ms. Gbeneol (Nigeria) said that a decision had been taken to diversify national output, which was solely geared to petroleum, and to have recourse to

scientific and technological innovation to develop agriculture and provide the population, thanks to solar energy, with ecologically rational means to earn income. The flourishing telecommunication sector had generated a large number of jobs. It was also a vehicle for progress; for instance, the Federal Ministry of Agriculture used short message services (SMS) to direct farmers to the nearest place for them to buy seeds and quality fertilizers. The video film industry was beautiful and well used to convey public health messages; it also generated jobs for young people and helped fight poverty, thereby contributing to the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals. Endowed with the necessary funds, the National Bureau of Statistics produced reliable and usable data. Finally, the public pair review mechanisms of the Nigeria Governors' Forum was a way of sharing best practices and conducting joint research, at its monthly meetings, into ways of advancing in concert and overcoming regional inequalities.

The meeting rose at 6.05 p.m.