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Held at the Palais des Nations, Geneva, on Thursday, 4 July 2013, at 3 p.m.

President: Mr. Osario (Colombia)

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

Thematic debate: The contribution of the Economic and Social Council to the elaboration of the post-2015 development agenda as a principal body for policy review, policy dialogue and recommendations on issues of economic and social development and for the follow-up to the Millennium Development Goals (*continued*)

Roundtable II: "Follow-up to the post-2015 development agenda"

The President invited Mr. Steven, Associate Director at the Center for International Cooperation of New York University (United States of America) to moderate the thematic debate.

Mr. Getahun (Ethiopia) said that the Council would act as a catalyst in the preparation of the post-2015 development agenda and in the redefinition of the global partnership for development, which should constitute one of its top priorities. Given that prospect, the Council should bear the following considerations in mind. First, in connection with a revamped global partnership, provision should be made for harmonized ways of delivering development assistance and for effective accountability mechanisms. That partnership should be geared to financing, trade, debt relief, science and technology. Second, it was of the utmost importance to establish economic and financial conditions conducive to sustainable development for all. Third, that global partnership should to a large extent rely on official development assistance (ODA). In that regard, it was important that donor countries honour their commitment to allocate 0.7 per cent of their gross domestic product (GDP) to development. Fourth, current ways of delivering ODA, the principles upon which it is based and the conditions associated with it needed to be reviewed. In particular, the Council should strive to ensure that additional conditions are not imposed on developing countries. Fifth, the Council should take steps to ensure that the principles governing South-South cooperation are integrated into that global partnership and taken into account in the framework of North-South cooperation. Those principles were: alignment with local priorities, swift completion of projects and the non-imposition of terms. Sixth, that revamped global partnership should aim to achieve greater consistency in development policies, economic stability and more equitable global governance. It should also leave developing countries

more leeway. Seventh, the Council should proceed to combine all commitments in a single framework in order to alleviate the burden for countries of having to produce reports for each commitment and to avoid the impression of confusion created by those reports' multiple conclusions. Eighth, the partnerships formed should stress complementarity and the sharing of knowledge and information. Finally, the Council should continue to promote full implementation of the commitments undertaken by the international community.

Mr. McArthur (Fung Global Institute and Brookings Institution) said that the international community needed to establish clear priorities in the allocation of ODA, determine in which sector additional sources of financing will be necessary and show proof of creativity in the quest for those sources.

Ms. Fischler (Catholic Fund for Overseas Development — CAFOD) said that, given the increasing part they played in development projects, private enterprises needed to become more responsible players and be obliged to account transparently for their activities, including any social and environmental incidents associated with them.

Mr. Dahinden (Switzerland) said that, with respect to sustainable development, the member states of the United Nations had opted for a hybrid institutional model, in which the High-level Political Forum offered guidelines and recommendations and followed up on progress made, while the Council remained the principal body responsible for implementing operational development activities. Everyone agreed on the need to strengthen the Council and enable it to perform its coordination function within the United Nations system and ensure harmonious integration of the three — economic, environmental and social — pillars of sustainable development. From that perspective, and given the part that the Council would play in following up on implementation of the post-2015 development agenda, Switzerland deemed it advisable to keep two considerations in mind. On the one hand, it was important to begin by reaching agreement on a shared vision of what the new development framework is expected to accomplish and to establish joint objectives. On the other, since the United Nations system as a whole and all the entities it comprises are called upon to play an essential part in bringing that shared vision to fruition, it was important to avoid

duplication and to define the functions of the various bodies involved before determining how they should act. Furthermore, it would be advisable to establish the objective of the post-2015 development agenda before discussing the reform of the Council. The Council would play a prominent part in following up on implementation of the quadrennial comprehensive policy review of the United Nations operational development activities and on achievement of the targets set, and in seeing to it that the United Nations operating system functions as effectively as possible. However, to ensure that the system functions smoothly, it would be wise to associate the United Nations specialized institutions with the reform process, including those not formally involved with the quadrennial comprehensive review.

Mr. Getahun (Ethiopia) said that the member states should be the principal players in coordination activities conducted by the Council.

Ms. Fischler (CAFOD) proposed that the Council strengthen the Statistical Commission and support its work at the international, regional and national levels because relevant statistics would be needed to lend weight to the shared vision to be developed.

Mr. McArthur (Fung Global Institute and Brookings Institution) said that, although much progress in that direction had been made, the international community did not have at its disposal a global development system geared to objectives, in which those objectives framed the approach of the institution responsible for achieving them. In reality, many institutions are not conceived to attain the objectives assigned to them. Ultimately, the biggest structural problem found is that the resources allocated do not match the targets set. Very few countries have devised a strategy that is ambitious enough to achieve the objectives established at the international level, while the international development system institutions are not really used to identify each country's funding shortfalls and plug the gap. Ideally, every commitment, be it financial, institutional, or of some other nature, should have a five-year expiration date, with check-ups being performed at each stage on the way. In addition, multilateral institutions should be subject to periodic evaluations, an area in which the Council could play a leading part. It was also advisable to bear in mind that the objectives planned for post-2015 were of three kinds: first, objectives that one might describe as

universal and absolute, that have to do with observance of minimum standards shared by humanity as a whole; second, country-specific objectives. Here it would probably be necessary to establish a set of shared priorities, from which these objectives would be derived. The Council would play a part in that process, while the United Nations regional institutions could help organize peer reviews of the progress made toward those objectives. The third type of objectives planned were shared objectives, which mainly related to the environment and were furthest away from realisation.

Ms. Fischler (CAFOD) said that, in order to assess progress made toward the achievement of shared and national objectives, shared indicators were needed, as that was the only way one could make comparisons between countries, regions and sectors.

Mr. Dahinden (Switzerland) doubted whether it was possible to squeeze reality into a model, fit it into a system and then try and modify it using methods planned in advance. While broad objectives were indeed important, the system set up needed to be open and flexible.

Mr. McArthur (Fung Global Institute and Brookings Institution) said that in numerous cases no care had been taken to ascertain whether strategies adopted and the resources mobilized were really suited to the pursuit of objective chosen. In financing, for example, projections were not made to determine whether the resources mobilized would really make it possible to accomplish the ambitions expressed. While it was true that not everything could be foreseen and calculated in advance, there was something to be said for drawing lessons from experience acquired in order to make the instruments used somewhat more likely to do their job.

Mr. Getahun (Ethiopia) said it was important to continue striving to find innovative sources of financing and to strengthen and support partnerships such as the Global Alliances for Vaccines and Immunizations, which had saved numerous lives.

Ms. Fischler (CAFOD), said, regarding the role of the various different stakeholders in a post-2015 context, that more account needed to be taken of the private sector, given that small and micro-enterprises provided 90 per cent of jobs in poor countries and should be the subject of better funded programmes. In university circles, the interests of the least advantaged

should be a priority; approaches such as participatory research were proving to be highly promising for measuring poverty on the ground. Civil society would benefit from swifter and more open accreditation and from enhanced participation of the United Nations in the processes involved, including at the decision-making stage. The resources of the United Nations Non-Governmental Liaison Service (UN-NGLS) could be increased.

Mr. McArthur (Fung Global Institute and Brookings Institution) said that a review of influential publications over 10 years from 2002 on showed that while the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) were mentioned more than 1,000 times in health and medical journals, they were mentioned fewer than 10 times in economic journals and hardly at all in economic development journals. In future, the Economic and Social Council could disseminate theoretical discussions and especially economists' contributions to it.

Mr. Dahinden (Switzerland) underscored the important role of civil society, which was not restricted to criticism. Rather it helped governments reflect and achieve better outcomes. The future development framework should recognize that role.

Ms. Saeed Alsaleh (League of Arab States) stressed the importance of the Economic and Social Council as a coordination mechanism that takes the priorities and particular circumstances of different regions into account, while at the same time ensuring a degree of consistency. The Arab region had organized forums on the roles of civil society and the private sector in development and with respect to humanitarian assistance and disaster relief. In addition, as recent events had shown in Arab countries where the people were clamouring for change, it was important that good governance should figure in the future development goals framework.

Mr. Rudischhauser (European Commission) said that strengthening the Economic and Social Council should facilitate greater synergy with the High-level Political Forum on Sustainable Development. The post-2015 framework should, in the European Union's view, integrate poverty eradication and sustainable development in a comprehensive and coherent manner. The new post-2015 global partnership needed to be founded upon the solidarity, cooperation and accountability of all the players involved. The new

challenges required stronger review and follow-up mechanisms and the Commission therefore welcomed the Secretary-General's proposals along those lines. As for financing, the term "developing country" referred to many different realities and it was important, in the context of a truly global partnership, that the more prosperous countries assume their share of responsibility for helping the poorest countries. Furthermore, official development assistance needed to be directed in particular at the countries that needed it most, that is to say, low-income countries.

Mr. Olaniran (Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations — FAO) recalled the outcomes of the Post-2015 Global Thematic Consultation on Hunger, Food Security and Nutrition. The preparations for that Consultation had brought together players from around the globe. The Consultation had underlined that steps taken to combat hunger and poverty in rural areas by sustainable agriculture and food systems could have major impacts on the economy, equitable growth, the reduction of inequalities, social development and environmental protection. Participants had also noted the reform of the Committee on World Food Security, the leading international and intergovernmental body for food security and nutrition issues, and had approved a number of strategic and guiding principles proposed by the Committee regarding various aspects of those issues. The Committee had also helped ensure that agriculture was taken into account in the debate on climate change. It was important to include a cross-cutting approach to major issues in the post-2015 development agenda.

Interactive debate

Ms. Mxakato-Diseko (South Africa) said that for the next two years achieving the Millennium Development Goals by 2015 was still a top development priority. While welcoming the initiatives under way to forge the post-2015 United Nations development framework, the South African delegation wished to draw attention to the effort needed to achieve the MDGs on time. It relied on the Council to ensure that the immediate development needs of developing countries and of the United Nations system were not lost sight of. It was likewise important to bear in mind, in the debate about the post-2015 agenda, the development objectives already adopted by the United Nations, including the MDGs, the other development objectives on which international agreement had been

reached, and the final documents produced at major conferences and summits. Finally, South Africa wanted the post-2015 framework to strengthen existing regional initiatives, especially the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD).

Mr. Asayesh (Iran) said that the goals to follow on from the MDGs should not just state ends, but also indicate the means to attain them. The goal preparation process needed to be participatory and member state-based. To establish a global framework conducive to sustainable development, one had to look for ways to improve and reform the current global economic and financial system, particularly in the light of the global financial crisis and its impacts on development. The room for manoeuvre left to developing countries was another key aspect. The role of the development-minded State was crucial for achieving the development goals; a responsible private sector could supplement the State's work and help it achieve those goals.

Ms. Padilla Rodríguez (Mexico) said that the post-2015 development agenda needed to be universal, endowed with a single set of goals, and built around the three dimensions of sustainable development. The inequalities issue had to be at the heart of the agenda, and the international migration issue, focusing on the rights of migrants, needed to be high up on the agenda as well. The Council should continue to be the principal body for integrating and monitoring the post-2015 agenda. The Mexican delegation raised the issue of concrete measures conducive to ensuring that decisions were taken that had the necessary funding and the necessary scientific backing.

Mr. Vasiliev (Russian Federation) said that the post-2015 development agenda had to be socioeconomically well structured and had to incorporate the notion of sustainable development. One of the principal tasks, namely setting a reasonable number of priorities, was not easy, given each country's preferences. For its part, the Russian Federation set great store by the goals of sustainable transportation and combating communicable diseases. It was even more difficult to agree on indicators and there the Russian delegation relied on the support of the United Nations system institutions, which had the experience, skills and information needed.

Ms. Bibalou (Gabon) was glad that such a resounding call had been made during the meeting to

the world's leaders to reaffirm, with reservations, the commitments and responsibilities they had taken on with respect not only to official development assistance but also to achievement of the Millennium Development Goals. Now it was a matter of translating intentions into action and of focusing on strengthening partnerships. Bearing in mind the universal nature of sustainable development goals, it will be up to each country to set the targets best suited to its national priorities. The Gabonese delegation welcomed the establishment of the High-level Political Forum on Sustainable Development and seconded the statement made by the representative of Belgium on the matter of the role of the Economic and Social Council.

Mr. Oguntuyi (Nigeria) attached special priority to the goals of eradicating poverty and hunger and improving sanitation in the post-2015 development agenda. Thanks to its interdisciplinary dimension and intersectoral approach, the Economic and Social Council was the body best positioned to coordinate and follow up on the activities conducted in the framework of that agenda.

Mr. Grande (International Telecommunication Union — ITU) pointed out that the availability and affordability of information and telecommunication technologies, especially mobile and broadband telephony helped integrate marginalized populations into an information- and knowledge-based global economy. The ITU strongly urged the Council to place information and communication technologies high on the post-2015 development agenda.

Ms. Fischler (CAFOD) said it was very important to acquire the means of determining the priorities of the individuals who would be the ultimate beneficiaries of the agenda and to have a scientific basis for the measures adopted. She pointed to solidarity as the basis for effective multilateralism.

Mr. McArthur (Fung Global Institute and Brookings Institution) envisaged two way of proceeding from now on, namely: establishing global environmental goals, starting with scientific analysis and subsequently conducting evaluations, or else opting for a more experimental approach, focusing on five thematic areas. An independent assessment would be carried out and reasonable targets established. It was vital to have a proper mechanism for passing on the information from evaluations. Mr. McArthur drew attention to the need to duly celebrate the fact that the

United Kingdom — the first member of the G7 to honour its commitment — would, by the end of the year, meet the target of 0.7 per cent of its GDP devoted to official development assistance, thereby proving to detractors that by taking appropriate political decisions and conducting the necessary consultations, it was possible to get to that point. Mr. McArthur concluded by saying that account had to be taken of what the public regarded as its priorities and to ensure the necessary support of the country's financial authorities.

Mr. Getahun (Ethiopia) insisted on the need to bridge the digital divide. He reminded the international community that it needed to honour the commitments undertaken and combat extreme poverty through national policies, but also through international assistance in the form of financing. The Council had a leading role to play in that regard, by ensuring coordination and consistency in those efforts and seeing that funding was available and predictable.

Mr. Dahinden (Switzerland) regretted that scientific facts were not structured in such a way as to facilitate policy formulation and changes in behaviour. It would be worthwhile to ponder ways of making better use of scientific knowledge and innovation in order to make progress. Welcoming the convergence of views that had arisen from the discussions, he deemed it important that they continue through to 2015 with the same frankness they had shown until now.

Mr. Steven (Moderator) drew attention to the magnitude of the task awaiting the Council. Sustainable development goals were in a way more difficult to perfect and keep to than the Millennium Development Goals, and the strategies to be implemented were very different. But, above all, the Council had to be capable of offering a vision for the future and of seeing that it is properly implemented.

The meeting was suspended at 5:35 p.m. and resumed at 5:50 p.m.

The President announced that the high-level debate was suspended pending agreement on the text of the ministerial declaration.

The meeting adjourned at 5:55 p.m.