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Chair: Mr. Cardi (Italy)

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

General debate (*continued*)

1. **Ms. Koleva** (Bulgaria), speaking on behalf of the Bulgarian youth, said that while people between the ages of 10 and 24 represented one-quarter of the world's population, they did not participate in decision-making in any way. Young people were three times likelier than adults to be unemployed, and one in six was neither employed nor receiving education or training. As a result, growing numbers of youth were being forced to take unskilled jobs to survive. She therefore called on Governments to support both formal and non-formal education, with an explicit focus on entrepreneurial and leadership skills.

2. Full participation of young people in the post-2015 development agenda was essential; young people should be included in decision-making processes. Accordingly, she called for an inclusive post-2015 development agenda based on human rights.

3. Going forward, human rights should be an integral part of sustainable development. The new development agenda should benefit and involve all persons, including the most marginalized and vulnerable groups; persons with disabilities should also be included in all aspects of development. Young people should be given the opportunity to take an active part, for without the full and equal participation of young people in the decision-making processes all over the world there could be no peace and no prosperity.

4. **Mr. Suveinakama** (Fiji) said that the Small Island Developing States Accelerated Modalities of Action (Samoa Pathway) provided a crucial vision for sustainable development, in particular with respect to the social, economic and environmental challenges facing small island developing States. The partnerships envisioned between the international community and small island countries like his own could take the unfinished business of the Barbados Programme of Action and the Mauritius Strategy Initiative to the next level by mainstreaming the three dimensions of sustainable development into the work of the United Nations system. In that regard, his delegation looked forward to the third International Conference on Financing for Development and hoped that implementation of the Samoa Pathway would be

incorporated into the emerging sustainable development agenda.

5. Fiji depended on a healthy marine environment for key development sectors, including tourism, transport and fisheries. However, conservation and the sustainable management of marine resources was not only an issue for the ocean States; it was also a critical part of the global commons. Ocean degradation was increasing at an alarming rate, posing a significant threat to biodiversity and sustainable development. The solution required a global approach through the post-2015 development agenda, with a specific stand-alone goal on oceans and seas and one on climate change.

6. Finally, greater attention to the United Nations agencies tasked with implementation was required to ensure that their work programmes served the interests of the developing countries. For small island developing States, the new agenda would be meaningful only if accompanied by a cohesive financial structure and by mechanisms to monitor, evaluate and report on the implementation of the agreed goals.

7. **Ms. Alshamsi** (United Arab Emirates) said that it was important to focus on poverty eradication and to be mindful of the needs of the African continent and developing countries with special circumstances. The report of the Open Working Group on Sustainable Development Goals should be the basis for the incorporation of such goals into the post-2015 development agenda. She urged the developed countries to fulfil their commitments on helping developing countries adapt to climate change and to honour the pledges made at Monterrey in 2002 and at Doha in 2008. She also stressed the importance of empowering women to take part in all aspects of development.

8. She reiterated her country's support for the inalienable right of the Palestinian people to the use of its resources in an independent State based on the borders of 1967, with East Jerusalem as its capital, and called on the international community to provide the necessary assistance to the Palestinian Authority for the reconstruction of its economic and social institutions.

9. **Ms. Aljazi** (Jordan) welcomed the report of the Open Working Group, which would be a vital document for the forthcoming discussions on the post-2015 development agenda. In that regard, it was

important to address the loopholes of the current Millennium Development Goals and build on lessons learned.

10. The eradication of poverty should be the core goal of the new agenda and would allow the international community to better respond to the changes that had taken place since the adoption of the Millennium Development Goals. Financing for development would be another central element of the discussions. Her delegation expected the third International Conference on Financing for Development to play a key role in assessing the implementation of both the Monterrey Consensus and the Doha Declaration.

11. Climate change had emerged as one of the most challenging problems that could undermine the drive for sustainable development. Her delegation believed that the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change and the Kyoto Protocol should remain the core multilateral framework for addressing climate change issues and, in that connection, it hoped that the upcoming conferences to be held in Lima and Paris would result in a legally binding agreement with concrete commitments to address the impacts of climate change.

12. **Mr. Dennis** (Liberia), speaking on behalf of the Mano River Union countries, namely Côte d'Ivoire, Guinea, Sierra Leone and Liberia, said that although they, together with international partners, had taken bold steps to build a sustainable future for their people, their fragile post-conflict economies were being threatened by the outbreak of the Ebola pandemic. The latter had already taken a huge toll on health workers and health systems in the affected countries and was undermining their ability to adequately respond not only to Ebola but to other illnesses and beginning to impact their growth and development prospects. They therefore welcomed the adoption of Security Council resolution 2177 (2014) and General Assembly resolution 69/1, and they applauded the Secretary-General's initiative in establishing the first United Nations emergency health mission, the United Nations Mission for Ebola Emergency Response. It was important to note that they had not brought the current outbreak of Ebola upon themselves, and that it had come at a time when they were in the process of rebuilding their infrastructure and consolidating their democracies.

13. The Millennium Development Goals had been the largest, most successful anti-poverty push in history. As efforts to meet those goals intensified ahead of 2015, it was important to assess their crucial gains, including in such areas as global poverty reduction, expanded access to potable water, greater access to universal primary education, lower child and maternal mortality, improved access to HIV treatment and reduction of slum populations. It was also important to acknowledge the failure to achieve some goals and uneven progress on others, which could undermine gains made elsewhere. Discussions for the post-2015 development agenda needed to take into account the sustainable development needs of small island developing States, among others, and to ensure that a comprehensive financing framework was incorporated into the new architecture. In that regard, the new agenda should reflect the diversity of national circumstances.

14. **Ms. Brennen-Haylock** (Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO)), also speaking on behalf of the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD) and the World Food Programme (WFP), said that figures from the latest State of Food Insecurity report, jointly published by the three Rome-based agencies, showed that the hunger target of Millennium Development Goal 1, namely, halving the world's undernourished population by 2015, was now within reach. There had been a drop of more than 100 million in the number of people chronically undernourished over the past decade.

15. However, enormous disparities remained across regions and within countries. The current report provided clear evidence that increased growth and rising incomes did not proportionately correlate with improved food security and nutrition, for while the number of people living in extreme poverty had been more than halved between 1990 and 2010, the number of undernourished had fallen by only 20 per cent.

16. A zero hunger world would require sustained political commitment at the highest level and an integrated approach that addressed, inter alia, investments to increase agricultural productivity and reduce all forms of malnutrition; better access to inputs, land, services, technologies and markets, especially for smallholders; measures to promote rural development; social protection for the most vulnerable; and recognition of the growing challenges posed by climate change. The climate-smart agriculture initiative

launched during the recent Climate Change Summit was an example of such a comprehensive approach; moreover, it built on sustainable agricultural practices developed by farmers in both developed and developing countries.

17. In fact, smallholder farmers were on the frontlines of climate change. Increased and more strategic investment in rural populations, providing them with access to weather information, institutional networks, finance and adaptation technologies, would help unleash their potential to feed the planet while also restoring degraded ecosystems and reducing the carbon footprint of agriculture.

18. That had been the thinking behind such initiatives as IFAD's Adaptation for Smallholder Agriculture Programme, WFP's Food Security Climate Resilience Facility and FAO's Global Blue Growth Initiative, all of which placed income growth, food security and nutrition within the context of climate change.

19. Investing in adequate social protection mechanisms, including nutrition-sensitive safety net programmes, was key to promoting sustainable and inclusive development and crisis response. Investment in agriculture, in particular in family farming, could benefit everyone, especially the poor.

20. **Mr. Ahmed** (United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP)) said that the inaugural session of the United Nations Environment Assembly of UNEP had reaffirmed the importance of fully integrating the environmental dimension throughout the development agenda. The report of the Open Working Group on Sustainable Development had echoed that message, as had the ministerial declaration of the Economic and Social Council high-level political forum, which stressed the importance of sustainable consumption and production as a central component of the emerging sustainable development agenda.

21. Some of the environmental issues the Assembly had addressed, included illegal trade in wildlife, air quality, chemicals and waste, marine debris, science policy interface and ecosystem-based adaptation. Recently enhanced or new mandates entrusted to UNEP included joint work with other United Nations system agencies and stakeholders, as well as with the Climate Technology Centre and Network, the Climate and Clean Air Coalition, the Intergovernmental Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystems Services and the Minamata Convention on Mercury. Among the

most critical environmental challenges facing mankind, he singled out air pollution, which was responsible for some 7 million fatalities a year.

22. The Committee's deliberations presented concrete opportunities to further mainstream the integration of environmental sustainability and economic growth and social progress within the work of the United Nations system. In addition to facilitating the elaboration of global instruments that would support the post-2015 development agenda, UNEP was working on a host of interagency initiatives designed to advance national strategies to generate green jobs and skills, promote clean technologies and reduce environmental risks and poverty.

23. Finally, he stressed the importance of system-wide efforts to sustain and improve support for the small island developing States through durable partnerships.

24. **Ms. Christensen** (International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC)) said that, despite progress in many spheres, poverty levels and hunger remained unacceptably high. Nearly 2.5 billion people lacked access to basic sanitation and more than 800 million went to bed hungry every night.

25. As work began on the final phase of preparations for the process to shape the post-2015 development agenda, it was vital to keep in mind the critical connection between disaster risk and poverty eradication. The combination of urbanization and climate change was threatening to overturn years of progress, especially in the most vulnerable countries, where disasters were increasing in frequency and intensity. It was therefore critical to build disaster resiliency into the post-2015 agenda.

26. Her organization therefore welcomed the report of the Open Working Group, which reflected that concern. While recognizing that there were varying views on whether goals and targets should be consolidated or reduced, it strongly urged that the substance of all resilience targets should remain in the final version of the sustainable development goals. It was critical that a target on disaster risk reduction, such as target 1.5, remain as part of the goal of poverty eradication. The IFRC had been a key partner in the implementation of the Hyogo Framework for Action and its 189 national societies continued to work with their governments to ensure that local communities were prepared for — and responded to — disasters.

27. The links between humanitarian and development interventions must be recognized and built into the post-2015 agenda; previous drafts had included targets for addressing the impact of food emergencies and the situation of refugees and internally displaced persons but they had been dropped from the text. Given the burden that these crises placed on host countries, it was vital that such targets be reinstated.

28. The IFRC was pleased to see that the Working Group report included strong targets on such issues as universal health coverage and maternal and child health and it called for those targets to be maintained in the final version of the sustainable development goals.

29. Finally, the IFRC hoped that Member States would reach a legally binding agreement on climate change by December 2015.

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30. **The Chair** said that a number of the suggestions contained in the non-paper put together by the Bureau of the sixty-eighth session had already been acted upon. Suggestions made at the current meeting and any additional suggestions that were submitted in writing would be reflected in a summary so as to assist the Committee in its discussions on how to further improve its work.

31. **Ms. Pirouz Poulsen** (Observer for the European Union), speaking on behalf of the European Union and its member States; the candidate countries Albania, Iceland, Montenegro, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia and Serbia; the stabilization and association process country Bosnia and Herzegovina; and, in addition, Armenia, Georgia, Liechtenstein, the Republic of Moldova and Ukraine, said that the Committee should not duplicate or pre-empt ongoing substantive negotiations on the post-2015 development agenda. Resolutions on issues that were being covered in parallel intergovernmental processes should be purely procedural updates.

32. The European Union supported proposals to counter the tendency towards proliferation of repetitive resolutions, including through biennialization or triennialization of certain resolutions and the combining of some resolutions into omnibus resolutions. Any resolution proclaiming new international days should be in line with the corresponding Economic and Social

Council guidelines, including the need to ensure that financing for such proclamations was available before they were adopted.

33. Finally, the European Union urged the Bureau to impart a sense of urgency about deadlines. If no agreement could be reached by the appointed deadline then the resolution in question should be purely procedural; moreover, there should be clear procedures for the extension of deadlines. Moreover, while respecting the mandate of the Fifth Committee with regard to budget issues, the Bureau should also take up with the Secretariat the issue of providing delegations with basic information on cost implications.

34. **Ms. Whyte** (Barbados), speaking on behalf of the Caribbean Community (CARICOM), said that the work of the Committee required a balance between timeliness and predictability, and that it was important to keep in mind the prerogative of Member States to bring issues to the table. Many of the organizational proposals that had been put on the table had substantive implications.

35. Her delegation supported the measures outlined in the first part of the Bureau's non-paper that would allow for focused and timely consideration of draft resolutions. Any proposal for streamlining agenda items should have a substantive basis. Proposals for biennialization or triennialization of particular resolutions should be considered carefully in conjunction with the sponsors. Given the experience of the previous session, her delegation fully endorsed the proposal to provide clear guidelines on programme budget implications in a manner that did not encroach on the mandate of the Fifth Committee. Negotiations should not be held up by requests for information that could not be provided in a timely fashion.

36. Given that the work of the United Nations was unfolding within a context that was ever-changing, it might be best to wait until after the adoption of the post-2015 development agenda before changing the manner in which items were clustered on the agenda. CARICOM welcomed the increased collaboration between the Committee and the Economic and Social Council. Close collaboration with the Third Committee was also extremely important, and joint meetings should occasionally be convened.

37. **Ms. von Steiger** (Switzerland) said that her delegation supported the recommendations contained in the Bureau's non-paper. In recent years there had

been a proliferation of resolutions, in particular on issues relating to the Rio+20 outcome; combining or re-clustering certain resolutions would put the Committee in a better position to contribute to the post-2015 development agenda. Just as the sixty-sixth session had focused on procedural resolutions while awaiting the outcome of Rio+20, so should the current session focus on procedural resolutions while awaiting the finalization of the post-2015 development agenda.

38. **Mr. Carey** (United States of America), noting that the current session was taking place against the background of a rush of concurrent processes, dialogues and conferences, including the post-2015 development agenda negotiations, said that there were a number of measures that could be taken to avoid confusion and duplication of effort. The Bureau had already circulated the programme of work early, rearranged the calendar to reflect likely workloads, and circulated guidelines for the submission of draft proposals that included strict deadlines. His delegation supported the suggestion that facilitators be given guidance on how to respond to questions about programme budget implications without impinging on the mandate of the Fifth Committee. Streamlining the number of resolutions that covered related topics could yield immediate gains in efficiency for the current session. Discussion of biennialization or triennialization of certain resolutions or restructuring of agenda items might best be left until after conclusion of the post-2015 development agenda.

39. **Ms. Jonsdottir** (Iceland) said that it would be useful for a list of high-level officials and experts presenting reports under the various agenda items to be made available annually before the start of the Committee's work, as was done in the Third and Fifth Committees.

40. **Mr. Usui** (Japan) said that the Committee should avoid duplication and prejudging of the outcome of parallel processes. A number of reforms, such as streamlining of the agenda and clustering of certain agenda items, might also be helpful.

41. **Mr. Grant** (Canada) said that it was essential that the Committee should not disrupt, pre-empt or otherwise replicate the work of the intergovernmental negotiation process. The best way to ensure that resolutions of the Committee were not used to prejudice the outcome of that process was to rely on procedural resolutions in areas related to the post-2015

agenda negotiations or subjects being addressed at the numerous international conferences that were scheduled to take place before the end of 2015.

42. There were a number of measures that could be taken immediately to improve the effectiveness of the Committee's work. It would be helpful if, as was done in the Third Committee, all draft resolutions highlighted new language in bold typeface. Resolutions under a single agenda item could be staggered in order to promote a more balanced workload. Strict adherence to the Bureau's deadlines would allow the Committee to conclude its work on schedule, and greater use of the QuickPlace portal would advance the Committee towards its goal of becoming paperless. There should also be greater communication with the Budget Office to ensure that budget implications of resolutions were identified as early as possible in the negotiation process.

43. **Ms. Lim** (Singapore) said that Member States should try to make their statements concise and should upload the full versions to the PaperSmart portal, and draft resolutions should be circulated as early as possible. The Committee should follow the example of the Third and Fourth Committees and dispense with the general debate, thereby allowing more time for negotiations on specific items. She also expressed support for the proposal to combine more issues under the "sustainable development" agenda item.

The meeting rose at 4.35 p.m.