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President: Mr. Oh Joon (Vice-President) (Republic of Korea)

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In the absence of Mr. Sajdik (Austria), Mr. Oh Joon (Republic of Korea), Vice-President, took the Chair.

The meeting was called to order at 9.40 a.m.

Opening of the high-level segment

1. **The President** declared open the high-level segment of the 2015 session of the Economic and Social Council, including the three-day ministerial meeting of the high-level political forum on sustainable development, which was being held in parallel with the ministerial dialogue of the high-level political forum on sustainable development.

Statement by the President

- 2. The President said that the international community had a responsibility to make a new start in the effort to eradicate extreme poverty and to give the poorest and most vulnerable in all corners of the world the chance to live a life of dignity. Implementing a universal, transformational and people-centred agenda required a change in mindset, because business as usual was not an option. The Council and the high-level political forum had a responsibility to contribute to the process that will chart the way for the next 15 years and beyond.
- 3. The current meeting was taking place at a time when negotiations were being conducted on the post-2015 development agenda and on the outcome for the third International Conference on Financing for Development. Negotiators were looking to the Council and the high-level political forum for guidance on the framework for the implementation of sustainable development and poverty eradication. It was therefore important to hear views and proposals on how the forum could best be utilized in the architecture for the implementation, follow-up and review of the post-2015 development agenda. The high-level political forum should be the apex of that architecture.
- 4. The Council should consider how to build on strong foundations to generate tangible ideas and proposals that could strengthen the United Nations and improve the well-being of people everywhere. An integral part of implementing the new agenda was to ensure that the high-level political forum was successful. The forum needed to prove itself as the vibrant new platform for a strong science-policy interface and innovation. While working with existing institutions, it should bring new dynamism and lead in

- changing the "business as usual" pattern. It should provide political leadership and guidance for sustainable development to follow up and review progress made in the implementation of commitments.
- 5. All stakeholders the private sector, civil society, parliaments, academia and philanthropic organizations should work in collaboration the Council and the forum to deliver on the post-2015 development agenda. Communicating that agenda effectively would require engaging all citizens and other stakeholders in common efforts to achieve the international community's aspirations. The high-level political forum, the General Assembly, the Council and the entire United Nations system should be used to maintain the focus on and enrich the policies for implementation of the exceptional and ambitious agenda to be adopted by world leaders in September 2015.

Statement by the President of the General Assembly

- 6. **Mr. Kutesa** (President of the General Assembly) said that the meeting was taking place at a critical juncture when a new universal framework for guiding development efforts for the next 15 years was being formulated. Member States and all stakeholders had a collective responsibility to ensure that the post-2015 development agenda was ambitious, inclusive and transformative. The core objectives of the proposed sustainable development goals that would form the central component of the new agenda were eradicating poverty, improving livelihoods for all and achieving sustainable development in its social, economic and environmental dimensions.
- Efforts should be redoubled to bring the negotiations on the agenda to a successful conclusion, and adequate resources should be mobilized to implement it. A successful outcome at the third International Conference on Financing for Development was therefore necessary. Given the scale of ambition reflected in the agenda, increased resources from all sources — public and private, domestic and international — would be required. The global partnership for development in support of developing countries, particularly the least developed countries, landlocked developing countries, small developing States and African countries, also needed to be renewed and enhanced.

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- 8. Efforts to improve the socioeconomic welfare of all should take into account the need to protect the environment and the planet. It was expected that, at the twenty-first Conference of the Parties on Climate Change, to be held in Paris in December 2015, Governments would adopt a universal and meaningful climate change agreement. It was obvious why successful outcomes from all of such processes would be critical to achieving sustainable development and to putting the world on a safer, more equitable and sustainable pathway. Great effort would be required to ensure that the post-2015 agenda was incorporated into national development plans and implemented at all levels, and that it was accompanied by a robust follow-up and review framework.
- The overall theme of the forum for 2015, "Strengthening integration, implementation review — the high-level political forum after 2015", offered an opportunity to discuss the elements of a comprehensive, effective, participatory and inclusive implementation structure. Deliberations at the 2015 session would deepen understanding of critical issues related to the agenda and the vital role that the forum could play in ensuring that the agenda was understood, communicated and implemented achieved by all relevant actors. In its coordinating role, the forum would track progress and build on experiences with existing national, regional and global review networks and mechanisms to promote coherence and effective implementation.
- 10. During the current session of the General Assembly, he had convened a series of high-level thematic debates and events designed to contribute to the post-2015 agenda, including the means of implementation; gender equality and women's empowerment; the promotion of tolerance and reconciliation; ways to strengthen cooperation between the United Nations and regional and subregional organizations; harnessing the demographic dividend; and youth employment. No effort should be spared as the international community worked to bring about a new era of international cooperation to improve the everyday lives of people worldwide and protect planet Earth.

Statement by the Deputy Secretary-General

11. The Deputy Secretary-General said that the international community's legacy to its children and grandchildren would depend in no small part on

- whether the post-2015 development agenda had been ambitious and transformative and whether the community had lived up to it. The world was heading in the right direction. The Member States had aimed high and proposed 17 transformative sustainable development goals that mirrored the challenges and complexities of the world, shaped a holistic peoplecentred vision of development, and addressed socioeconomic progress and the health of planet Earth. The goals, whose overarching objective was poverty eradication and whose vehicle for the way forward was sustainable development, recognized the importance of peaceful societies and the crucial role of institutions. As the goals were interrelated, progress on one goal would advance the others.
- 12. The litmus test for the new agenda would be its implementation. Much had been learned from the implementation of the MDGs, and the new agenda would have a strong basis upon which to build. One of the lessons learned was that the world could no longer work in silos. Focusing on one goal without considering its links to others was not optimal. An integrated vision of implementation was required; interlinkages between goals needed to be understood and well utilized. For example, much could be achieved for child mortality, maternal health and girls' education through decent sanitation.
- 13. Since substantially transforming societies and economies in the global arena was not a road it had travelled before, the world needed more than a new toolbox of policy measures. It needed to reassess the way in which policies were made and implemented. It must also learn how to shape, implement and review development plans reflecting economic, social and environmental dimensions. The members of the international community must innovate, work hand in hand and learn from each other. The participatory and cross-cutting approaches that gave rise to the post-2015 development agenda must be mainstreamed.
- 14. The new agenda would also require the building of national capacities and mobilization of finance and technology on a new, larger scale. The Addis Ababa conference on financing for development should strengthen the global partnership for sustainable development. It was hoped that the negotiations on the outcome to be adopted at that conference, under the leadership of the President of the General Assembly, would be concluded shortly.

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- 15. As the high-level political forum was the platform to promote and review implementation of the new agenda, it must be guided by the same ambition and forward thinking that gave rise to the agenda itself. The forum should be shaped to serve the needs of future generations. It must be able to track progress, accelerate changes in people's lives, and be equipped to make course corrections, update policies, identify new issues, shape new responses and assess the longterm implications of the decisions taken. The forum could help revitalize the United Nations system by instilling new ways of working and building on the accomplishments of the General Assembly and the Council. A strengthened Council was needed to spur integration and mobilize actors inside and outside the United Nations system.
- 16. Member States must orchestrate reviews and shape close follow-up mechanisms for the post-2015 development agenda. They must be both visionary and practical in their approach. In the interest of multilateralism, the international community and the Member States should use the enthusiasm and commitment all around to effect change. In today's world, good international solutions were in the national interests of Member States. At the same time, States' ideas and vision were needed to shape the high-level political forum and engage the United Nations so that the ambitious objectives set in September could be realized
- 17. The international community must embrace the path charted by the post-2015 agenda towards transformation, prosperity and dignity for all on a healthy planet. A strong and genuine sense of global responsibility, solidarity and willingness to act was necessary to achieve the future the world wanted.

Statement by the Executive Director of the International Disability Alliance, New York Office

18. **Mr. Cuk** (International Disability Alliance), speaking on behalf of major groups and other stakeholders, said that the discussions to shape the post-2015 development framework had been one of the most inclusive efforts in the history of the United Nations. The new agenda, which called for the participation of people the world over, opened the door to unprecedentedly broad participation by new stakeholders. His presence at the current meeting was proof of that fully inclusive approach.

- 19. In 2006, civil society organizations had for the first time worked with Member States to draft the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, setting a precedent for such collaboration. The adoption of the Convention had been a monumental victory for civil society in general, and especially for organizations representing persons with disabilities. The Convention called for persons with disabilities to be actively engaged in development, implementation and decision-making processes on matters that directly affected them. The contributions of persons with disabilities to the high-level political forum on sustainable development also represented a historic moment and a ground-breaking change for persons with disabilities. After a broad consultation process, 109 organizations from around the world had endorsed the relevant submission, as had the Special Rapporteur on the rights of persons with disabilities.
- 20. The post-2015 development framework must aim to address challenges faced by persons with disabilities, and the forum should be in a position to review progress made. To make the process more successful, the forum must build on the strengths and experiences of existing national and regional processes, ensuring that implementation of the new agenda consolidated, complemented and strengthened existing commitments, including the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities. For example, reports on mainstreaming the rights of persons with disabilities could be submitted to both the Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities and the high-level political forum. That practice could be followed for other groups for whom similar bodies existed, such as women, children, young people and the elderly.
- 21. To further review progress on inclusion, one thematic session of the forum should be dedicated during the next 15 years to persons with disabilities. In addition, ongoing thematic working groups should be established to give policy and technical advice to the forum and to Member States on mainstreaming the rights of persons with disabilities and also provide technical expertise on avoiding the creation of new barriers or the continuation of existing ones.
- 22. The forum should ensure that civil society organizations participated in its deliberations, especially in the light of the broadened, strengthened and more inclusive model jointly developed in recent years. Poverty eradication and economic growth could help to

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promote the rights and inclusion of persons with disabilities. The new framework must therefore be people-centred, with participation at all levels. Persons with disabilities should be recognized not just as beneficiaries of the new agenda but as partners. In the post-2015 implementation process, persons with disabilities wanted to work with everyone, including Governments, the United Nations system and civil society.

23. Persons with disabilities wanted to embrace the new vision of the twenty-first century. The new framework should open doors to their participation and inclusion and to their recognition as active, contributing members of society, without any discrimination or fear of being left out or left behind. They were ready to work with others to build a sustainable world without poverty or discrimination. The peoples of the United Nations were ready to stand together and build a better world.

Launch of the Millennium Development Goals Report

24. **The President** said that the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) Report was important to take stock of progress that had been made towards achieving the MDGs. Those Goals had rallied countries around a set of clear common goals; mobilized actions at the local, national and international levels; inspired countless people and institutions; revolutionized the approach taken towards development cooperation; and paved the way for the ambitious agenda that Heads of State and Government would be adopting in September 2015.

Statement by the Secretary-General

- 25. **The Secretary-General**, speaking via video link from Oslo and launching the Millennium Development Goals Report 2015, said that the year 2015 was a landmark for humanity. The deadline for the MDGs was fast approaching and, in September 2015, world leaders would be adopting the new universal development agenda for the next 15 years. The Report confirmed that the global efforts to achieve the MDGs had saved millions of lives and improved conditions for millions more around the world, helping to lift more than a billion people out of extreme poverty and make major inroads against hunger.
- 26. The MDGs had enabled more than 2.6 billion people to gain access to improved drinking water

sources, and more girls were attending school than ever before. Reductions in child and maternal mortality and progress in combating HIV/AIDS, malaria and other diseases were among the most significant advances in human well-being in all of human history. Antiretroviral therapy had reached 13.6 million people in 2014, an immense increase from just 0.8 million in 2003. More than 6.2 million malaria deaths had been averted since 2000, primarily of children under five years of age in sub-Saharan Africa. Tuberculosis prevention, diagnosis and treatment interventions had saved an estimated 37 million lives between 2000 and 2013. Developing regions as a whole had achieved a target of eliminating gender disparity in primary, secondary and tertiary education. Over the past 20 years, the average representation of women in parliaments had nearly doubled.

- 27. While those successes should be celebrated throughout the global community, many challenges remained. Progress had not reached everyone. Too many people had been left behind, especially the poorest and those at a disadvantage because of their age, sex, disability, ethnicity or geographic location. Too many women and children continued to die during pregnancy or from childbirth-related complications. Too many people lacked adequate sanitation facilities, especially in rural areas. Moreover, other dangers had intensified. Conflicts had forced almost 60 million people to abandon their homes, the highest level of displacement since the end of the Second World War, with staggering consequences for human development. Climate change had become an existential peril; environmental degradation was undermining development gains; and both were affecting poor people most of all. Efforts now needed to turn to bridging those gaps.
- 28. The lessons from the MDGs could provide the springboard for future progress. Successes in the MDGs proved that global action and setting goals were effective, both as a guide and as a benchmark for greater accountability. Worldwide, people had gained a greater appreciation for governance and institutions, seen the fundamental importance of national ownership and come to appreciate the immense value of partnerships. At the United Nations, it had been shown that bringing together key actors from Government, civil society, the private sector and academia could significantly accelerate action, as had happened with the "Every woman, every child" initiative and other

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platforms involving energy, education and food security.

29. The MDGs worked at the global, national and local levels, rallying not just diplomats and technocrats in conference buildings, but communities gathering in village squares. The MDGs measured things that mattered to people. In the future, it would be necessary to do more to reach those who were most vulnerable, were not counted and had not shared in the improvements of the past 15 years. Hard-won and fragile gains must not be diminished or reversed. It was necessary to work together to finish the job started with the MDGs and build on their successes and momentum. Over the next 15 years, the international community would certainly be able to deliver on the responsibility to end poverty, leave no one behind and create a world of dignity for all.

Statement by the Prime Minister of Norway

- 30. Ms. Solberg (Norway), Prime Minister, and Co-chair of the MDG Advocacy Group, speaking via video link from Oslo, said that as the MDG era came to a close, there were many lessons to be learned. Goals must be communicated in a way that was easy to grasp and motivating for leaders and people worldwide. The sustainable development goals must be framed in a that mobilized resources, Governments, international organizations, civil society and the private sector to form partnerships to ensure financing and support implementation. Stakeholders must move beyond a sector mindset and tap into synergies between goals. As the MDGs had shown that there were strong synergies between education and health, educating girls was especially important.
- 31. Simply establishing goals would not in itself lift people out of poverty. Unless national Governments showed political resolve to reach a goal, progress would be limited or non-existent. Coherent goals must be accompanied by strategies, policies and investment at the national level. The MDG process reinforced global norms, such as the universal right to primary education. The normative aspect would be even more relevant in the era of the sustainable development goals, as countries sought to balance global and national interests. Areas affected by crisis and conflict lagged behind on most of the MDGs, representing the most complex challenge in the MDG campaign. Fragility, crisis and conflict were the common global

enemy. Concerted action was needed to tackle that challenge.

Statement by the President of Rwanda

- 32. **Mr. Kagame** (Rwanda) Co-chair of the MDG Advocacy Group and President of the Republic, speaking via video link from Oslo, said that the MDGs had rallied the world to improve the quality of life for people in developing countries. But while unprecedented progress had been made towards achieving all the Goals, the majority of them would not be met in many countries, especially those in conflict or emerging from conflict.
- 33. The MDGs had showed that where there was political will, it was possible to work together successfully towards improved well-being. It required mobilizing leaders and citizens towards focused outcomes and ensuring that resources were properly utilized for maximum impact. The international community had learned that results were best achieved countries took responsibility for development agenda, within mutually respectful and productive international partnerships. The partnership between Governments and the private sector must be further strengthened. Developing countries must create wealth. With the right conditions, economic growth accelerated development progress. The international community must continue to work together, driven by the fact that millions were still underfed owing to extreme poverty, disease, ignorance and other conditions. The legacy of the MDGs went beyond the effort to achieve development goals. The MDGs had also served as a springboard for even higher ambitions.

Statement by the Special Advisor to the Secretary-General on the Millennium Development Goals

34. **Mr. Sachs** (Special Advisor to the Secretary-General on the Millennium Development Goals) said that the MDGs represented something important and unique, and had given rise to enormous progress. They had focused the attention of the world on the poorest and most voiceless people; this was something that the international community was usually not particularly skilled at doing. At the time of the launching of the MDGs, there had been no official programme in any developing country to provide HIV/AIDS patients with antiretroviral medicine. HIV-infected people in poor countries were among the most voiceless people in the

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world. While there had been only 800,000 people in 2003 receiving antiretroviral medicines, prior to the MDGs that figure had been zero.

- 35. When the MDGs had been formulated in 2001, many leaders of non-governmental organizations had wondered about the point of such stupid, arbitrary goals. Cynicism had been pervasive and widespread. The international community should be grateful that so many years on, the Goals had not been forgotten, but were rather being celebrated for their successes. Nonetheless, the world, while incredibly rich, was still replete with poor people. The level of technical sophistication in the world was astonishing. Nothing was impossible. The question of attaining the MDGs had never revolved around resource limitations or poverty and had always been about focusing attention on what was important. It had not been difficult to provide antiretroviral drugs or bednets to people. Far more difficult things had been achieved, but in many cases, markets, profit, self-interest, greed and a short attention span made it difficult to focus on achieving those Goals.
- 36. Fundamentally, the question of the MDGs had always been moral, not economic. In 1990, 13 million children under the age of five had died, but that number had been reduced to 6 million in 2014. On the other hand, those 6 million children had died in 2014 because no one had made the effort necessary to keep them alive. In the coming era, the issues would be even more complex. In addition to the usual challenges that humanity had faced for thousands of years, such as extreme poverty, disease, impunity and a host of other problems, a full-fledged environmental catastrophe was looming. As with the MDGs 15 years earlier, those issues were solvable if the world cared enough to solve them. The lesson of the MDGs was straightforward: when an effort was made, there were successes. When no effort was made, the result was failure.

Messages from the high-level political forum on sustainable development

37. **Mr. Rattray** (Jamaica), reporting on the implementation component of the discussions of the high-level political forum held the previous week, said that successful implementation of the post-2015 agenda depended on understandable communication that would make everyone feel like a stakeholder. While silos should be avoided, they were not inherently bad, as they represented separate sectoral

and stakeholder spheres of influence, which, when working together like pistons in an engine, could accelerate implementation of the sustainable development goals.

- 38. Communication should take place at all levels in all countries and reach all groups, including women and young people. Classic civil society mobilization techniques and non-traditional social media should be used to create effective communication campaigns. The agenda and development goals must be distilled into something that people can understand, identify with and act upon. In order to spread the messaging far and wide, multiple languages not just English should be used.
- 39. The Member States should learn from the lessons of the MDG experience. Despite the new agenda's universality and inclusiveness, national ownership, transparency and accountability were of the essence. The high-level political forum could provide policy guidance in that regard to help forge links among the agenda's different elements. It could, for example, request the regional commissions, governing bodies of United Nations entities and the entire system to review their policies in order to better support implementation System-wide agenda. coherence complementarity between the forum and other existing bodies and institutions were required. A multilevel architecture that could support implementation should be created to ensure that a multilevel perspective was reflected in the subregional, cross-regional and transboundary approaches adopted for implementation of the agenda. The facilitation of regional forums on sustainable development by the regional commissions had been suggested as a way of identifying regional specificities and transmitting recommendations to the high-level political forum.
- 40. Implementation of the transformative agenda would be impossible without engaging multiple stakeholders and creating innovative partnerships with business, public enterprise, civil society organizations and academia. However, some partnership approaches would necessarily reflect country specificities. The high-level political forum could provide guidelines for those partnerships to better align their policies and organizational strategies. Continuity could be ensured by engaging multiple stakeholders from the start of implementation.

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- 41. Local government should play an important role at the subnational level to bring the agenda to the front lines, yet they had not been included in the process of operationalizing the agenda. Parliaments could serve as critical relays for communication and education for sustainable development and play important roles in national reviews. Strong, well-equipped parliaments should play a crucial role in tracking and measuring progress. The business and private sectors, as agents of change, solutions providers and hosts to much of the creative and human capital needed for implementation, were the necessary strategic partners of Governments. To reach those sectors, the agenda needed to be communicated in language they were familiar with. partnerships Public-private were also implementation tools, as long as they adhered to standards of accountability and transparency and operated in line with agreed principles of human rights, international labour standards and national labour laws.
- 42. The principle of leaving no one behind, embodied in the post-2015 development agenda, was crucial to implementation. Governments should enforce that commitment by adopting non-discriminatory and inclusive policies as a guideline for implementation. They should use disaggregated data that ensured that everyone was accounted for, such that marginalized and disadvantaged groups received adequate attention. To that end, they should review the impacts of all policies on all subgroups of the population.
- 43. Mr. Seger (Switzerland) reporting on the followup and review component of the discussions, said that an effective follow-up and review mechanism was necessary for the new agenda to succeed. Reviews should be voluntary and State-led, rigorous and evidence-based, open and inclusive of all stakeholders. They should address progress made in implementation, support countries in making informed policy choices, build on existing platforms and assist in capacitybuilding in developing countries. Although follow-up and review should start at the national level, they should be designed to reach multiple levels. The review mechanism should induce change by creating incentives and refraining from shaming stakeholders; it should also allow for the sharing of experiences and discussion of solutions. Since peer reviews contributed to collective learning, they should be integrated into follow-up and review processes.
- 44. While follow-up and review should be anchored at the national level, coherence across national reviews

- should be ensured, because those reviews would feed into the regional and global reviews. Regional follow-up and review should serve as a platform for exchanging best practices and as opportunities to discuss common challenges and regional trends and to support regional coherence. Different regions should organize their own mechanisms, building on existing institutions and processes and taking into account regional specificities.
- 45. At the global level, the high-level political forum should play a decisive role in monitoring progress in the implementation of the new agenda. The forum should become a place for dialogue among all countries and stakeholders, including parliaments. Thematic platforms were important for monitoring and following up on implementation of the sustainable development goals. The forum's thematic reviews should draw on those taking place in other forums, including the Council and its subsidiary bodies and other international agencies and organizations. It should also take a cross-cutting approach to avoid working in silos.
- 46. Member States should provide clarity on how to organize periodic national progress and thematic reviews, on the scope and methodology of the Global Sustainable Development Report, and on the positioning of the high-level political forum within the United Nations development system. The Global Sustainable Development Report and annual progress reports on the sustainable development goals were important to the forum's review work.
- 47. The Global Sustainable Development Report should also inform intergovernmental discussions, identify emerging issues, give key recommendations for policymaking, act as a communication tool, and highlight the most relevant information on progress made towards achieving development goals, including the interlinkages among the goals. The Report should be produced in collaboration with all relevant United Nations agencies, draw on peer-reviewed sources and avoid duplication of other reports. As to its periodicity, some Member States preferred a yearly report while others preferred a report issued every four years to align with the meeting of the high-level political forum under the auspices of the General Assembly.
- 48. To strengthen the science-policy interface, the high-level political forum should contribute to agendasetting by providing a platform for dialogue and

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policy-relevant analysis, highlighting trends and translating outcomes of science-policy debates into action. To enhance the dialogue, the interface should involve communication among policymakers, science communities, including traditional knowledge and non-Western science communities, and civil society. The forum could help ensure that the post-2015 agenda topics were on the agendas of scientists around the world.

- 49. Lastly, disaggregated data collection and analysis would be critical for implementation, follow-up and review. All stakeholders should have access to the information and data, and some countries needed to have their capacity for data collection and analysis strengthened, particularly the least developed countries and the small island developing States.
- 50. **Ms. Khalaf** (Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia), reporting on the integration component of the discussions, said that Member States had noted that the post-2015 development agenda required integration at the geographic, institutional and sectoral levels, and across a wide range of actors and spheres of activity. Integration was a matter of policy coherence, inclusion and participation. Adequate funding and capacity-building would be indispensable for achieving the sustainable development goals.
- 51. Implementation, follow-up and review could not be considered separately. Progress would be made only through the leveraging and deployment of adequate means, including financial resources and technology transfer, and through inclusive and participatory approaches that left no one behind. Follow-up and review should be conducted using adequate institutional mechanisms and capabilities. Data collection and analysis were crucial for planning, implementation and enhancement of evidence-based decision-making.
- 52. Member States had stressed that the regional dimension was also crucial, as it could bring countries and peoples together for coordinated action that would make the most of financial and other partnerships in national implementation and effective monitoring, reviewing and learning. It was important to build on existing mechanisms and platforms, such as those provided by the United Nations regional commissions and their subsidiary bodies. Given their multidisciplinary expertise and capacity for cross-sectoral analysis, the commissions could also suggest ways of promoting integrated approaches to sustainable

development issues, provide policy advice for adapting the development goals to national plans and programmes, help leverage the means of implementation and support follow-up and review.

53. The United Nations development system, including the regional commissions, stood ready to support the Member States in delivering on the post-2015 development agenda.

The meeting rose at 11.10 a.m.

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