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President: Mr. Khiari (Vice-President) (Tunisia)
later: Mr. Drobnyak (Vice-President) (Croatia)

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General debate

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In the absence of Mr. Sajdik (Austria), Mr. Khiari (Tunisia), Vice-President, took the Chair.

The meeting was called to order at 3 p.m.

General debate (E/2015/33, E/2015/56, E/2015/68 and E/2015/69)

1. **Mr. Wu Hongbo** (Under-Secretary-General for Economic and Social Affairs), introducing the report of the Secretary-General on managing the transition from the Millennium Development Goals to the sustainable development goals: what it will take (E/2015/68) and the report of the Secretary-General on strengthening and building institutions for policy integration in the post-2015 era (E/2015/69), said that the international community had made important strides in defining the scope of the new post-2015 development agenda but it now needed to understand how the proposed goals would be implemented. The Millennium Development Goals experience had shown that a goal-oriented agenda alone was not sufficient to produce positive change, and that development goals translated into development results when they were supported by a comprehensive policy framework based on strong institutions, broad partnerships and robust monitoring and review mechanisms. The new development agenda was much broader than the one covered by the Millennium Development Goals; to deliver on that agenda, countries would need to build on potential synergies across all dimensions of sustainable development and adapt existing institutions, policy frameworks, accountability systems and partnership arrangements.

2. The report on the transition to sustainable development goals identified four priorities that were required to manage that transition: policy integration for a unified development agenda; institutional reform; a revitalized global partnership for sustainable development; and effective follow-up and review mechanisms. Increasingly, complex development challenges would call for integrated policy responses, which would require strengthened cooperation at all levels. Policy integration across the three dimensions of sustainable development would need to become the new operational standard, supported by a greater emphasis on achieving integration and coherence across different actors and sectors. That approach would have to be facilitated by strong, adaptable and inclusive institutions at all levels, and institutional reforms would be required to ensure that institutional

arrangements at the global, regional, national and subnational levels kept up with new and emerging challenges and left no one behind. A fundamental shift in mindsets and attitudes, accompanied by strong leadership and vision, would be critical to enabling such an institutional transformation to take place. The global partnership for sustainable development would have to be strengthened in both scope and depth to meet the demands of the new agenda. That revitalized global partnership should be built on strong political will and a clear understanding of the roles and responsibilities of national and international, as well as public and private, constituencies. Lastly, a rigorous, multi-tiered follow-up and review of progress would be crucial to the implementation of the new agenda.

3. The report of the Secretary-General on strengthening and building institutions for policy integration in the post-2015 era (E/2015/69) analysed the institutional implications of the transition to an agenda based on the sustainable development goals from the perspective that institutions were both critical enablers and outcomes of development. Achieving the transformative vision of the post-2015 development agenda would depend on institutional arrangements that could enable more comprehensive, coherent and integrated approaches to sustainable development.

4. Existing regulatory, policy and implementation gaps across sustainable development dimensions and levels of governance would need to be filled to make policy integration work in practice. In addition, effective and competent institutions for the post-2015 era would need to bridge those gaps and be able to cut across existing analytical, operational and political boundaries. Innovation at all levels of governance would be critical to ensure the necessary institutional adaptation and transformation, and should lead to more flexible, dynamic, horizontal, participatory and multi-stakeholder arrangements. Strong national ownership and transformative leadership, accompanied by supportive organizational processes and structures, would be key factors in institutional innovation. New and effective governance structures should facilitate multi-stakeholder engagement in the various stages of policymaking. Communication and capacity-building would help ensure the full and effective engagement of all stakeholders with the Government, and with each other, in the implementation of the post-2015 development agenda.

5. **Mr. Ocampo** (Chair, Committee for Development Policy), introducing the report of the Committee for Development Policy on its seventeenth session (E/2015/33), said that with globalization, national policies were not sufficient to ensure that countries' shared goals were achieved. The Committee for Development Policy had therefore shifted its focus to strengthening intergovernmental cooperation and improving global rules to better manage the increasing interdependence among countries.

6. However, identifying national and international policies that were conducive to the implementation of a shared agenda did not guarantee that common objectives would be met. The commitments made by Member States were voluntary but morally binding since Governments were accountable to the people to whom those commitments were made. Governments were also accountable to each other as partners working together towards common global goals. Consequently, an effective monitoring and accountability mechanism was needed to track policy implementation, assess progress made and hold States and other stakeholders accountable for commitments made. Beyond the mechanical assessment of how fast countries were closing the gap towards agreed global thresholds, accountability should monitor progress towards agreed objectives, examine obstacles to implementation, identify successful approaches and provide guarantees on changes needed to fix ineffective policies.

7. Countries should adapt the sustainable development goals to their national contexts through democratic consultation, taking into account specific national constraints and opportunities, and specify their global commitments to creating an enabling environment for sustainable development worldwide. The adaptation of global goals into national targets ensured ownership and facilitated answerability by all stakeholders to citizens and to the global community. It also enabled that accountability framework to be an inclusive, transparent and participatory bottom-up process. Member States should therefore make public their national commitments to achieve the sustainable development goals, adapt the targets to the national context and design policies to meet those targets nationally, which would, in turn, contribute to their achievement at the global level.

8. The Committee was concerned at the emphasis on quantifiable targets for monitoring implementation

since some of the aspirations for the post-2015 era could not be expressed in numbers and monitoring should not be reduced to what could be measured. Quantifiable targets were useful but a qualitative analysis of progress, constraints and challenges was also required to ensure that global governance, the correction of injustices in the global economic system and other crucial issues were not sidelined in the development debates.

9. Follow-up, review and monitoring of the implementation of the new development agenda should be a bottom-up process that relied on existing national accountability mechanisms, including local and regional governments. However, national frameworks should be fully integrated with the international accountability framework, especially in those instances where national accountability systems were not yet fully developed or operational.

10. At the international level, the regional layer of monitoring and accountability would be the best context for peer reviews and other forms of horizontal accountability. That layer should be facilitated by the United Nations regional commissions in developing countries and by the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development in developed countries. Peer reviews should not reflect power imbalances in donor-recipient relations but rather a process in which partners saw themselves as equals. To that end, the Council should instruct the regional commissions to facilitate the conduct of open, inclusive and participatory regional peer reviews on the implementation of the post-2015 agenda.

11. The high-level political forum on sustainable development would bring together national and regional processes, provide political leadership and review implementation of sustainable development commitments. Its follow-up and review should focus on the relevant aspects of the global partnership for sustainable development that were necessary to support implementation of those commitments. Active social accountability exercised by civil society organizations should be an essential component of the follow-up process at the national, regional and global levels, and specific accountability frameworks should be put in place for civil society organizations and the private sector.

12. Given the complexity of the post-2015 agenda, the annual follow-up exercises by the Council should

have a thematic focus and should reflect the three dimensions of sustainable development. The Council could mandate its main subsidiary bodies to undertake specific responsibilities for the much closer follow-up of specific development goals, which should be integrated with their own follow-up of the global conferences and summits under their purview.

13. Review and accountability processes must be supported by a strong monitoring system at both the regional and global levels. To ensure independent, impartial monitoring, responsibility for that should be given to the United Nations Secretariat, including the secretariats of the regional commissions and of other relevant organizations of the United Nations system. The high-level political forum, including when convened under the auspices of the Council, and the Development Cooperation Forum should be the institutional homes for Governments to assess monitoring reports and recommendations prepared by national and regional processes.

14. Many developing countries, including most least developed countries, would be unable to furnish reliable, timely and accurate information on most targets under the sustainable development goals. Strengthening the statistical capacities of those countries to produce basic data about their own economic, social and environmental conditions should therefore take precedence over developing a more sophisticated information system; that was the most important element of any data revolution related to the follow-up of the sustainable development goals.

15. **Mr. Mamabolo** (South Africa), speaking on behalf of the Group of 77 and China, said that the high-level political forum would bring added value to universal efforts to achieve sustainable development and integrate its economic, social and environmental dimensions. With poverty eradication underpinning development efforts, the forum had an important role to play not only in terms of follow-up and review but also in providing guidance, recommendations and political leadership as countries strived to take the global sustainable development agenda forward. Within the United Nations system, the forum could serve as a useful tool to improve coordination of efforts and promote the sharing of best practices, expertise and lessons learned, as well as a coherent system-wide approach to sustainable development policies.

16. Every step taken should be designed to strengthen the forum so that it could fulfil its mandate. To that end, all Member States should participate in the preparatory process to determine both the content of its programme and the desired outcomes. That would have the added benefit of creating a bottom-up approach, greater transparency and understanding, and ownership of decisions made. The forthcoming development agenda was an opportunity to address the multifaceted development challenges that all countries faced; it was important that the forum created space for adequate engagement on the sustainable development challenges faced by developing countries. As developing countries lacked the capacity to achieve sustainable development, capacity-building measures in line with national priorities and strategies were urgently needed. The Group hoped that the forum would hold sessions dedicated to building the capacities of developing countries and addressing the diverse needs and challenges faced by countries in special situations, in particular African countries, the least developed countries, landlocked developing countries and small island developing States, as well as the specific challenges facing middle-income countries and peoples and countries under foreign occupation.

17. It was important to link the various processes and outcomes relating to sustainable development, including the outcome documents of conferences on groups of countries in special situations. Such linkages were especially vital for developing countries, as that would ensure coherence and reduce the reporting burden on States with limited capacities. The extent to which the forum was fulfilling its mandate would in no small measure be reflected by how well it was supporting those most in need of development assistance.

18. **Ms. Alamilla** (Observer for Belize), speaking on behalf of the States members of the Caribbean Community (CARICOM), said that the high-level political forum on sustainable development would be an integral part of the review and follow-up process of the post-2015 development agenda. A multilayered approach, beginning at the national level and moving on to the regional and international levels, should be taken to produce an aggregate of inputs showing the full scope of progress made in implementation. The forum should conduct its work in a flexible, dynamic and solution-oriented manner and should provide momentum in support of implementing the new

agenda. In its regular reviews on the follow-up and implementation of sustainable development commitments, including those related to the means of implementation, the forum would doubtless take into account other inputs as well, including those provided by intergovernmental entities and other stakeholders.

19. The forum could play an important role in reviewing and following up the outcome document of the third International Conference on Small Island Developing States. In accordance with its mandate, the forum must devote adequate time to the discussion of sustainable development challenges facing developing countries, including the States members of the Caribbean Community, which were in the unique position of being both small island developing States and middle-income countries. The challenges faced by those countries with their small economies included a lack of economies of scale, high dependency on international trade, vulnerability to natural disasters and the impacts of climate change. In addition, access to concessionary and grant-based financing was hindered by the exclusive use of gross domestic product per capita to define development. Capacity-building was therefore especially important for small island developing States, including in conducting their own monitoring and assessments. Tailored support was needed to assist those countries in strengthening statistical systems in support of evidence-based decision-making.

20. CARICOM was committed to strengthening the science-policy interface through inclusive, evidence-based and transparent scientific assessments, as well as access to reliable, relevant and timely data in areas related to the three dimensions of sustainable development, building on existing mechanisms. It welcomed the regular annual ministerial reviews of the high-level segment of the Council to be conducted by the high-level political forum under the auspices of the Council, commencing in 2016, on the follow-up of the post-2015 development agenda.

21. **Mr. Vella** (Observer for the European Union) said that the main objectives of monitoring, accountability and review were to monitor progress; assess the effectiveness of implementation and the continued relevance of the agenda in light of new and emerging issues; ensure sustained political commitment and action and effective multi-stakeholder participation in the process; and increase the credibility of commitments. Effective monitoring and review

helped countries to maximize their progress; the objective was not to finger-point but rather to foster exchange of best practices and mutual learning and to provide political and leadership focus. It also enabled countries to identify new and emerging issues and provided a forum for accountability between all actors.

22. The high-level political forum was the apex of a global network of review processes and should draw on national and regional review processes, taking into consideration contributions from other multilateral and non-governmental actors. It should also play an oversight role and make recommendations for further action at the national, regional and global levels. The forum could hold thematic discussions on cross-cutting issues and host country presentations to review national efforts. Ideally, each State would volunteer to participate in that process at least twice by 2030.

23. The forum should assess progress against the whole post-2015 agenda, including means of implementation, in an integrated way. The monitoring, accountability and review of the third International Conference on Financing for Development should be an integral part of the post-2015 monitoring, accountability and review process, and should therefore feed into the forum. In order to provide strong political guidance and follow-up to the Conference outcome, the forum should give adequate consideration to financing for development conferences every four years under the auspices of the General Assembly. The forum should ensure that progress was reviewed in a holistic manner on the basis of integrated assessments which captured interlinkages between different parts of the agenda. The forum could also play a role in future-proofing the framework in relation to global commitments.

24. The forum should be effective and inclusive, providing members of civil society and other stakeholders an opportunity both to comment on national reviews of progress and give an account of their own contributions. The Council's Partnerships Forum could play a role in that connection. In addition, the forum should draw on a wide range of scientifically credible, evidence-based reports relating to all aspects of sustainable development, including the Global Sustainable Development Report. However, the forum should avoid duplication and build on ongoing work to make the United Nations development system more fit for purpose.

25. **Mr. Sana** (Observer for Rwanda), speaking on behalf of the Group of African States, said that the high-level political forum would play a crucial role in ensuring implementation of the post-2015 development agenda. In addition, it would provide political leadership, guidance and recommendations for sustainable development and enhance the integration of the three dimensions of sustainable development in a holistic and cross-sectoral manner at all levels.

26. The forum needed to deliver on its core functions by discussing concrete aspects of the follow-up and review of the post-2015 development agenda and how it could best fulfil its mandate outlined in General Assembly resolution 67/290, paragraph 8. However, that could be achieved only by addressing the forum's lack of authority and by providing space for it to set out the principles of follow-up and review at the global level, and to provide guidance at both the regional and national levels. In particular, follow-up and review at the global level should be universal in scope and should be owned by each country in accordance with its national circumstances, needs and priorities. It must be Government-led and voluntary, involving ministerial and other relevant high-level participants. The review should assess the activities of the United Nations system and stakeholders relating to the sustainable development goals and their means of implementation. It should also encompass all 17 sustainable development goals and 169 targets in a balanced and integrated manner. The balance and integration of the framework of goals should be preserved while recognizing the priority for the implementation of proposed goal 17 and specific targets relating to means of implementation under other goals, given their importance for the implementation of the entire framework of goals.

27. The follow-up and review should assess the results of the technology facilitation mechanism for the implementation of the sustainable development goals and its efforts to promote the transfer of technology to developing countries. The review should be conducted in a constructive spirit in order to foster mutual learning and cooperation, promote the sharing of lessons learned and the necessary means of implementation, and facilitate access to technology and other support. The follow-up and review process should strengthen follow-up and review of the commitments made at the international level. In that regard, a differentiated approach should be adopted to

ensure focus on the means of implementation for attainment of the sustainable development goals. The universality of the sustainable development goals should enhance consistency with the principle of common but differentiated responsibilities with a view to recognizing different national realities, capacities and levels of development while also emphasizing the importance of national policy space.

28. Follow-up and review of the implementation of the sustainable development goals at the national level should be determined by national Governments in accordance with national circumstances and levels of development, and with the participation of all relevant stakeholders. It was important to ensure coherence between the national, regional and global levels. The basis for the follow-up and review of qualitative national information on sustainable development policies at all levels should be robust data drawn from national progress reports. Data from existing reporting mechanisms should be used where possible, given the urgent need for the transfer of financial resources, technologies and capacity-building for developing countries in accordance with national priorities and strategies. Lastly, the Group of 77 and China supported greater engagement by Member States in the process of preparing the agenda of the forum to ensure transparency. The programme of the forum should be designed in a more balanced manner and should provide for discussions on capacity-building, methods of work of the forum and the technology facilitation mechanism, which were issues of the utmost importance to developing countries.

29. **Mr. Sareer** (Observer for Maldives), speaking on behalf of the Alliance of Small Island States, said that since it had been decided at the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development (Rio+20) to establish the universal, intergovernmental high-level political forum on sustainable development to replace the Commission on Sustainable Development, small island developing States had been fully engaged in the forum, which was of critical importance to them, particularly as it was mandated to build on the strengths, experiences, resources and inclusive participation modalities of the Commission.

30. The Commission had played a central role in monitoring progress in the implementation of the outcomes of global conferences on small island developing States. The forum should continue to play that role by devoting adequate time to discussions on

the sustainable development challenges that small island developing States faced, including their unique geography, small size, narrow resource base, inability to achieve markets of scale, remoteness from markets, and limited negotiating capacity, and the urgent solutions required to address them. Small island developing States faced the greatest risk of natural disasters and the consequences of climate change.

31. He welcomed the recent decision to translate the vision of the Samoa Pathway into action and expressions of commitment to the development of small island developing States made by partners and other stakeholders at the informal panel discussion, “SIDS Accelerated Modalities of Action (SAMOA) Pathway: Translating vision to action”, held on 1 July. Several panellists and speakers at that meeting had noted that small island developing States were special cases owing to the specific challenges they faced, and that any advances they made could easily be eroded by an economic or environmental shock. Small island developing States therefore attached great importance to the success of the Samoa Pathway to ensure that no State and no individual was left behind.

32. The forum must not become a talking shop or a venue where States that were not on target were named and shamed. Rather it should provide political leadership, guidance and recommendations for sustainable development; follow up and review progress in the implementation of sustainable development commitments; enhance the integration of the three dimensions of sustainable development in a holistic and cross-sectoral manner at all levels; and have a focused, dynamic and action-orientated agenda, with appropriate consideration given to new and emerging sustainable development challenges in line with the forum’s mandate. Small island developing States had called for a peer-learning mechanism within the forum, in an effort to eradicate poverty through sustainable development.

33. The forum must focus on translating discussions into action and assessing the impact of implementing policies through the United Nations system. There were many lessons to be learned from the Commission that should be built upon. The forum was positioned to be a vast repository of information on sustainable development indicators; but in addition to collecting data, it should analyse and ensure stakeholders’ access to that data, and facilitate and improve data collection mechanisms. Such wide-ranging work would require

significant resources for planning and implementation. Given the enormous task before it, the forum should focus on capacity-building to ensure that countries had adequate policy space and support to participate effectively in the review mechanism and report on development targets. Data analysis and collection were areas that needed to be strengthened. Steps should be taken to ensure that countries, especially developing ones, were not overburdened with reporting requirements, which could lead to reporting fatigue and disincentivize small countries from reporting.

34. It had been made clear during the recent panel discussions within the forum that the development goals and targets were all interlinked and equally important. If the ambitious post-2015 development agenda was to be achieved, Member States must take responsibility for national development and commit to doing their part, according to their means. Member States must commit to working together in a bottom-up approach, engaging the poorest and most marginalized members of society, and ensuring that all stakeholders were heard and contributed to achieving the sustainable development goals. Steps should also be taken to ensure coherence and the necessary linkages between the various bodies responsible for sustainable development, while respecting their different mandates and scope. Coherence did not and could not mean one-size-fits-all. A coordinated and collaborative mechanism should be established to synergize national, regional and international reporting systems, to amplify the success stories and lessons to be learned, and to review constraints and externalities. The review and follow-up mechanism should therefore be designed to take into account the practical concerns of countries such as the small island developing States, and to be constructive.

35. Member States should consider how to address and coordinate targets that did not have formal platforms or mechanisms; how to engage all stakeholders; whether to introduce guidelines or binding rules for the private sector on good conduct in implementing the sustainable development agenda; and how to keep everyone, from private individuals to Governments, engaged and committed to the sustainable development goals. The forum must adopt a flexible, bottom-up, people-centred approach so that it could address emerging issues promptly and provide appropriate guidance.

36. **Mr. Perera** (Observer for Sri Lanka), speaking on behalf of the Group of 15 (G-15), said that while the Millennium Development Goals had undoubtedly paved the way for global efforts to improve the lives of billions of people around the world, progress had been mixed. Today's global realities and development challenges demanded that the post-2015 development agenda should be more ambitious, interconnected and universally applicable than its predecessor with a comprehensive vision and practical means for achieving sustainable development. Member States should seize the opportunity to build on the Millennium Development Goals, while recognizing and overcoming their shortcomings. The eradication of poverty must remain at the centre of the agenda.

37. Noting the lack of any extensive dialogue or exchange of views among Member States in formulating the Millennium Development Goals, he said that the efforts of the intergovernmental Open Working Group on Sustainable Development Goals had been a step in the right direction. He welcomed the adoption of the Working Group's proposal as the basis for integrating the sustainable development goals into the post-2015 development agenda.

38. The G-15 had taken a special interest in the negotiations on the post-2015 development agenda and had convened, in collaboration with the South Centre, a series of symposiums on the post-2015 development agenda from the perspective of Geneva-based international organizations. Those interactive discussions between the countries of the global South and relevant institutions had focused on the three pillars of sustainable development and the challenges and opportunities that the post-2015 development agenda posed for developing countries.

39. An enabling international environment to ensure that developing countries would have the necessary policy space, technical assistance and predictable additional funding would be more crucial than ever. It would be vital to strengthen aspects of international cooperation, ensure that developed countries met their official development assistance (ODA) commitments in a time-bound manner, improve global economic governance, and remove systemic impediments to development.

40. As part of the transition from the Millennium Development Goals to the sustainable development goals, the challenges faced by least developed

countries, landlocked developing countries, small island developing States and middle-income countries must be addressed. Middle-income countries must continue to have access to concessional development financing, even after their graduation to middle-income status. In the light of the third International Conference on Financing for Development, held in Addis Ababa, the synergies between financing for development and the post-2015 development agenda should be underscored; financing for development should, however, remain independent from and complementary to the means of implementation to be agreed as part of the sustainable development goals.

41. A meaningful technology facilitation mechanism should be the core of the agenda's means of implementation. The G-15 strongly supported a technology facilitation mechanism that would promote the development, transfer and dissemination of clean and environmentally sound technologies, and that would take into consideration the future technology needs of developing countries in order to achieve sustainable development. The final agreement in Addis Ababa should recognize the decisive role technology would play in achieving sustainable development. The G-15 also looked forward to the outcomes of the United Nations summit for the adoption of the post-2015 development agenda and the twenty-first session of the Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change.

42. An efficient, vigorous, inclusive and transparent follow-up and review process would be an essential component of the new global development agenda. Discussions on a follow-up and review mechanism must be predicated on the principle of national sovereignty and different but equal national circumstances, needs and priorities. That mechanism should also respect the balance between the economic, social and environmental dimensions of sustainable development. The high-level political forum on sustainable development, under the auspices of the Economic and Social Council, would therefore be the most suitable forum in which to review global implementation of the post-2015 agenda.

43. **Mr. Tupouniua** (Observer for Tonga), speaking on behalf of the Pacific small island developing States, said that efforts to specify and shape the outcomes of the post-2015 development agenda and the third International Conference on Financing for Development should take into account the Barbados

Programme of Action for the Sustainable Development of Small Island Developing States, the Mauritius Strategy for the Further Implementation of the Programme of Action for the Sustainable Development of Small Island Developing States, and the Samoa Pathway. The high-level political forum on sustainable development should dedicate adequate time to discussing the issues related to small island developing States as outlined in those outcome documents and other relevant sustainable development commitments.

44. The ability of small island developing States to collect and analyse data and statistics was limited as a result of their small, vulnerable and dispersed populations and small national statistical bureaus. International efforts to build data and statistical capacity should take those challenges into account and provide targeted support to small island developing States.

45. While he welcomed the recent informal panel discussion on the follow-up of the Samoa Pathway, it was time to stop talking and start taking action to remedy the issues related to the sustainable development of small island developing States. The partnership framework called for in the Samoa Pathway was essential for that to happen. To facilitate the establishment of such a framework, the forum should create synergies with existing and new partners.

46. As Member States continued to shape the follow-up and review mechanism for the post-2015 development agenda, national ownership and the need for an efficient, robust, inclusive and transparent follow-up and review process would be key considerations. The regional commissions, other regional and subregional bodies and targeted thematic reviews could play an important role in that process. He welcomed efforts to ensure that the United Nations system was fit for purpose and would be able to support States' efforts to implement the post-2015 development agenda.

47. The high-level political forum offered not only an opportunity to monitor implementation of the agenda, but also dedicated space for the proper assessment of progress, achievements and challenges that offered concrete and solution-oriented guidance on further implementation. The forum would play a key role in translating Member States' vision and partnerships into action. The forum could also offer a point of convergence and help to promote coherence and

synergy between distinct processes, thus preventing duplication and limiting reporting burdens on countries.

48. **Mr. Kelly** (Observer for Ireland) said that his delegation fully supported the post-2015 development agenda. The agreement that Member States were expected to finalize in September would be a milestone in redefining humanity's relationship with planet Earth and in their commitment to leave no one behind. It was a huge task that would entail a coordinated, holistic approach, but his Government was committed to that task and to mobilizing a national response that would embed the spirit and substance of the post-2015 development agenda across the socio-economic spectrum.

49. As a major agriculture and food production economy, his country was already addressing one of the major emerging issues of the post-2015 development agenda, namely sustainable agriculture and food security. Finding and implementing a way forward would be crucial to a successful transformation agenda. In that connection, the high-level political forum should become a space for mutual learning and for the exchange of information on best practices for the implementation of the agenda, based on Member States' experiences through effective monitoring, accountability and review. Like many others, his delegation shared the view that the forum should focus on reviewing overall global progress, based on a common set of global indicators, while also drawing on best practice at the national level, through voluntary presentations by States on their national implementation results.

50. The aim of an effective review process was not about naming and shaming countries with poor implementation records; rather it should seek to share best practice, identify gaps at the global level and suggest solutions. Both implementation and the review of implementation must be evidence-based. The forum's mandate to strengthen the science-policy interface was therefore crucial. The Global Sustainable Development Report would also be a valuable contribution to the review process, but the forum should be able to draw on all credible scientific sources relevant to its discussions on an ongoing basis.

51. Political engagement was indispensable to driving implementation of transformative sustainable development goals and targets. Member States had a

responsibility and a duty to deliver on those commitments. To ensure that high-level political engagement was maintained, the forum should adopt an action-oriented agenda that did not duplicate the work of other bodies and set out a clear programme of work for each four-year cycle. The forum must also be inclusive; citizen ownership and engagement were vital to the successful implementation of the agenda. Citizens and the wider society were not merely beneficiaries of the agenda; they must be partners and participants in its implementation as well.

52. The year 2015 had the potential to be an historic year in shaping global development. But the agreements that would be adopted in Addis Ababa, New York and Paris would be only the beginning of a global journey towards achieving social, economic and environmental sustainability. The sustainable development goals were as ambitious as any agreed to previously by the international community, with a breadth of required actions that had never been attempted before. Achieving that transformational shift would be challenging, to say the least. There would undoubtedly be setbacks along the way, both at the national and international level, but a forum that effectively monitored global implementation and articulated a positive vision and tangible outcomes of the post-2015 development agenda to the wider world would help Member States to achieve their collective goals of providing a decent standard of living for all, while protecting the planet and making sure that absolutely no one was left behind.

53. *Mr. Drobnjak (Croatia), Vice-President, took the Chair.*

54. **Mr. Kouyialis** (Observer for Cyprus) said that 2015 was a crucial year for the international community. The new development agenda and the sustainable development goals represented a universal agenda for all nations, rich and poor alike. The people-centred agenda sought to end poverty and promote the three pillars of sustainable development — a commitment that had been made 28 years ago in the Brundtland Report and had still to be realized.

55. For the post-2015 development agenda to be truly effective, transformational and people-centred, a strong monitoring, accountability and review framework would be needed globally, regionally and nationally. The global framework should incorporate lessons learned and best practices from existing monitoring

and accountability mechanisms. A more credible system of mutual accountability was needed for the new, universally applicable goals and commitments within a strengthened institutional framework.

56. Member States had decided to establish the high-level political forum at the Rio+20 Conference to follow up the implementation of sustainable development commitments and the integration of the social, economic and environmental pillars. While the forum was now in a transitional period, it would be the primary monitoring, review and accountability mechanism for implementation of the post-2015 development agenda at the global level. Progress in the implementation of the sustainable development goals and targets must be measured against a robust set of global indicators that covered the whole agenda, including means of implementation, thus allowing for comparison of the economic development of countries and regions. National and regional review processes should include contributions from a wide spectrum of stakeholders and should feed their outcomes into the forum to inform recommendations for further national, regional and global action. In order to act as an effective global review mechanism, the forum would have to coordinate and cooperate closely with all relevant United Nations bodies and agencies, including the functional commissions of the Economic and Social Council and the United Nations Environment Programme, as well as other international organizations.

57. The Global Sustainable Development Report, another important tool in measuring the implementation of the sustainable development commitments, should bring together information and assessments that would strengthen the science-policy interface. As a global report, it should build on existing mechanisms and address common challenges through inclusive, evidence-based and transparent scientific assessments in areas related to the three pillars of sustainable development. The Report should inform the forum's deliberations every four years and should provide political impetus for action-oriented results.

58. A monitoring, accountability and review mechanism could not be successful without reliable and transparent data that measured progress at the global, regional and national levels. In order to achieve universal coverage and to ensure that no one was left behind, such data must be, inter alia, accessible, user-friendly and disaggregated by gender, age and income.

Building capacity in the generation of high-quality data in countries that were most in need must therefore be prioritized.

59. Because the post-2015 development agenda was universal, it must be strengthened by universal monitoring, accountability and review. However, each country was responsible for ensuring effective implementation nationally. National accountability mechanisms should therefore be guided by national ownership and leadership and involve all stakeholders. High-level political involvement, as well as periodic and inclusive global, regional and national reviews of progress on specific goals, targets and indicators, would be essential to any follow-up and review mechanism. People must be able to participate in policy choices that affected them and hold Governments and other stakeholders to account. Local authorities and the private sector, among others, should play a key role in the national follow-up and review mechanism.

60. His country was working towards establishing its own accountability framework as part of its national implementation process. Cyprus looked forward to participating actively at the regional and global levels in order to successfully implement a common development agenda and attain the overarching goals of poverty eradication and sustainable development.

61. **Ms. Alsaleh** (Observer for Bahrain) said that Bahrain had attached great importance to the realization of sustainable development and the implementation of the Millennium Development Goals since the Millennium Summit in 2000, as was reflected in its 2015 national report on the Millennium Development Goals and the fact that it had implemented all of the Goals. Despite the challenges and difficulties that lay ahead, her Government was working towards ensuring sustainable development on all levels — socially, economically, environmentally, politically and culturally — and had adopted a raft of reforms to strengthen national economic and social development. Those reforms had had a positive impact and had helped to establish a long-term vision for human sustainable development in the different policy areas. The progress made had been recognized by the decision to award the Scroll of Honour to His Highness Shaikh Khalifa Bin Salman Al-Khalifa in 2006.

62. Her country had hosted the second session of the Arab High-level Forum on Sustainable Development

from 5 to 7 May, organized in conjunction with the Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia (ESCWA) and the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), and in collaboration with the Arab League. The Forum had been attended by representatives of many Arab countries, United Nations agencies and civil society organizations which had participated in discussions on sustainable development in the region, including on the transition from the Millennium Development Goals to the sustainable development goals; international approaches conducive to sustainable development; the participation of Arab countries; and the means of implementation, including financing for development. Capacity-building, technology transfers and a regional sustainable development framework had also been highlighted.

63. The outcome document of that Forum, the Bahrain Document, contained 19 recommendations for sustainable development and emphasized the voluntary, universal and holistic nature of the post-2015 development agenda in line with the principle of common but differentiated responsibilities, as well as the importance of an enabling global environment to implement the sustainable development goals. The Document also reiterated that Israeli forces must withdraw from the Occupied Palestinian Territory and the other occupied Arab territories, and that the Arab States were intent on working with the international community to achieve peace and security in the region. Stability was a prerequisite for achieving sustainable development, given the increasing levels of extremism and terrorism in the region. She urged all Member States to heed the messages and recommendations regarding implementation of the post-2015 development agenda contained in the Bahrain Document, as the agenda could only be realized with the support of the international community.

64. The sustainable development aspirations of all peoples had no temporal or spatial limitations. The world was currently facing numerous challenges, such as terrorism, climate change, poverty and armed conflict; the international community must therefore establish new, non-traditional mechanisms to address those issues, and to strengthen solidarity and end armed conflict. Her country would continue to pursue its efforts in order to ensure the success of the upcoming international summits and conferences on sustainable development and climate change and thus

allow humanity to enjoy a dignified life in a healthy environment.

65. **Ms. Gavrilescu** (Observer for Romania) said that the second meeting of the high-level political forum under the auspices of the Economic and Social Council was being held in a momentous year for the world. Inequality, social exclusion and environmental degradation threatened the welfare of present and future generations. Humanity was close to or had even exceeded critical ecological thresholds. The degradation and unsustainable management of natural resources would limit possibilities for reducing poverty. Unsustainable consumption and production patterns would affect the well-being of everyone and lead to widening disparities and social inequalities. All of those factors combined with exponential population growth, meant that sustainable development policies were needed to ensure balance between economic growth, quality of life and the long-term preservation of the environment.

66. The universal challenges that confronted the world would require collective action. All countries must be equally and mutually accountable for meeting their respective commitments and responsibilities under the universal development agenda. The implementation of the sustainable development goals and post-2015 development agenda would require many changes, including greater policy coherence and accountability. Accountability meant responsibility and answerability. All actors should have clearly defined duties, objectives and performance standards, and the review mechanism must be transparent and seek to inform, explain and justify.

67. The forum would play a central role in the implementation of the sustainable development goals and the post-2015 development agenda that would be adopted in September. It would be the global focal point for the universal, participatory and multi-stakeholder review of implementation of the new agenda. There should be one overarching review framework for the post-2015 development agenda and financing for development, covering all aspects of the sustainable development goals and targets and all means of implementation, both financial and non-financial. Separate monitoring and review systems would result in a duplication of effort and the diversion of resources. The periodic review of national progress in the implementation of the agenda would allow Member States to present reports and discuss lessons learned. It

would provide an opportunity to review both short-term outputs and long-term outcomes in the attainment of the goals, while promoting system-wide coherence and coordination of sustainable development policies.

68. The 17 proposed sustainable development goals built on the objectives of the Millennium Development Goals. They emphasized poverty eradication and protection of the planet, and they also addressed the structural causes of poverty and inequality. Member States should take control of national implementation processes. Periodic national reviews should build on existing local mechanisms, with broad, multi-stakeholder participation, including representatives of national and local authorities, parliaments, civil society, science, academia and business. National mechanisms should establish benchmarks, review national policy frameworks, chart progress, reflect lessons learned, consider solutions, and follow up and report on progress. Countries' progress should be assessed on the basis of periodic reports by national Governments, other national stakeholders, and United Nations agencies and international financial institutions, drafted in accordance with globally harmonized models and formats.

69. The second session of the United Nations Environment Assembly would be held in 2016, coinciding with the first year of implementation of the post-2015 development agenda. Her delegation was of the view that the Assembly should address the environmental aspects of the sustainable development goals.

70. Her Government would update its National Sustainable Development Strategy to take into account the sustainable development goals. Integrated decision-making processes and policy coherence were critical for sustainable development. Similarly, integrated, multi-stakeholder partnerships for development planning, implementation and monitoring would be needed to ensure transparency and accountability in the implementation of the post-2015 agenda.

71. **Mr. Cardona** (Honduras) said that his country had made considerable efforts to implement the Millennium Development Goals. Notable achievements had been the decline in the percentage of the population living in poverty and extreme poverty and the decline in income inequality. However, extreme poverty remained more pronounced in rural areas. While steps had been taken nationally, regionally and globally to achieve the Millennium Development

Goals, those efforts had not been sufficient to safeguard the future of humanity.

72. In implementing the Millennium Development Goals, his Government had made significant progress in reducing rates of child malnutrition and in increasing adult literacy rates, vaccination coverage and access to drinking water and sanitation. It had also launched one of the boldest development and social inclusion strategies in national history, allocating \$1.2 billion to the “Better Life for All” plan that provided social protections to 400,000 households living in extreme poverty around the country, based on a guaranteed minimum income; food and nutrition security; decent and healthy housing; access to primary health care; and universal preschool and primary education. The plan sought to reduce poverty by at least 20 percentage points.

73. As part of the “Better Life for All” plan, the President of Honduras had committed to advancing equitable conditions for economic growth so that both men and women could benefit from productive and financial inclusion and thus achieve their own sustainable development. In that connection, the Government had set up a dedicated fund to help reactivate the agrifood industry and a financial inclusion programme offering bank loans, in an effort to encourage self-employment and independent development among citizens.

74. His Government was developing a strategy to identify and address the short-, medium- and long-term requirements and challenges resulting from the sustainable development goals. The strategy would include focused, coherent actions to reduce poverty, promote social equity and protect the environment in an increasingly populated world. In that connection, the Government was working with the private sector to produce environmentally-friendly stoves. It was expected that some 400,000 environmentally-friendly stoves would be distributed over the next three years, with each stove saving 15 trees from destruction.

75. The priorities for the post-2015 development agenda proposed by his delegation were in line with those of the “Better Life for All” plan, namely, improving the efficiency of social welfare; promoting equitable and sustainable economic growth; strengthening the rule of law; building civic responsibility and social cohesion; and reducing environmental vulnerability. In order for the true

transformative potential of the post-2015 agenda to be realized, transformative leadership would be needed at all levels of government, civil society and private business.

76. **Ms. Ouedraogo-Boni** (Burkina Faso) said that when her Government had subscribed to the Millennium Development Goals in 2000, it had embarked on pioneering activities, including through its strategic frameworks to combat poverty and accelerate economic growth and sustainable development. In an effort to strengthen those achievements, the Transitional Government had attempted to raise the living standards of the people of Burkina Faso by renewing social measures to support the most vulnerable members of society; setting up financing windows to encourage female and youth entrepreneurship; and introducing an emergency economic and social programme to create employment for young people and women, finance microprojects and build infrastructure, including schools, universities and health centres.

77. With the deadline for implementing the Millennium Development Goals approaching, it was clear that Burkina Faso, like many other African countries, would not be able to achieve those Goals, despite considerable efforts. That was why her delegation sincerely hoped that the post-2015 development agenda and the outcome documents of the third International Conference on Financing for Development and the twenty-first session of the Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change would form the basis for inclusive and equitable economic growth that would provide everyone with access to basic goods and services, and guarantee future generations a world of peace, stability, and good political, social, economic and environmental governance.

78. In a world where access to technology and innovation was uneven, a mechanism for transferring and sharing technology could enable developing countries to strengthen their development capabilities. Member States must work together, on the basis of the principle of common but differentiated responsibilities, to consolidate harmonious models for human sustainable development as part of fair and efficient global governance. Member States must therefore focus on investments in science, technology and innovation, as that would be essential to achieving

poverty eradication and sustainable development, thus creating the conditions for a dignified life, marked by security, stability, progress and prosperity, for future generations. That approach and the success of the post-2015 agenda would require coherent development policies. Her country was determined to rise to those new challenges.

79. **Mr. Gatilov** (Russian Federation) said that the Russian Federation attached great importance to the work of the Economic and Social Council in the context of the elaboration of the post-2015 development agenda. The high-level political forum on sustainable development should make a significant contribution to preparations for the upcoming United Nations summit for the adoption of the post-2015 development agenda.

80. The Russian Federation looked upon the new agenda as a universal programme of action for achieving the sustainable development goals and saw the principle of common but differentiated responsibilities for development as the conceptual basis for multilateral cooperation on the sustainable development goals. Continuity between the sustainable development goals and the Millennium Development Goals should be ensured, and fighting poverty should be a key part of the new agenda.

81. Everyone should adhere to the principles of Rio+20 and avoid excessively broad interpretations of the concept of sustainable development. To address economic, social and environmental challenges effectively, an integrated approach was needed. It was also necessary to take into account, in an appropriate way, such pressing tasks as ensuring the necessary governance and rule of law at all levels, protecting human rights and maintaining international peace and security. He cautioned against unnecessary politicization or foisting upon Member States frameworks and standards that lacked broad support and had not been approved in the context of the appropriate international processes under the auspices of the United Nations.

82. The decisions of the third International Conference on Financing for Development, to begin in Addis Ababa the following week, would serve as the basis for further efforts to mobilize and effectively use financial and other resources necessary to implement the new agenda successfully. The Russian Federation hoped that in Addis Ababa, Member States would be

able to agree on concrete action to increase trade and investment cooperation, improve the global economic government system and the international financial architecture and encourage the spread of innovative, environmentally safe technologies. Financial and technical cooperation, including official development assistance — which remained an important source of external financing for vulnerable developing countries — would continue to serve as the cornerstone of the global development partnership.

83. While the Russian Federation welcomed the involvement and the contributions of non-governmental actors, which were essential to effective implementation of the priorities of the post-2015 development agenda, the main responsibility for achieving the sustainable development goals lay with national Governments. It was therefore extremely important to preserve the intergovernmental character of follow-up actions to the September summit.

84. The system for monitoring progress in implementation of the sustainable development goals should be oriented primarily towards supporting national efforts to achieve sustainable development. Such a system could function only on a voluntary basis and in an atmosphere of mutual trust. Forcing countries to participate in reviews, insisting on single standards and criteria for drafting national reports or issuing “ratings” based on review mechanisms were all unacceptable practices.

85. A review of progress in achieving the sustainable development goals at the regional level was the prerogative of the United Nations regional commissions. They had proven their value as a platform for developing collective solutions to problems common to the countries of a region, including cross-border and cross-cutting issues.

86. The high-level political forum was to be up and running at full capacity by 2016. The forum would be a principal intergovernmental forum for action on the outcomes of the upcoming summit, as well as the main mechanism for reviewing progress on meeting the sustainable development goals. The forum was the optimum platform for thematic reviews. During the forum meetings at the level of Heads of State and Government, to be held once every four years under the auspices of the General Assembly, it would be appropriate to conduct a comprehensive analysis of progress on implementation of all the priorities of the

new agenda, based on the conclusions and recommendations of the Global Sustainable Development Report.

87. **Ms. Velo** (Italy) said that to guide the transition towards sustainable development and poverty eradication, leadership, ambition and an effective structure were needed, headed by the high-level forum. The latter should be the primary forum at the global level for a multi-tiered monitoring, accountability and review mechanism for the post-2015 agenda and its sustainable development goals.

88. Realization of an integrated, universal and transformative approach, as embedded in the current draft of the post-2015 agenda, would entail the involvement of the United Nations system as a whole. As recently stated by Mr. Gass, Assistant Secretary-General for Policy Coordination and Inter-Agency Affairs, the post-2015 agenda and the sustainable development goals should not become a “silo,” and, for that reason, it was crucial for the working modalities of the forum to incorporate the entire United Nations system, building in particular on the integration segment of the Economic and Social Council and on its Development Cooperation Forum.

89. In that context, Italy welcomed the Council’s dialogue on the longer-term positioning of the United Nations development system. More than ever before, policies, work in the field, cooperation activities and financial flows needed to be aligned so that the same sustainable development goals were pursued by all. The forum must remain active and transparent to ensure that General Assembly resolution 67/290 was implemented in full.

90. Priorities included measuring the implementation of the post-2015 development agenda at the subnational, national and regional levels. Peer review processes could be implemented at the regional level according to best practices developed in each region. With regard to science-policy interface, Italy supported the ongoing efforts by the scientific community to move from fragmentation to a multidisciplinary approach. The future Global Sustainable Development Report should measure progress towards the sustainable development goals, based on available United Nations reports, and, in particular, the United Nations Environment Programme Global Environmental Outlook 6 (UNEP GEO 6). Deliberations in the high-level political forum under the auspices of the General

Assembly should take into account the findings in the Global Sustainable Development Report.

91. Italy stood by the commitments made at the third International Conference on Small Island Developing States, held in Samoa, and was working with partners on strengthening cooperation with Pacific small island developing States. A ministerial conference of all the small island developing States would be held in Milan in October to assess progress since the Samoa Conference. In June, Italy had hosted a ministerial conference of African least developed countries, also in Milan, which had adopted the Milan Charter. In October, it would also host a high-level event on the role of finance and innovation in contributing to food security and inclusive growth in the agricultural and agrifood sectors.

92. Natural resources should be an important consideration in policy planning. In 2016, the United Nations Statistical Commission would deliberate on a global framework of indicators for measuring the achievement of sustainable development goals. The new global framework would offer an opportunity to move beyond gross domestic product indicators, launch partnerships on capacity-building in statistics and lay the basis for increased synergies between the forum and the Statistical Commission.

93. **Mr. Tlapa** (Observer for the Czech Republic) said that effective monitoring, accountability and review were key to successful implementation of the sustainable development goals. The framework to be set up must therefore be solid, comprehensive, realistic and user-friendly. It must encourage mutual learning and sharing of experiences. The monitoring, accountability and review framework could achieve its purpose only through a single framework that would monitor progress on the sustainable development goals and also on delivering the means of implementation that had been prepared as part of the financing for development track. The means of implementation were expected to be agreed upon in a few days at the third International Conference on Financing for Development.

94. The forum was in a unique position to draw more political attention to the sustainable development agenda and ensure that the economic, social and environmental pillars were balanced and present on an equal footing. The Czech Republic expected the forum to be at the centre of the monitoring, accountability and review framework at the global level. It must be

complementary to and not competitive with other United Nations bodies and build on the work of those bodies, most notably, the integration segment of the Economic and Social Council; regional and functional commissions; and special meetings with important global players, such as international financial institutions. If elected to the Economic and Social Council for the 2016-2018 period, the Czech Republic would do its utmost to seek the most effective and efficient relationship between the forum and the Council system, including harmonization and effectiveness of monitoring and reporting activities with respect to implementation of the post-2015 development agenda.

95. The Czech Republic agreed that the forum must have sufficient and reliable data. Reports from individual countries, inputs from the United Nations regional commissions, thematic reports on boundary-crossing issues and scientific inputs and outcomes produced by relevant intergovernmental organizations and institutions, such as the Development Assistance Committee of the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development and the Global Partnership for Effective Development Cooperation, should be taken into account. The Global Sustainable Development Report would also be an important source of information, once its scope and methodology were finalized.

96. However, the Czech Republic also agreed with those who cautioned against overburdening the forum, recommending division of tasks among the forum and other United Nations bodies and platforms, especially the functional commissions under the Council's umbrella. A fine balancing act was therefore necessary. The forum should draw strategy conclusions on the basis of data collected and interpreted at the national and regional levels. The functional commissions, in partnership with other specialized bodies and national Governments, could carry out supportive analysis of progress towards individual sustainable development goals, and the state of play in different parts of the world could be assessed at the national and regional levels. For example, to maintain a sharp, effective focus and a sense of context, the forum could devote its attention to clusters of goals each year. The review process in the forum and elsewhere should be undertaken in the spirit of new, global partnership, which needed to go beyond business-as-usual approaches.

97. The Czech Republic also supported the vital role of the United Nations development system in the implementation of the sustainable development goals, welcomed the ongoing dialogue on its longer-term positioning and supported its path towards productive outcomes.

98. **Mr. Klisović** (Observer for Croatia) said that the first meeting of the high-level political forum on the transition from the Millennium Development Goals to the sustainable development agenda had been successful. The current meeting, which was the second, was crucial for defining the criteria that would serve as the basis for follow-up to implementation of the agreed sustainable development goals and further coordinate the relevant work.

99. Implementation of the ambitious post-2015 development agenda represented both a complex challenge and a unique opportunity to make a difference by acting together. Strong political commitment was needed on the part of all actors, State and non-State, as well as coordinated action across all policy areas. Only by creating a new global partnership for poverty eradication and sustainable development based on the guiding principles of universality, comprehensiveness, integration, policy coherence among various stakeholders, shared responsibility and mutual accountability, could that be accomplished.

100. The forum should play a crucial oversight role in monitoring implementation of the post-2015 development agenda, as well as in making recommendations for further action at the national, regional and global levels and identifying new and emerging issues. The annual forum under the auspices of the Council would be an ideal setting for monitoring all stakeholders' progress, as it was open to all Member States, as well as to major groups, civil society, other relevant stakeholders and international and regional organizations. The quadrennial meeting of the forum under the auspices of the General Assembly should provide Heads of State and Government an opportunity to steer political leadership on the process and stimulate political commitment and action at all levels. It should provide a platform for a comprehensive review, at the highest level, of global progress on implementation of the sustainable development goals, as well as for considering emerging issues and future challenges to the achievement of the post-2015 agenda.

101. The success of the post-2015 agenda depended on countries working together and upholding their commitments. A solid, efficient, effective approach to monitoring accountability and review was crucial to assessing progress and ensuring effective implementation of the sustainable development goals. It was important to stress the so-called fourth pillar of sustainable development, which included peace, rule of law, justice, human rights and good governance. Only a society that rested on a consistent set of rules based on universal respect for the rule of law could create a sound base and the necessary preconditions for sustainable development and the full eradication of poverty and inequality. Only open, transparent and inclusive governance could recognize and also address major social problems and issues.

102. All segments of society should be included in political decision-making. Consulting with citizens and civil society on policymaking allowed the Government to collect broad and diverse information, expertise and inputs that improved the quality of new policies and delivery of citizen-oriented public services. Civil society involvement guaranteed efficient implementation, monitoring and evaluation of existing policies. Through strengthened social dialogue, improved government responsiveness and the provision of timely, meaningful feedback to citizens, public trust in the work of public institutions would increase. Under a new global initiative, Open Government Partnership, Croatia had been working in recent years to make government more open and transparent. Its accomplishments on such issues as access to information and public services, fiscal transparency and various e-services had positioned Croatia as a leader in working towards more open government. Croatia was on the steering committee of the Open Government Partnership and was a dedicated advocate of the Partnership.

103. Inclusion, transparency and accountability would be key. The benefits of information technology, wide public consultation and participation must be tapped in efforts to achieve a minimum standard for democracy in the twenty-first century, and in the interest of the future development of all countries.

104. A human-rights-based approach to a common sustainable future was fundamental to achieving sustainability goals. Respect for human rights was an absolute prerequisite for any development. Human rights violations in the twenty-first century were not

only a disgrace for all of humanity but also exerted a detrimental influence on the fabric of society as a whole, undermining cohesion and destabilizing whole countries and regions. Standards for assessing respect for human rights in a society were determined by treatment of the most vulnerable groups. In that context, it was important, as part of the new agenda, to overcome remaining shortfalls in the implementation of the Millennium Development Goals, especially with regard to empowerment of the most vulnerable and marginalized, including children, persons with disabilities, the elderly and women and girls.

105. Croatia attached special importance to tackling the remaining causes of gender inequality, such as violence against women; early and forced marriage; shortfalls in sexual and reproductive health rights; persistent gender inequality in access to education; unequal employment opportunities and the gender wage gap; limited control over assets and property; and unequal participation in private and public economic and political decision-making. Eliminating all forms of violence against women and girls and ending sexual violence in conflict were issues on which Croatia had been especially vocal during the negotiations on the post-2015 development framework. Croatia hoped to contribute to the fight against impunity for sexual crimes committed in conflict by adopting a bill, currently being discussed in the Parliament, on the rights of victims of sexual violence. Under the bill, victims of rape and other forms of sexual violence during the war, both women and men, would be entitled to financial compensation as well as to the services and support they needed to heal from the trauma and rebuild their lives.

106. Environmental aspects of sustainable development must be addressed. Protection of the fragile maritime environment and the development of sustainable tourism were environmental priorities for Croatia, a Mediterranean country with a strong maritime heritage.

107. In conclusion, she warned that failure to achieve tangible improvements in living standards for all could cause irreparable damage to future generations, as well as to institutions.

108. **Ms. Murniningtyas** (Observer for Indonesia) said that the post-2015 development agenda provided an opportunity to make the world more just and prosperous. An open, transparent, inclusive follow-up and review framework was needed. The multilevel

process must be anchored in strong national ownership, with each country deciding on its own mechanism. It should be gradual, allowing countries to make adjustments that integrated the new agenda into the national planning process. The structural and development challenges faced by developing countries should be taken into account. Capacity-building would be of the utmost importance in strengthening national follow-up and review mechanisms.

109. Indonesia had been mainstreaming the principle of sustainable development goals into its five-year national development plan. Sustainable development was the pillar of the national development strategy. Putting sustainable development at the core of the national development strategy would ensure implementation throughout Indonesia. The development strategy was based not only on economic growth, but also took into account the urgent need for social inclusion, reduction of inequality among income groups and across provinces in Indonesia and environmental protection.

110. Lessons on implementation, monitoring, review and reporting mechanisms learned in implementing the Millennium Development Goals had also been taken on board and would serve as the basis for the post-2015 agenda accountability framework. While national ownership was important, there was value in looking at regional progress; sharing of experiences could support reviews at the national level.

111. The United Nations regional commissions should be strengthened. It might be valuable to share lessons learned and best practices among regional groups. Indonesia shared the view that the forum would play an important role as the apex of follow-up and review of the post-2015 development agenda and reaffirmed the general principle of the forum as mandated by Rio+ 20. The forum should be inclusive, universal and intergovernmental. It was mandated to be an authoritative body that provided political leadership, guidance and recommendations at the highest level, conducting State-led processes to follow up and review progress in implementing sustainable development commitments in a voluntary manner, while recognizing different national capabilities. The forum should be robust enough to strike a balance between economic, social and environmental imperatives. It should also ensure national capacity development in integrating or mainstreaming sustainable development goals in national development and should avoid overlap with

existing structures, bodies and entities within the United Nations system, in a cost-effective manner. Synergies between existing international mechanisms were needed to create an environment conducive to implementing the post-2015 agenda.

112. To achieve the ambitious sustainable development goals, Governments would require support from renewed global partnerships, with relevant stakeholders from the private sector, non-governmental organizations, academia and international organizations providing a supportive enabling environment and necessary resources.

113. A renewed global partnership would also strengthen the role of the forum in following up and reviewing the post-2015 agenda, including the commitment on means of implementation. Means of implementation, including financial resources, technology transfer, capacity-building and trade facilitation, would be critical in a partnership to deliver and implement a transformative post-2015 agenda. A transparent, effective and efficient ODA mechanism regime, action to reduce inequality across countries and spread development across countries and regions, and support from developed to developing countries would also be crucial to ensuring the successful implementation of the development agenda.

114. Indonesia had shifted subsidies towards more productive development priorities and optimized the tax sector. There was valuable experience among developing countries that could be shared through South-South and triangular cooperation. Indonesia had initiated the development of South-South and triangular knowledge-sharing and believed that the United Nations regional commissions could facilitate that process for countries within each region.

115. On the issue of financing, there must be synergy between the post-2015 development agenda and the deliberations on financing for development. The forum should be able to fulfil its promise to function as an effective global governance mechanism as well as to address gaps and inequalities among countries in achieving the sustainable development goals within the framework of the post-2015 development agenda.

116. **Ms. Laatu** (Finland) said that a well-functioning and credible monitoring, accountability and review mechanism was needed in order to learn from successes and failures, to indicate additional actions needed during implementation, to encourage countries

in their actions, and to communicate effectively. The high-level political forum, established as the main body for follow-up to the post-2015 development agenda, had a strong mandate for monitoring, follow-up and review of the agenda. However, the forum was still taking shape. The mandate should be operationalized without delay, and guidelines for future work developed, so that by 2016, the forum could function as the apex of a global review.

117. The forum must lose no time in claiming its place in the monitoring, accountability and review system. Member States should be invited in 2016 to introduce their implementation plans for the post-2015 agenda by describing how they were integrating the sustainable development goals into their national policies. After 2016, the focus should be on monitoring implementation of all sustainable development goals, including means of implementation.

118. The Global Sustainable Development Report should be produced every four years, in time for the meeting of the forum at the level of Heads of State and Government, underlining thereby the political importance of the Report and ensuring that it received high-level attention. It should also be used for communicating the agenda.

119. It was crucial for all stakeholders in the forum to participate effectively and make meaningful contributions. The voices of civil society and the private sector must not only be heard but also taken into account. That was one of the great innovations of the forum and was crucial to its ability to foster new partnerships.

120. Within existing budgetary resources, the forum should have adequate means not only to conduct its annual session effectively and efficiently, but also to process issues related to sustainable development and the implementation of the post-2015 agenda between sessions.

121. Preparation of forum meetings must become more transparent, and a clearer mechanism for the involvement of Member States, major groups and other relevant stakeholders should be developed.

122. In addition to a well-functioning and credible monitoring, accountability and review mechanism, national implementation was also necessary for the successful implementation of the post-2015 agenda. All countries needed to take concrete actions to implement

the agenda. Finland had always taken sustainable development very seriously, and had had, since 1993, a national commission for sustainable development chaired by the Prime Minister. During the past two decades, her Government had designed and implemented several sustainable development strategies. The most recent strategy was based on engaging all interested actors in promoting sustainable development.

123. Finland welcomed the recent discussions on the Samoa Pathway and on the 10-year framework of programmes on sustainable consumption and production. The forum should be able to demonstrate political leadership, provide guidance and dedicate sufficient time for deliberations.

124. **Mr. Sarapuu** (Estonia) said that the sustainable development goals were based not only on the successes of the Millennium Development Goals, but also on their shortcomings. The new goals would honestly acknowledge and address the remaining gaps and critical factors, agreeing on a comprehensive and effective approach to accountability, monitoring and review of the implementation of the new goals. The approach should be based on national ownership and leadership, and implementation with an efficient framework at all levels, national, regional and global. It should be inclusive and based on reliable data and statistics. The progress and outstanding issues arising from national and regional reviews should feed into the global review.

125. The high-level political forum should be the main platform for that purpose, and should be a forum for reporting on advancements, sharing States' knowledge, best practices and challenges and maintaining the level of ambition and commitment of the post-2015 agenda. Estonia supported the idea of States voluntarily participating in the process at least two times by 2030, if possible. The forum should enhance integration of the three dimensions of sustainable development in a comprehensive and cross-sectoral manner, at all levels, ensuring adequate consideration of emerging sustainable development challenges. Thematic discussions would also be productive.

126. Monitoring, accountability and review of financing for development conferences should be an integral part of post-2015 monitoring accountability and review, and should therefore feed into the forum. To provide strong political guidance and follow-up to

that outcome, the forum would give appropriate consideration to those conferences every four years. Using existing institutional mechanisms to conserve resource would ensure cohesion and avoid redundancies. As a current member of the Economic and Social Council, Estonia was of the view that the forum should rely to a large extent on the Council and its subsidiary bodies. However, the forum should also take into account the work of relevant United Nations system bodies and other international organizations such as the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development.

127. Like many other States, Estonia was taking steps to implement the sustainable development goals and integrate them into their national sustainable development monitoring system. The national strategies and planning documents of Estonia also covered post-2015 issues, but they needed to be revised in the context of new trends and the sustainable development goals. Coordination and cooperation at all levels across all sectors would be an especially important aspect of the success of the post-2015 agenda. Continuous building of awareness and effective communication of sustainable development goals, with the involvement of the private sector and civil society, remained essential for mobilizing all available resources to reach the global goals.

128. **Ms. Ganjanarintr** (Observer for Thailand) said that in two months, leaders would adopt the post-2015 development agenda, which was expected to be ambitious, transformative, inclusive, integrated and comprehensive. In finalizing the new development agenda, it was important to remember that, in many places in the world, the Millennium Development Goals remained unfinished business. Each country must assess how much and how far it had come in achieving them. Lessons learned from the Millennium Development Goals would be invaluable to the success of the new agenda.

129. Since the adoption of the Millennium Development Goals, the world had realized that economic pursuit must not take place at the expense of the environment. Growth must be equitable and inclusive. A people-centred and rights-based development approach was the way to address deeply rooted inequalities. The adverse effects of climate change and the increasing severity and frequency of natural disasters had led Thailand to strengthen resilience and reduce disaster risk. The Sendai

Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015-2030 would be instrumental in guiding the world to a safer path.

130. The report of the Secretary-General on managing the transition from the Millennium Development Goals to the sustainable development goals: what it will take (E/2015/68) had highlighted many points that were in line with the priorities of Thailand. There was agreement on the need for collective efforts as well as integrated policies and actions at the national, regional and global levels to respond effectively to the cross-cutting nature of the proposed sustainable development goals. Those efforts must be supported by strong political will and leadership. A recently established national committee for sustainable development would be chaired by the Prime Minister and include cross-sectoral representation. The national committee would ensure a comprehensive governmental and societal approach to achieving sustainable development.

131. It was clear that a new and transformative agenda required enhanced global partnership and cooperation. Thailand stood ready to meet its responsibilities. Its Department of International Cooperation now led the way nationally in extending development assistance through South-South and triangular cooperation. Thailand's partnerships with least developed countries and small island developing States were going from strength to strength.

132. The private sector could play a key role in integrating the three pillars of sustainable development through the promotion of responsible investment and the creation of social enterprises. Civil society could do more to keep government and the business sector in check and represent people and communities on the ground.

133. Her Government strongly believed that integration requirements for the post-2015 agenda would require the United Nations development system to develop capacity to shift seamlessly between specialization and integration. For the post-2015 agenda to succeed, not only did the Member States need to change, but the United Nations development system would need to adapt itself as well.

134. **Mr. Wennubst** (Switzerland) said that the post-2015 development agenda marked two fundamental paradigm shifts. It was universal, and it combined poverty eradication and sustainable development in an integrated manner. Successful integration would

require considering policy coherence, synergies and trade-offs among the goals.

135. Multiple stakeholders, including civil society and the private sector, had been involved in defining the post-2015 agenda. That must continue in future monitoring, follow-up and review framework activities. While any robust monitoring follow-up and review framework must begin at the national level, many of the challenges affected everyone and could not be reduced to the national and regional context. Monitoring, follow-up and review at the global level, with the high-level political forum as the focal point, were therefore crucial.

136. The annual meeting of the forum under the auspices of the Council was an opportunity to exchange views and experiences among countries based on national progress reports and to conduct thematic reviews at the global level. Those thematic reviews should reflect the integrated, interrelated nature of the sustainable development goals, focusing on the nexus between goals and targets and drawing on the consolidated input of relevant United Nations platforms that fed into the forum.

137. Some time would be needed before an implementation review could be conducted. During the first four-year cycle, Governments should be invited to communicate how they translated the sustainable development goals at the national level through their national commitments, innovative approaches and multi-stakeholder collaborative projects. During the subsequent four-year review cycles, Governments would be asked to report on progress in implementation. With that in mind, Switzerland supported holding the next meeting of the forum under the auspices of the General Assembly in 2019 in alignment with the quadrennial comprehensive policy review cycle.

138. At the quadrennial meetings of the forum under the auspices of the General Assembly, world leaders would need to mobilize action for implementation of the agenda, informed by policy-relevant, evidence-based conclusions of the Global Sustainable Development Report on successes, bottlenecks and new and emerging issues.

139. Given the important role of the forum in follow-up and review of implementation of the post-2015 development agenda, a more predictable, inclusive and transparent preparatory process for the forum should be

in place in the future. A road map indicating key milestones for the forum was needed as soon as possible for successful follow-up and review of commitments towards sustainable development through 2030.

140. Because it was necessary to ensure that the United Nations system was ready and able to support countries in implementing the universal and integrated post-2015 agenda, it would be appropriate to call for the elaboration of a United Nations system-wide strategy at the highest managerial level, for example at the level of the United Nations System Chief Executives Board for Coordination, to guide coherent, effective implementation of the post-2015 agenda across the United Nations system. Guiding elements for such a strategy would be taken up by an enhanced quadrennial comprehensive policy review in 2016.

The meeting rose at 6.00 p.m.