Economic and Social Council

2015 session
21 July 2014-22 July 2015
Fourth coordination and management meeting

Summary record of the 54th meeting
Held at Headquarters, New York, on Wednesday, 22 July 2015, at 10 a.m.

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

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

The meeting was called to order at 10.10 a.m.

Economic and environmental questions (*continued*)

 (b) Science and technology for development
 (A/70/63-E/2015/10; E/2015/31)

1. **Ms. Wu** (Chief, Science and Technology Division, United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD)), introducing the report of the Secretary-General on progress made in the implementation of and follow-up to the outcomes of the World Summit on the Information Society at the regional and international levels (A/70/63-E/2015/10), said that 2015 was a crucial year for the World Summit on the Information Society (WSIS) process as the General Assembly was conducting its overall review of the progress made over the last ten years in implementing the WSIS outcomes.

2. It was expected that the WSIS target of ensuring that more than half the world's inhabitants had access to information and communications technologies (ICTs) would be reached by 2016. Currently, over 90 per cent of the world's population was covered by mobile networks, with the number of mobile subscriptions almost equal to the world's population. However, digital divides persisted both between and within countries; for example, while 78 per cent of households in developed countries had Internet access, only 5 per cent in the least developed countries did so.

3. At the same time, the rapid pace of change in ICTs had led to the continuous emergence of new services and opportunities, including a shift towards more flexible mobile devices; a transition towards cloud-based data services; more extensive use of big data analysis and open data; and the emerging "Internet of things", which would greatly expand the data available to enhance development opportunities. However, such developments also posed substantial challenges in terms of policy and regulation, including excessive pressure on radio spectrum and concerns over data protection, privacy and data sovereignty.

4. In July 2014, following the announcement by the Government of the United States of America that it intended to transition its stewardship over key Internet domain name functions to the global multi-stakeholder Names and Numbers (ICANN) had established a Stewardship Transition Coordination Group to develop proposals regarding the administration of the Internet Assigned Numbers Authority (IANA) functions.

5. The tenth and final meeting of the Internet Governance Forum under its current mandate was scheduled for November 2015 in Brazil, and the renewal of its mandate would be considered by the General Assembly in December 2015. In addition, the secretariat of the Commission on Science and Technology for Development had continued the work begun by the Commission's Working Group on Enhanced Cooperation to review international public policy issues pertaining to the Internet. In the context of the ten-year review of WSIS, the International Telecommunication Union had hosted the WSIS+10 High-Level Event, which had produced two outcome documents: the WSIS+10 Statement on Implementation of WSIS Outcomes and the WSIS+10 Vision for WSIS Beyond 2015. A number of other events had also been held in relation to the implementation of WSIS outcomes, all of which had provided an inclusive and open platform for a broad spectrum of stakeholders to discuss and assess the progress made.

6. In connection with the review of progress conducted by the Commission on Science and Technology for Development, the Commission secretariat had organized an open online consultation, inviting all stakeholders to share their views and experiences. A total of 95 written contributions had been received, providing valuable evidence of WSIS implementation. In order to reach stakeholders from different regions, seven face-to-face consultations had also been held in different locations. Based on those consultations, as well as previous WSIS+10 processes and relevant literature, the Commission secretariat had prepared a report entitled "Implementing World Summit on the Information Society Outcomes: A Ten-Year Review" which had served as input to the substantive discussion on the WSIS ten-year review during the eighteenth session.

7. **Ms. Johnson** (Observer for Nigeria), Chair, Commission on Science and Technology for Development, introducing the report of the Commission on its eighteenth session (E/2015/31), said that the Commission had discussed the ten-year review of progress made in implementing the WSIS outcomes, and had also considered two priority themes, "Strategic

foresight for the post-2015 development agenda" and "Digital development". A special segment had been devoted to the science, technology and innovation policy review of Thailand. Finally, a ministerial round table had been convened on the role of science, technology and innovation in managing the transition from the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) to the sustainable development goals.

8. Participants in the discussion on the priority themes had concluded that strategic foresight was an important policy tool for implementing the post-2015 development agenda; Governments had been encouraged to undertake foresight exercises on trends in science, technology and innovation and ICTs, and their impact on sustainable development. Participants had also observed that a well-developed digital ecosystem was a primary requirement for effective digital development, and the Commission had recommended that Governments should assess their national innovation systems and digital ecosystems to identify weaknesses and direct policy interventions to strengthen the weaker areas. The Commission had also encouraged UNCTAD to include strategic foresight and digital ecosystem assessments as part of its science, technology and innovation policy reviews.

9. In presenting the main findings of its science, technology and innovation policy review of Thailand, UNCTAD had observed that the country, like many other middle-income developing countries, must invest in strong domestic innovation capabilities to ensure sustainable competitiveness and continued increases in productivity and per capita income.

10. The ministerial round table had recognized the instrumental role of science and technology innovation in achieving numerous MDGs and highlighted its role as an enabler of the post-2015 development agenda. A summary of the discussions, contained in document E/2015/78, had been submitted to the Council's high-level segment.

11. In the context of the ten-year review of progress made in implementing WSIS outcomes, participants had drawn attention to the considerable progress made, particularly in terms of increasing access to ICTs and reducing the digital divide in basic services. Challenges remained, however, especially with regard to the affordability of broadband access, the specific needs of least developed countries, the persistent gender divide and the need to ensure full inclusiveness

for economically and socially marginalized groups. It had been noted that the WSIS outcome documents provided a solid foundation for shaping a people-centred, inclusive and development-oriented information society. At the same time, rapid change and innovation in ICTs since WSIS had brought new priorities and challenges, which should prompt the international community to adjust implementation of the outcomes where necessary. Various views had been expressed concerning the process of enhancing cooperation in Internet governance to enable Governments to address international public policy issues regarding the Internet on an equal footing. While some participants believed that substantial progress had been achieved, others strongly disagreed and had been of the view that the overall review should provide clear guidance concerning operationalization of the process.

12. Many participants had noted the success of the Internet Governance Forum in bringing together diverse stakeholders, facilitating substantive, topical workshops and fostering dialogue. Some, however, had indicated that the Forum could be further strengthened, and a number of delegates had called for its mandate to be extended.

13. The report prepared by the Commission secretariat, entitled "Implementing World Summit on the Information Society Outcomes: A Ten-Year Review" had been welcomed by the vast majority of Governments and other stakeholders as a comprehensive, thorough and balanced analysis that drew on extensive contributions by a range of actors. However, some participants had noted that the report did not sufficiently reflect the view that little or no progress had been made in the area of enhanced cooperation, an aspect that must be addressed in the post-2015 development agenda. Some participants had called for a greater focus on developing countries and had highlighted the need to give priority to ICTs in international cooperation between developed and developing countries, in particular least developed and landlocked developing countries. The importance of financing mechanisms had also been stressed, especially as investment in ICTs was costly for developing countries. Recommendations were needed on how to enhance financing for the implementation of WSIS outcomes and ensure robust financial and technical assistance mechanisms. The Commission had decided to transmit the report of its secretariat, through

the Council, to the General Assembly as input for its overall review of the implementation of the WSIS outcomes. It had also recommended that the Council should forward the Commission's report on its eighteenth session (E/2015/31) to the preparatory process of the high-level meeting of the General Assembly.

14. The two priority themes for the Commission's nineteenth session would be "Smart cities and infrastructure" and "Foresight for digital development".

15. **Mr. Morozov** (Russian Federation) said that, in the context of the post-2015 development agenda, his delegation attached particular importance to the upcoming overall review of the implementation of WSIS outcomes in 2015. It was important to build a new paradigm for developing the information society so that it became a knowledge society. It was unjustified to equate social development merely with technological development and ignore individual development, replace knowledge acquisition with training on how to use computers and smartphones, or focus on reducing the digital divide and building capacity while neglecting the quality and security of information on the Internet.

16. Science and technology were mentioned directly in nine of the 17 proposed sustainable development goals and indirectly in four others. Science and technology innovation would be essential for implementing the post-2015 development agenda and achieving the sustainable development goals. The Commission on Science and Technology for Development should focus its efforts on developing broad-based international cooperation in the humanities and natural sciences, including design transfer and the spread of clean, environmentally friendly and safe technology, as well as on supporting university education and research in global sustainable development. His Government attached particular importance to information and telecommunications, life sciences, the nanosystem industry, nature conservation, transport and outer space systems, energy efficiency, energy conservation, nuclear energy, security and counter-terrorism.

17. **Mr. Reynolds** (United States of America) said that the Commission had positioned itself very constructively within the United Nations system, particularly during the transition from the MDGs to the post-2015 development agenda. ICTs were important

enablers within that agenda, as science, technology and innovation assets were crucial for achieving nine of the proposed sustainable development goals. Not only did ICTs enable science, technology and innovation, engineering and vocational training, but they also provided the infrastructure to which developing countries could connect. However, as had been emphasized by the Commission over the last five years, developing countries would need training to use those assets well.

18. The priority theme of "Smart cities and infrastructure" for the nineteenth session was particularly timely, as issues of infrastructure, urbanization and industrialization were key to the proposed sustainable development goals. His delegation looked forward to the forthcoming United Nations Conference on Housing and Sustainable Urban Development (Habitat III), which would address those points, and highlighted the importance of the fusion of information and communication technologies in the twenty-first century urban environment. It hoped that in the context of the second priority theme "Foresight for digital development" the Commission would address other underlying issues, such as impacts on labour and advanced manufacturing.

Action on recommendations contained in the report of the Commission on Science and Technology for Development on its eighteenth session (E/2015/31)

19. **The President** drew attention to the draft proposals contained in chapter I, sections A and B, of the report, noting that they contained no programme budget implications.

Section A

Draft resolution I: Assessment of the progress made in the implementation of and follow-up to the outcomes of the World Summit on the Information Society

Draft resolution II: Science, technology and innovation for development

20. *Draft resolutions I and II were adopted.*

Section B

Draft decision I: Extension of the mandate of the Gender Advisory Board of the Commission on Science and Technology for Development

Draft decision II: Participation of non-governmental organizations and civil society entities in the work of the Commission on Science and Technology for Development

Draft decision III: Participation of academic and technical entities in the work of the Commission on Science and Technology for Development

Draft decision IV: Participation of business sector entities, including the private sector, in the work of the Commission on Science and Technology for Development

Draft decision V: Report of the Commission on Science and Technology for Development on its eighteenth session and provisional agenda and documentation for the nineteenth session of the Commission

21.   *Draft decisions I, II, III, IV and V were adopted.*

(g) Public administration and development (E/2015/44)

22.   **Ms. Saner** (Chair of the Committee of Experts on Public Administration), speaking via video link from London and introducing the report of the Committee of Experts on Public Administration on its fourteenth session (E/2015/44), said that at that session the Committee members had concurred that building trust in government in the post-2015 era would depend primarily on the implementation of sound public policies that reflected people's priorities, and on institutional performance and quality public services. In order to be fully effective, technical and bureaucratic responses to the challenges of the sustainable development goals would require political consensus and constructive management of relationships with citizens at all levels.

23.   In that connection, the Committee had addressed in depth the issues of redefining relationships and responsibilities to support participatory governance; strengthening innovation and policy integration; and accountable institutions, ethical leadership and integrity. It had also reviewed the United Nations Programme in Public Administration and Development Management, noting that the governance aspects of

proposed sustainable development goal 16, as well as aspects of goal 17, were areas where the Programme could best support the Committee's work in the follow-up to the post-2015 development agenda. It had stressed that the Secretariat and the United Nations agencies should continue to promote collaboration and coherence of their activities in pursuit of those ends.

24.   The Committee proposed to prepare concrete policy recommendations on the governance and institutional aspects of the Council's 2016 theme "Implementing the post-2015 development agenda: moving from commitments to results". Its focus would be on developing recommendations for transforming public institutions to promote effective governance and facilitate inclusive policy formulation and integration in the follow-up to the sustainable development goals.

Action on recommendations contained in the report of the Committee of Experts on Public Administration on its fourteenth session (E/2015/44)

25.   **The President** drew attention to the draft proposals contained in chapter I, sections A and B, of the report, noting that they contained no programme budget implications.

Section A

Draft resolution: Report of the Committee of Experts on Public Administration on its fourteenth session

26.   *The draft resolution was adopted.*

Section B

Draft decision: Venue, dates and provisional agenda of the fifteenth session of the Committee of Experts on Public Administration

27.   *The draft decision was adopted.*

Social and human rights questions (*continued*)

(h) Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues (A/70/84-E/2015/76; E/2015/43)

28.   **Mr. Gass** (Assistant Secretary-General for Policy Coordination and Inter-Agency Affairs, Department of Economic and Social Affairs), introducing the report of the Secretary-General on progress made in the implementation of the outcome document of the high-level plenary meeting of the General Assembly known as the World Conference on Indigenous Peoples

(A/70/84-E/2015/76), said that few specific actions had been taken by Member States in direct follow-up to the outcome document, perhaps owing to the short time frame since the World Conference, which had taken place in September 2014. The few follow-up actions taken to date indicated the need to further disseminate the outcome document and raise awareness of the World Conference and the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples. Member States, the United Nations system and indigenous peoples all had a role to play in that regard.

29.   Further to the General Assembly's request in the outcome document for the Secretary-General to develop, within existing resources, a system-wide action plan to ensure a coherent approach to achieving the ends of the Declaration and to report on progress made, the Under-Secretary-General for Economic and Social Affairs had been accorded responsibility for coordinating the action plan. The Inter-Agency Support Group on Indigenous Peoples' Issues had established a working group to develop the action plan, with the active participation of focal points from United Nations agencies, funds and programmes, and a draft version had been disseminated for input from the Inter-Agency Support Group. The consultation process with Member States and indigenous peoples was ongoing.

30.   In relation to the request for the Secretary-General to submit recommendations on how to use, modify and improve existing United Nations mechanisms to achieve the ends of the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, the report focused on the Expert Mechanism on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples. The work of the Expert Mechanism had proven valuable in providing thematic expertise, although its impact must be further strengthened, especially by taking into account the specific measures put forward by Member States and indigenous representatives. In particular, the Expert Mechanism could be mandated to assist Member States in monitoring and evaluating progress, including in relation to the implementation of relevant thematic and country-specific recommendations issued by human rights mechanisms and bodies. The Expert Mechanism would then be able to engage in direct communication and constructive dialogue with interested Member States and indigenous peoples.

31.   In response to the General Assembly's request for specific proposals to enable the participation of indigenous peoples at the United Nations, the Secretary-General encouraged Member States to develop measures to enable the effective participation of indigenous peoples' representatives and institutions in meetings of relevant United Nations bodies, through representatives chosen in accordance with their own procedures. In that process, Member States could draw on current United Nations practices regarding indigenous participation that had been identified as good practices by both indigenous peoples and Member States. The President of the General Assembly might wish, as a next step, to appoint co-facilitators or advisers, including indigenous representatives, to lead an open-ended consultation process on the possible procedural and institutional steps and selection criteria necessary to enable indigenous peoples' participation.

32.   **Ms. Davis** (Chair of the Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues), speaking via video link and introducing the report of the Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues on its fourteenth session (E/2015/43) said that, although indigenous issues were not new to the United Nations system, they were gaining relevance and importance within it.

33.   Indigenous peoples, who numbered approximately 370 million around the world, possessed their own identities, cultures and knowledge systems, with aspirations for a just world built on the principles of equity and justice. Whether in developed or developing countries, indigenous peoples faced discrimination, marginalization, poverty and unemployment, as well as health risks that were disproportionally higher than the rest of the population, with little or no access to basic services such as water and sanitation. Indigenous peoples were also among the internally displaced as a result of development that often took place on their territories without their involvement, knowledge or consent. Despite such challenges, indigenous peoples maintained a rich cultural heritage and knowledge systems that could be shared with Governments to build a better future for generations to come.

34.   Discussions at the fourteenth session had covered a wide range of issues, including a focus on the Pacific region and human rights. In addition, the Permanent Forum had decided to review and reform its own methods of work in order to become more effective within the United Nations system and more responsive to its mandate, which included economic and social development, culture, the environment, education, health, and the promotion and protection of the human rights of indigenous peoples.

35. The Permanent Forum had made recommendations to States, indigenous peoples and United Nations agencies, funds and programmes to immediately engage in a consultative process at the local, national, regional and international levels, focused on the full and effective implementation of the outcome document of the World Conference on Indigenous Peoples. The Permanent Forum had also taken note of the serious concerns raised by indigenous peoples over the lack of explicit reference to and inclusion of indigenous peoples as distinct groups with collective rights in the development of the goals and targets of the post-2015 development agenda. It had reaffirmed the need for that agenda to be fully aligned with the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, as well as with States' international human rights obligations and commitments.

36. The Permanent Forum had urged all States to substantially increase the human and financial resources made available to all indigenous communities and schools to prevent self-harm and suicide among young people, and for holistic treatment based on cultural, spiritual and linguistic revitalization, providing healthy and positive lifestyle choices as well as access to traditional methods of counselling based on accurate and reliable data.

37. The theme of the fifteenth session of the Permanent Forum would be "Indigenous peoples: conflict, peace and resolution", reflecting the need to explore the effects of conflict on indigenous peoples' safety and well-being, as well as the important role to be played by indigenous peoples in peacebuilding, reconciliation and the resolution of conflicts.

38. **Ms. Phipps** (United States of America) said that the Council was an appropriate forum to follow up on the many recommendations of the outcome document of the World Conference on Indigenous Peoples that related to the coordination and management of the United Nations system. Her delegation supported the preparation of a system-wide action plan to ensure a coherent approach to achieving the ends of the Declaration on the Right of Indigenous Peoples. Bearing in mind that, according to the dictionary definition, something was "coherent" when it was logical and easy to understand, and when its parts related to each other in a consistent, organized and reasonable way, a system-wide action plan could help achieve a logical and consistent relationship both

within and across United Nations agencies, minimizing overlaps and identifying gaps. Each member of the United Nations family had to determine how it could address indigenous concerns within its own mandated activities. When a possible course of action applied to more than one agency, parties should consult each other to eliminate duplication, thus creating a coherent approach across agencies at the headquarters level. In addition, once valuable activities had been identified, recommendations should be brought to the attention of the governing boards for discussion and endorsement, thereby creating a coherent approach within agencies. At the field level, country team members should establish contact with indigenous groups, so that agencies could work with host governments and other partners to meet indigenous peoples' needs within their existing priorities and programming or through targeted programming. While the United Nations Development Group had guidelines relating to indigenous peoples, those guidelines lacked accountability mechanisms. The system-wide action plan should require agencies to report on whether guidelines were being followed. At the current stage, characterized by inaction and inconsistency within United Nations agencies in relation to indigenous peoples, the development of a system-wide action plan was a modest but necessary tool.

39. Her delegation supported modifying the mandate and composition of the Expert Mechanism on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples to help it assess the progress of Member States in achieving the goals of the Declaration and identify best practices. Currently, the programmes of work for the Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues and the Expert Mechanism were duplicative. In the future, the Expert Mechanism should not consider issues that were already being addressed at the Permanent Forum. It would thus have greater capacity to partner with countries to ascertain how they had attained the Declaration's goals. The Expert Mechanism would need more than its five current members to perform an assessment function. Both Government and indigenous representation could perhaps be included in a revised Expert Mechanism, with members elected for a two- to three-year period to allow the transfer of expertise. Despite concerns that such changes would transform the Expert Mechanism into a treaty body, her delegation believed that it would merely make it more efficient by eliminating duplication and assigning it the important task of helping Member States to assess progress and share

best practices. The scope of the Mechanism's additional functions would, however, need to be clearly defined.

40. With regard to enhancing indigenous peoples' participation in the United Nations, her delegation recommended that new participation procedures for representatives of indigenous peoples and institutions should initially be considered within the Council and its subsidiary bodies. For example, the Council could, as of its 2016 session, establish a mechanism for hearing the views of indigenous peoples during its annual debate on the follow-up to the World Conference on Indigenous Peoples. The revised procedures for subsidiary bodies could build on those established by the Council for participation in the Permanent Forum, allowing both elected and traditional indigenous representatives to submit written input, attend selected sessions, and make oral statements. Changes making sessions inefficient by adding unwieldly numbers of participants should, however, be avoided.

41. Her Government supported enhanced participation for the representatives of federally recognized Indian tribes, as well as for other United States entities that could demonstrate that they should be allowed to participate in the United Nations system as indigenous peoples' representatives. Similar principles could be applied to the representatives of indigenous entities from other countries. It would therefore be important to evaluate applications from entities beyond those recognized under a country's established domestic process. Her delegation suggested that an application questionnaire could be provided to interested indigenous entities, while a hybrid committee, consisting of Member States and indigenous representatives — with Member States in the majority — could be established to make decisions on the applications. The secretariat of the Permanent Forum could support the selection process, as its involvement with the Forum's accreditation process gave it the required expertise for vetting applications.

42. With regard to the report's recommendation that co-facilitators could be appointed to lead an open-ended consultation process on the enhanced participation question, her delegation noted that paragraph 40 of the World Conference outcome document called for the Secretary-General to submit recommendations, through the Economic and Social Council, to the seventieth session of the General

Assembly. It therefore suggested that, rather than having an open-ended process, it would be advisable to have Council facilitators — one Member State representative and one indigenous peoples' representative — to lead a consultative process over several months.

43. **Ms. Yassine** (Brazil) said that the Expert Mechanism, as a subsidiary body of the Human Rights Council, contributed a specific human rights perspective on indigenous issues. Improvements could be made to fully exploit the respective assets of the Expert Mechanism, the Permanent Forum and the Special Rapporteur on the rights of indigenous peoples, and to minimize duplication. Her delegation welcomed several of the proposals concerning the mandate of the Expert Mechanism contained in the report of the Secretary-General (A/70/84-E/2015/76), specifically those proposing that its mandate should include preparing reports on the implementation of the Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples worldwide; assisting Member States in monitoring and evaluating progress and overcoming obstacles to better achieve the goals of the Declaration; supporting Member States and indigenous peoples in the preparation of national strategies and action plans for the implementation of the Declaration, including through country-specific advice; issuing general observations and interpretations regarding the provisions of the Declaration; and collecting and disseminating information regarding good practices for achieving the ends of the Declaration.

44. At the seventieth session of the General Assembly, Member States must consider ways to enable the participation of indigenous peoples' representatives in meetings of relevant United Nations bodies on issues affecting them, bearing in mind that few indigenous representatives were usually able to participate in international forums. Furthermore, Governments, civil society, international organizations and representatives of indigenous peoples must join efforts to ensure the dissemination of the World Conference on Indigenous Peoples outcome document and the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, as well as the follow-up of their implementation.

45. **Mr. Montaño** (Observer for Mexico), speaking on behalf of the Group of Friends of the World Conference on Indigenous Peoples, consisting of Argentina, Australia, Bolivia (Plurinational State of),

Brazil, Colombia, Denmark, Finland, Guatemala, Mexico, New Zealand, Nicaragua, Norway, Peru and Spain, said that the Group acknowledged the work under way on the development of a system-wide action plan to ensure a coherent approach to achieving the ends of the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples. It encouraged the Inter-Agency Support Group, Member States and indigenous peoples to continue consultations regarding the development of the plan.

46. The Group of Friends also supported the call in the outcome document of the World Conference on Indigenous Peoples for the Human Rights Council to review the mandates of its existing mechanisms, in particular the Expert Mechanism on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples. The Group underlined the necessity of maintaining an inclusive process that ensured the participation of indigenous peoples throughout the deliberations. In addition, the Group supported the specific proposals made in the Secretary-General's report for enabling the participation of indigenous peoples' representatives in the United Nations, in particular the proposal that the President of the General Assembly might consider the possibility of appointing co-facilitators or advisers, including indigenous representatives, to lead an open-ended consultation process among, inter alia, Member States, indigenous peoples' representatives and existing mechanisms of the United Nations on the possible procedural and institutional steps and selection criteria necessary to enable such participation.

47. **Mr. Crippa** (Observer for the National Congress of American Indians), also speaking on behalf of the Indian Law Resource Center, the Native American Rights Fund and the Ewiiaapaayp Band of Kumeyaay Indians, said that the last four decades had seen important victories in the advancement of indigenous human rights, including the adoption of the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples. However, much remained to be done, as indigenous peoples remained the poorest of the poor, violence against indigenous women was at epidemic levels, sacred sites were being traded away to mining companies, and indigenous leaders were being threatened, assaulted and even murdered for their work protecting indigenous lands.

48. The decisions made at the World Conference on Indigenous Peoples had the potential to greatly improve indigenous peoples' lives, but only if they were properly implemented in the coming months. The system-wide action plan addressed in the Secretary-General's report should pay special attention to the rights of indigenous women and children. Furthermore, nothing was more essential than the two reforms it supported, namely, the development of an implementing and monitoring body to protect the indigenous rights enshrined in the Declaration, and the creation of rules to enable indigenous peoples' governments and representative institutions to participate throughout the United Nations system. The organizations he represented, and many other indigenous peoples, stood ready to contribute to developing and implementing those measures as effectively as possible.

49. He welcomed the Secretary-General's recommendation to strengthen and expand the mandate of the Expert Mechanism on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, which should also pay particular attention to the rights of indigenous women and children. Whatever form it took, the Expert Mechanism should enable experts to receive information, produce reports and issue guiding interpretations. He also welcomed the proposal to establish a consultation process to receive the views of indigenous peoples and Member States, and supported the recommendation of the Permanent Forum that a new procedure should be established to guarantee the effective participation of indigenous governance institutions in the United Nations.

50. Indigenous governing institutions that were accredited must be able to participate meaningfully in practically all United Nations meetings. Indigenous peoples were the most appropriate actors to discuss issues affecting them, such as violence against indigenous women. Enabling indigenous governing institutions to speak for themselves would yield more informed deliberations, better decisions, more successful programmes, and greater security for indigenous rights.

Action on recommendations contained in the report of the Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues on its fourteenth session (E/2015/43)

51. **The President** drew attention to the draft proposals contained in chapter I, section A, of the report.

Draft decision I: International expert group meeting on the theme "Indigenous languages: preservation and revitalization (articles 13, 14 and 16 of the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples)"

Draft decision II: Venue and dates for the fifteenth session of the Permanent Forum

Draft decision III: Report of the Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues on its fourteenth session and provisional agenda for its fifteenth session

52. *Draft decisions I, II and III were adopted.*

53. **Ms. Selk** (France) said that her Government, which was committed to the principle of equality among all individuals, supported any proposal that sought to ensure the full enjoyment of human rights by indigenous peoples. However, referring to the interpretative declaration that her delegation had formulated when the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples had been adopted, she recalled that, under French constitutional law, France did not recognize any collective rights of any group whatsoever, as defined by community of origin, culture, language or belief. Human rights were universal and intended to be applied to all individuals without distinction. France was committed to ensuring that every individual could fully and effectively enjoy his or her human rights without discrimination.

Regional cooperation (E/2015/15, E/2015/15/Add.1, E/2015/15/Add.2, E/2015/16, E/2015/17, E/2015/18, E/2015/19, E/2015/20 and E/2015/21)

54. **Mr. Nour** (Director, Regional Commissions New York Office), introducing the report of the Secretary-General on regional cooperation in the economic, social and related fields (E/2015/15, E/2015/15/Add.1 and E/2015/15/Add.2), said that the report provided regional perspectives on the post-2015 development agenda and the third International Conference on Financing for Development, as well as highlighting the role of the regional commissions in supporting action on climate change ahead of the twenty-first session of the Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change. The report also covered developments in selected areas of regional and interregional cooperation.

55. Intergovernmental processes related to the post-2015 development agenda and the third International Conference on Financing for Development had acknowledged the value of the regional commissions in supporting Member States to implement their commitments. In that regard, the regional commissions must mobilize their expertise and mechanisms to support implementation of the financing for development agenda. Although domestic resource mobilization was at the core of financing for development, the constraints on mobilizing domestic resources were increasingly being exacerbated by global externalities and spillovers, including issues of global regulation relating to international tax cooperation, debt sustainability and profiling, the combating of illicit financial flows, vulnerability to conflicts and their impact on neighbouring countries, contractual frameworks for public-private partnerships, and fair returns from extractive industries in developing countries. The need for a universal, inclusive platform to address such issues was becoming increasingly critical to support the adequate mobilization of resources for an ambitious, transformative and people-centred sustainable development agenda.

56. It had become clear from consultations undertaken by the regional commissions on follow-up and review of the post-2015 development agenda that those bodies could serve as platforms for substantive and inclusive discussions of regional trends and cross-border challenges, leading to a shared understanding of important development issues. The regional commissions could also support Member States by adapting the sustainable development goals and targets to national contexts, and working to achieve a balanced integration of the different dimensions of sustainable development, including by strengthening countries' capacities for national planning, data collection, statistics, analysis and evidence-based policymaking.

57. The regional commissions were expected to play an important role in the follow-up and review of the new agenda. Regional reviews could help to strengthen countries' respective capacities by supporting common solutions to common challenges and fostering regional cooperation. They could also assess how the means of implementation were being leveraged in each region, thereby identifying the best practices to be shared. While each region could shape its own review process through the regional forums on sustainable development, it was necessary to clearly and effectively link the national, regional and global levels of review, using the subsidiarity principle.

58. Increased resilience to the adverse effects of climate change and to natural disasters — some of the considerations that had led to the SIDS Accelerated Modalities of Action (SAMOA) Pathway and the Sendai Framework of Action for Disaster Risk Reduction — were also among the critical aspects of adaptation to climate change being considered in preparation for the twenty-first session of the Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change. The regional commissions had been supporting Member States to achieve climate neutral and resilient development, aligning their climate change initiatives with regional priorities. The regional commissions had also consolidated their efforts to promote policy coherence in United Nations system responses and interaction with other regional and subregional partners through the regional coordination mechanisms and had agreed on key policy initiatives to support enhanced interregional cooperation.

59. During the reporting period, the regional commissions had held sessions and high-level meetings resulting in regionally agreed policy declarations, decisions and resolutions brought to the attention of the Council in the addenda to the Secretary-General's report (E/2015/15/Add.1 and E/2015/15/Add.2).

60. **Mr. Hilale** (Observer for Morocco), also speaking on behalf of Spain, said that the two countries planned to introduce a draft resolution on the project for a Europe-Africa fixed link through the Strait of Gibraltar. They were confident that the project would continue to receive the attention and support of the international community, as it would have beneficial economic, political, social and cultural effects on both European and African countries in the region. The various resolutions adopted by the Council between 1982 and 2013 were proof of the growing importance of the project.

61. Since the launch of project studies in October 1980, good progress had been made, and new actors had become involved. However, a variety of geological, climate-related, environmental, technological and financial obstacles were fuelling scepticism regarding the possibility of realizing such an ambitious project. Nonetheless, ongoing studies and continued collaboration among the various public and private actors should help bring the project to fruition.

62. The two delegations remained confident that the serious rationale for the project and the international community's commitment would ensure its success, especially as its impact would be beneficial at all levels and could only serve to solidify the multidimensional relationships that existed between peoples on either side of the Strait of Gibraltar.

Action on the recommendations contained in the addenda to the report of the Secretary-General on regional cooperation in the economic, social and related fields (E/2015/15/Add.1 and E/2015/15/Add.2)

Draft resolution: Admission of Norway as a member of the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (E/2015/15/Add.1 (sect. B))

63. *The draft resolution was adopted.*

Draft resolution I: Restructuring the conference structure of the Commission to be fit for the evolving post-2015 development agenda (E/2015/15/Add.2 (chap. I, sect. A))

64. **Mr. Gustafik** (Secretary of the Council), delivering a statement in accordance with rule 31 of the rules of procedure of the Council, said that the implementation of the draft resolution on restructuring the conference structure of ESCAP would have additional financial implications for the programme budget of the United Nations for the biennium 2016-2017, under section 19, Economic and social development in Asia and the Pacific, in the amount of $1,482,100. The implementation of requests contained in the draft resolution would require programmatic modifications to programme 16, Economic and social development in Asia and the Pacific, of the biennial programme plan for the biennium 2016-2017 (A/69/6/Rev.1), and section 19, Economic and social development in Asia and the Pacific, of the proposed programme budget for the biennium 2016-2017 (A/70/6 (Sect. 19)).

65. **Mr. Ammar** (Pakistan) said that his delegation attached great importance to the work of the regional commissions and the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP) in particular. It was his Government's view that countries in the region should define their own priorities and methodologies for cooperation in implementing the post-2015 development agenda, while keeping in mind the relevant regional dynamics.

66. As the Asia-Pacific region had both energy importers and producers, energy accessibility and security, as well as the sustainable use of energy, remained critical for the region's development. Cooperation in the energy sector must be holistic, taking into account approaches that promoted access to energy resources, transboundary energy networks and energy security, efficiency and sustainability. His delegation therefore supported the ESCAP proposal to establish a new committee on energy. Following the adoption of the Addis Ababa Action Agenda of the Third International Conference on Financing for Development, the consideration of issues related to financing for development, as well as science, technology and innovation, would be of great importance for the work of ESCAP over coming years. His delegation therefore recommended that draft resolution I should be endorsed by the Council during the current session, while recalling that consideration of programme budget implications fell within the mandate of the Fifth Committee.

67. **Mr. Elias** (Bangladesh) said that, since their inception, the regional commissions had successfully played a catalytic role in regional cooperation in the economic and social fields. His delegation supported the work of ESCAP, whose initiatives to ensure that economic benefits and technological innovation were shared by all through regional cooperation had produced tangible results.

68. Bearing in mind the emphasis on the role of the regional commissions in both the Addis Ababa Action Agenda and the draft outcome document of the United Nations summit for the adoption of the post-2015 development agenda, his delegation reiterated its support for the timely resolution currently before the Council, which reflected relevant activities of ESCAP, including the restructuring initiative and the establishment of a committee on energy.

69. *Draft resolution I was adopted.*

70. **Mr. Dugan** (United States of America) said that his delegation supported efforts to restructure conferences, with the aim of improving transparency, accountability, efficiency and effectiveness, and welcomed efforts to improve the functioning of regional institutes, including the focus on extrabudgetary resources to sustain them. However, given the financial constraints of many Member States, his delegation was dismayed by the significant budget

implication attached to the resolution and disappointed that further efforts had not been made to offset or phase in changes. More extensive dialogue regarding ways to implement reforms in a more cost-effective manner was needed. His delegation therefore disassociated itself from the adoption of the draft resolution.

71. **Ms. Klausa** (Observer for the European Union) said that the European Union and its member States attached great importance to the work of the regional commissions, recognizing that they would continue to play a significant role in implementation, monitoring and review of the post-2015 development agenda. Regional commissions and Member States should reflect on how best to address the new agenda and fulfil their mandates in the most effective and efficient manner, including in budget terms.

72. Her delegation understood the programme budget implications of the resolution on the restructuring of the ESCAP conference structure to be only estimates that had been presented in accordance with rule 31 of the rules of procedure of the Council. They did not prejudge the Secretary-General's submission of the proposed budget for the biennium 2016-2017 to the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions and the Fifth Committee, which should first consider financing through redeployment of existing resources. Some of the estimates could not be considered as requirements, and as such should not be perceived as having been endorsed by Member States.

73. Any decision on restructuring the conference structure of ESCAP in order for it to be fit for the evolving post-2015 development agenda was premature before the actual conclusion of work on the new development agenda and its adoption. As ESCAP already had eight working committees, the European Union did not see the rationale behind establishing a ninth committee, on energy, whose envisaged field of work had to date been at least partially covered by the Committee on Environment and Development. Nor did the European Union see the need for new posts, in particular in the fields relevant to the work of the already functioning Committee on Macroeconomic Policy, Poverty Reduction and Inclusive Development and the Committee on Information and Communications Technology, Science, Technology and Innovation.

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74. In order to achieve increased transparency regarding budgetary figures, any oral statements to be delivered on programme budget implications should be provided to Member States well in advance.

75. **Ms. Onishi** (Japan) said that, as a member of ESCAP, Japan was committed to engaging constructively in designing the constructive roles that the Commission could play in the implementation of the post-2015 development agenda at the regional level. Her delegation supported the restructuring of the conference structure of ESCAP in order for it to be fit for the post-2015 era and hoped that any reforms and restructuring would be done in the most inclusive, efficient, and cost-effective manner possible. Reform and restructuring did not mean merely expanding the ESCAP bureaucracy, or merely increasing the levels of resources that ESCAP drew from the regular United Nations budget.

76. The estimates presented in the statement of programme budget implications should not prejudge future discussions in the Fifth Committee on revised regular budget estimates for the biennium 2016-2017, nor should the adoption of the resolution be construed as an endorsement of those estimates on the part of Member States. Further efforts should be made to reduce the amount of the estimates.

77. **Mr. Henderson** (Australia), speaking also on behalf of Canada and New Zealand, said that, while his delegation continued to support ESCAP, it was concerned at the lack of transparency regarding the basis for the significant programme budget implications of the resolution on restructuring the ESCAP conference structure and what tangible outcomes would be delivered with the additional budget. The Secretariat should engage with all Member States early, often and openly to avoid future problems. Such concerns notwithstanding, his delegation supported the adoption of the resolution.

78. **Ms. Rakhmatia** (Observer for Indonesia) said that the current ESCAP structure, as part of the United Nations development system, should be adjusted to the needs of the Member States of the region in implementing the sustainable development goals. Additional structures and posts in the restructuring process should be carefully reviewed to strengthen the support function of ESCAP in relation to the post-2015 development agenda. Regional ESCAP institutions must be strengthened; in that regard, ESCAP should regularly communicate and coordinate with its host country. ESCAP should also support the development of South-South cooperation as a complement to North-South cooperation, by using existing mechanisms and centres of excellence in the region, such as the Non-Aligned Movement Centre for South-South Technical Cooperation in Indonesia.

Draft resolution II: Establishment of the Asian and Pacific centre for the development of disaster information management (E/2015/15/Add.2 (chap. I, sect. A))

79. **Mr. Gustafik** (Secretary of the Council), delivering a statement in accordance with rule 31 of the rules of procedure of the Council, said that the draft resolution indicated that the centre would be funded through voluntary contributions from the host Government, including up to a limit of $50 million during its first five years of operations. The adoption of the draft resolution would therefore not entail any financial implications under section 19, Economic and social development in Asia and the Pacific, of the proposed programme budget for the biennium 2016-2017.

80. *Draft resolution II was adopted.*

Draft resolution: Admission of Mauritania as a member of the Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia (E/2015/15/Add.2 (chap. II, sect. B))

81. *The draft resolution was adopted.*

82. **The President** said he took it that the Council wished to take note of the report of the Secretary-General on regional cooperation in the economic, social and related fields (E/2015/15, E/2015/15/Add.1 and E/2015/15/Add.2), the economic situation in the Economic Commission for Europe region (Europe, North Africa and the Commonwealth of Independent States), 2014-2015 (E/2015/16), the overview of economic and social conditions in Africa, 2014-2015 (E/2015/17), the summary of the Economic and Social Survey of Asia and the Pacific 2015 (E/2015/18), the situation and outlook for Latin America and the Caribbean, 2014-2015 (E/2015/19), the summary of the survey of economic and social developments in the Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia region, 2014-2015 (E/2015/20) and the report on the project for a Europe-Africa fixed link through the Strait of Gibraltar (E/2015/21).

83. *It was so decided.*

The meeting rose at 12.30 p.m.

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