



General Assembly

Seventieth session

36th plenary meeting
Monday, 19 October 2015, 10 a.m.
New York

Official Records

President: Mr. Lykketoft (Denmark)

In the absence of the President, Mr. Aboulatta (Egypt), Vice-President, took the Chair.

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

Agenda items 9 and 15 (continued)

Report of the Economic and Social Council

Report of the Economic and Social Council (A/70/3)

Note by the Secretary-General (A/70/140)

Integrated and coordinated implementation of and follow-up to the outcomes of the major United Nations conferences and summits in the economic, social and related fields

The Acting President: In connection with agenda item 9, I would like to recall that pursuant to resolution 58/316, of 1 July 2004, the Assembly, on the recommendation of the General Committee, decided, at its 2nd plenary meeting, on 18 September, to consider agenda item 9 in its entirety in plenary, on the understanding that the administrative programme and budgetary aspects should be dealt with by the Fifth Committee.

At the same meeting, the Assembly took note of the clarification that, in implementing resolution 58/316 to consider item 9 in its entirety in plenary, the relevant parts of Chapter I of the report (A/70/3) that are under agenda items already allocated to the Main Committees will be considered by the Committee concerned for final action by the General Assembly.

In connection with agenda item 15, members will recall that pursuant to resolution 57/270 B, the Assembly decided to consider under the item the chapter of the annual report of the Economic and Social Council relevant to the integrated and coordinated implementation of and follow-up to the outcomes of the major United Nations conferences and summits, including through the participation of the President of the Council in its discussions.

I now give the floor to the President of the Economic and Social Council, His Excellency Mr. Oh Joon, to introduce the report of the Council.

Mr. Oh Joon (Republic of Korea), President of the Economic and Social Council: I have the honour to introduce the report of the Economic and Social Council to the General Assembly for 2015 (A/70/3). This has been a highly productive and significant year for the work of the Economic and Social Council, laying a solid foundation for the 2015 session of the Council.

Before I highlight some of the key results and messages from the 2015 session, I wish to congratulate the President of the General Assembly on the outstanding success of the Sustainable Development Summit held last month and the adoption of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (resolution 70/1). Our intergovernmental bodies and forums, particularly the General Assembly, the Economic and Social Council system and the High-level Political Forum on Sustainable Development, held under the auspices of both the Economic and Social Council and the General

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Assembly, will need to work closely together to support the implementation of the new Agenda.

One important requirement of the Sustainable Development Goals is the need for Member States to formulate integrated policies that foster balanced consideration of economic, social and environmental issues, ensuring synergies across multiple sectors. The Economic and Social Council is committed to supporting Member States in that policy integration effort and in the implementation of the 2030 Agenda. I can assure Member States that the entire Economic and Social Council system, including the functional and regional commissions, committees and expert bodies, is mobilized towards that end.

In our 2015 session, the Council continued to support the transition to the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development through the main theme of “Managing the transition from the Millennium Development Goals to the Sustainable Development Goals: What it will take”. We drew upon the experience of implementing the Millennium Development Goals, which showed that development goals translate into results most effectively when they are supported by comprehensive and integrated policies. In that vein, I would like to highlight four key messages of the 2015 session of Economic and Social Council.

First, increasingly complex development challenges call for coordinated and integrated policy responses. That requires not only a deepening of cooperation at the country, regional and global levels, but also strengthened integration across the three dimensions of sustainable development. Secondly, strong, adaptable and inclusive institutions at all levels are necessary for such improved coordination and integration. Thirdly, realizing the global partnership for sustainable development is critical to meeting the demands of the new Agenda. That global partnership must be built on a clear understanding of the roles and responsibilities of all partners, national and international, as well as public and private. Finally, an effective and inclusive follow-up process to ensure full implementation will be vital to the success of the 2030 Agenda. Empirical evidence and the use of data must support the follow-up and review.

Through its 2015 cycle, the Council diligently executed its reform measures arising from the General Assembly’s strengthening of the Council, addressed a broad range of themes and brought together different

development actors by convening a forward-looking dialogue on the longer-term positioning of the United Nations development system and the readiness of its operational activities; applying the integration of the three dimensions of sustainable development to employment creation and decent work; advancing financing for development; strengthening the coordination of humanitarian assistance of the United Nations; conducting a review of its main theme, including through national voluntary presentations on what it will take to manage the transition to the Sustainable Development Goals; considering the role and features of multi-stakeholder partnerships in implementing the 2030 Agenda; and incorporating youth perspectives in the international dialogue on development.

I am particularly pleased that our work culminated in the 2015 high-level segment of the Economic and Social Council, which included a three-day ministerial meeting of the High-level Political Forum on Sustainable Development. That meeting made significant contributions to our collective efforts to transition to the new 2030 Agenda. The second meeting of the Forum, under the auspices of the Council, cemented the Forum as a platform for dialogue and political guidance, and its discussions advanced our vision for the Forum beyond 2015.

I would also like to recognize the invaluable contribution of the whole Economic and Social Council system. The high-level engagements of the Council in helping to shape the contours of the new Agenda were possible because of growing coordination among its constituent parts, namely, the functional and regional commissions, committees and expert bodies.

The 2016 session will be crucial for the Economic and Social Council as we lead in the global implementation and review of the 2030 Agenda. The Economic and Social Council forum on financing for development follow-up and review, mandated by the Addis Ababa Action Agenda, will be convened for the first time during that session. It will include a special high-level meeting of the Council with the World Bank, the International Monetary Fund, the World Trade Organization and the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development.

The 2016 annual theme, “Implementing the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development: Moving from commitments to results”, reflects the Council’s commitment to tackling the challenging task ahead

of us. We stand ready to align our substantive and organizational support for sustainable development. The Council will ensure that the High-level Political Forum and all segments and meetings of the 2016 session bring together valuable contributions to support that task. The whole Economic and Social Council system will serve as a harmonized, coherent and effective platform for delivering concrete results for people and the planet. On behalf of the Economic and Social Council Bureau, I would like to express my gratitude for the strong collaboration and support of Member States and the United Nations development system. We look forward to continued collaboration and engagement in the 2016 session.

Mr. Mandaviya (India): I am honoured to address the General Assembly during the historic seventieth anniversary of the United Nations. The Organization embodies humankind's faith in dialogue over war and in collective progress over individual gains. As it celebrates its seventieth anniversary, its founding creed of maintaining international peace and security, developing friendly relations among nations and promoting social progress, better living standards and human rights for all is more relevant than ever.

India attaches great importance to the work of the Economic and Social Council. The Council plays an important role as a principal body for coordination, policy review, policy dialogue and recommendations on issues of economic and social development. As we transition into the new 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (resolution 70/1), which is a path-breaking new template for action across the three dimensions of economic growth, social inclusion and environmental protection, the Economic and Social Council's effective discharge of its functions will be of even greater importance. Of equal importance will be for the Economic and Social Council to rejuvenate itself, making it more action-oriented, policy-relevant and responsive to the new Development Agenda.

We are grateful for the report of the Economic and Social Council for 2015 (A/70/3). The report usefully enumerates the activities of the Council during that period. We commend the outgoing President and the Bureau for their stewardship of its activities. I would like to extend our congratulations to the Permanent Representative of the Republic of Korea on his assumption of the current presidency of the Economic and Social Council, and assure him of our steadfast support of him and the Bureau in their work.

Among the important discussions organized by the Economic and Social Council in the past session was the dialogue on the longer-term positioning of the United Nations development system — a discussion made all the more topical by the new Development Agenda. We commend the efforts of the Permanent Representative of Colombia for her stewardship of the dialogue and welcome the Permanent Representative of Argentina as the incoming chair of the dialogue this year.

As the Prime Minister of India, His Excellency Mr. Narendra Modi, emphasized in his address to the General Assembly this year,

“the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (resolution 70/1) is lofty, and its Goals are equally comprehensive. It gives priority to problems that have persisted over the past decades and reflects our evolving understanding of social, economic and environmental issues” (A/70/PV.4, p. 17).

India was a key and active participant in the process that led to the adoption of the new Agenda with a set of Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) at its core. India's voice in the negotiations was that of all developing countries. We now look forward to working closely with all delegations to ensure that the 2030 Agenda is implemented according to its letter and spirit. In fulfilling that objective, the Economic and Social Council and the High-level Political Forum will play a central role. It is our expectation that the Economic and Social Council will address sustainable development challenges, seen through the prism of poverty eradication, as our central and overarching objective. Ending poverty by 2030, which subsumes the provision of essential amenities for a dignified existence — such as food, clean water, sanitation, electricity, good health, literacy, transportation and a roof over one's head — is rightly at the core of the 2030 Agenda.

It is our expectation that the Economic and Social Council will prioritize the attainment of robust and inclusive economic growth in developing countries, and to that end it will strengthen the partnership among developed and developing countries to make it more meaningful. It is also our expectation that the Council will address the issue of environmental degradation and climate change with a sense of urgency, focusing on reforming unsustainable consumption patterns in the developed countries and affording enhanced financial and technological support to developing countries in

transitioning their economies to progressively more sustainable pathways.

India's success in sustaining robust economic growth to eradicate poverty will contribute in no small measure to the global achievement of the SDGs. The process of doing so will bring forth technologies and pathways leading to progress that can be shared with other developing countries so as to enable them to also achieve sustainable development.

India is fully committed to ensuring a life of dignity to all its people. To that end, the Government of Prime Minister Modi has renewed its efforts to return India to a high-growth trajectory, promote job-rich industrial development — including through rapid skill development for our young population — financial inclusion, the protection and welfare of female children, agricultural renovation, and a massive drive for improved sanitation.

At the same time, we in India realize that the pursuit of economic growth and development cannot be business as usual. Although we did not create the problem, India has every intention of being a part of the solution when it comes to climate change. The solution lies in pursuing policies that, rather than blindly aping the development model that has brought humankind into a clash with nature, promote a more holistic relationship between growth and the environment. Prime Minister Modi has sought to do this by harkening back to our civilizational ethos of harmony with nature, or treating nature as a partner, not as an adversary. Prime Minister Modi has spoken of achieving the same level of development, prosperity and well-being without going down the path of reckless consumption. His belief is that doing so does not necessarily mean that our economies will suffer, but rather that they will take on different characters.

India's planned objectives of adding 175 gigawatts of clean and renewable energy to our energy mix; reducing the energy intensity of our gross domestic product by 35 per cent by 2030; achieving 40 per cent of electricity generation from non-fossil fuel sources; and creating an additional forest sink of 2.5-3 billion tons of equivalent carbon dioxide are evidence of our seriousness in addressing the environmental sustainability of our growth.

In conclusion, allow me to reiterate India's commitment to the work of the Economic and Social

Council and to actively and constructively engaging in its work in the coming months.

Ms. AlGharabally (Kuwait) (*spoke in Arabic*): Let me begin by reaffirming my delegation's commitment to participating in the discussion on the report of the Economic and Social Council (A/70/3), one of the most important items on the United Nations agenda. I would also like to thank States members of the Economic and Social Council for their efforts and their contributions. Indeed, they have worked with my country to overcome all major obstacles and to contribute effectively to the excellent activities undertaken by the Economic and Social Council during the most recent meeting.

I would like to congratulate Ms. Thurayya Ahmed Obaid on winning the 2015 United Nations Population Award, which recognizes her perseverance in raising awareness on population issues. We would also like to congratulate the African Population and Health Research Centre, in Kenya, which has conducted research on population, education and health issues for the past 20 years.

We welcome resolution 61/16, on the strengthening of the Economic and Social Council. The measures and procedures adopted in that resolution can strengthen the role of the Economic and Social Council as a central forum for coordinating the activities of the United Nations and its specialized agencies, and for overseeing the work of its subsidiary bodies in the economic, social and environmental fields. Its goal is to bolster the role of the Economic and Social Council so that it can assume the responsibility it has been granted. I also wish to say that Kuwait's mandate in the Economic and Social Council will be ending in December. We are convinced that the Economic and Social Council and its subsidiary bodies play an essential role and, as such, we would like to thank all member States for their support to the State of Kuwait. Kuwait was elected to the Commission on the Status of Women for a term of four years beginning in 2016 in order to complete the efforts undertaken by Kuwait in this area.

The entire international community is facing a number of obstacles and challenges. Furthermore, in the past 15 years, the world has seen many crises, including an increase in the number of natural disasters and in the temperature on land, which has led the countries of the world to adopt the 17 Sustainable Development Goals in their three dimensions: economic, social and environmental. This provides a road map for renewed

hope for working together. We should be more united than ever in our efforts. We must also support the role of the Economic and Social Council, the international high-level forum responsible for achieving social and economic development. In that way, we can provide a decent life for all and promote the improvement of the living conditions for all peoples by eliminating poverty between now and 2030. This represents a key pillar in the United Nations work in the context of the post-2015 development agenda.

In that context, we will have to face a number of challenges in future. It is therefore important to implement the various outcomes of the development Summit and the 17 Sustainable Development Goals and to underscore the importance of climate change. The United Nations entities, the Economic and Social Council and the General Assembly must work together to that end. It is especially important to improve the assessment and follow-up methods for the Sustainable Development Goals at the high-level political meeting of the Economic and Social Council under the auspices of the United Nations.

In addition to holding a seat on the Economic and Social Council, Kuwait is eager to assume its regional and international responsibilities for achieving the Sustainable Development Goals and addressing our various problems effectively and constructively. My country has therefore held a number of high-level meetings in recent years on economic, humanitarian and development issues, and launched a number of initiatives to strengthen partnerships and cooperation in the area of development and humanitarian issues. We have spared no effort to provide assistance to developing States through various institutions, including the Kuwait Fund for Arab Economic Development. We have also provided voluntary contributions and loans to a number of infrastructure projects for developing States, and we have provided 1.4 per cent of our gross domestic product in the form of contributions and assistance. That is double the internationally agreed rate.

Kuwait is committed to undertaking greater efforts to achieve sustainable development, eliminate poverty and take advantage of international knowledge and information, and the various experiences of the United Nations with a view to defining strategic priorities in the economic, social and environmental fields.

In conclusion, I wish to reaffirm that Kuwait is fully committed to implementing the outcomes of the meetings of the Economic and Social Council and its subsidiary bodies. We attach particular importance to the activities of the Economic and Social Council to promote economic cooperation aimed at boosting development so that it will be possible to achieve the objectives to which we all aspire: the elimination of poverty and non-communicable diseases and the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals. We also support international and regional institutions that work in the area of development so that they contribute to the implementation of agreed Sustainable Development Goals, including by assisting least developed and developing countries in achieving the Goals.

Mr. Estreme (Argentina) (*spoke in Spanish*): My delegation welcomes the annual report of the Economic and Social Council for 2015 (A/70/3). I want to thank Ambassador Oh Joon, Permanent Representative of the Republic of Korea and President of the Economic and Social Council, and Ambassador Sajdik, who was President of the Council during the first half of 2015, for their effective management of its work. I also want to highlight the work of the other members of the Bureau of the Economic and Social Council and the support of the Secretariat.

Following the adoption of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (resolution 70/1) and the Addis Ababa Action Agenda on financing for development, it is clear that the Economic and Social Council has assumed a more important role than previously. It has now become the platform for coordinating the development activities at the global, regional and national levels. The discussions that took place during the major negotiating processes this year have shown that the successful implementation of such an ambitious and transformative development agenda can be achieved only through genuine partnerships with the various development stakeholders. The Economic and Social Council has the knowledge, experience and strength necessary to do this, which it derives from its cooperation with its subsidiary bodies, including the regional commissions.

The universal nature of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development means that it applies to all countries and is also a recognition of the growing interdependence of today's world. But another principle at the heart of the Agenda is integration, which is

also the key to the work of the Economic and Social Council system at the levels of policy analysis and implementation.

At this point, I would like especially to express gratitude for and acknowledge the work undertaken by the Permanent Representative of Colombia, Ambassador Mejía Vélez, and the team of the Colombian Mission for managing the first phase of the dialogue of the Economic and Social Council on the longer-term positioning of the United Nations development system. My country, as Vice-President of the Economic and Social Council, took responsibility for the segment on operational activities for development and thus of the second phase of the dialogue. We are convinced that the United Nations development system should be adjusted to better support the implementation of the new Agenda. It is necessary to effectively implement, at all levels of the system, the mandates that are established in resolution 67/226 on the quadrennial comprehensive policy review in order for the system to position itself correctly in the long term.

The dialogue has proved to be an excellent opportunity to carry out valuable and inclusive technical discussions from a system-wide perspective. The bases were laid down to that end by the presidency of Ambassador Mejía Vélez. As we start the second phase, we must shape all these concepts into concrete recommendations that contribute to an ambitious General Assembly resolution on the quadrennial comprehensive policy review by late 2016, aimed at adjusting the United Nations development system in order to improve the support it affords to the implementation of the new Agenda.

I wish to conclude by saying that we believe that the Economic and Social Council is the most important intergovernmental body in the pursuit of two major, closely interrelated goals: the eradication of poverty and the achievement of the integration of the economic, social and environmental dimensions of sustainable development. As a member of the Bureau of the Economic and Social Council, Argentina will continue working to ensure that the Council can effectively carry out its work.

Mr. Mahmoud (Egypt): I would like to thank the Permanent Representative of the Republic of Korea for introducing the excellent report of the Economic and Social Council (A/70/3).

Egypt attaches special importance to the implementation of and follow-up to the outcomes of the major United Nations conferences and summits in the economic, social and related fields. We do so in view of their contribution to the formation of an international sustainable development work programme based on inclusiveness, respect and solidarity. However, despite all these efforts over the past decades in the field of sustainable development, a significant proportion of the decisions and outcomes of the summits and conferences in the economic and social fields are yet to achieve the level of implementation to which we aspire.

The General Assembly has always advanced poverty eradication and other related development issues through the United Nations conferences and summits in the economic, social and related fields. These conferences and summits resulted in the emergence of a global consensus on a shared vision for sustainable development, which culminated most recently in the adoption of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (resolution 70/1) and the Addis Ababa Action Agenda of the Third International Conference on Financing for Development. The 2030 Agenda, which is an additional platform to reinvigorate the synergies between the outcomes of the various conferences and summits, articulated that the allocation of resources for the development of appropriate national and international policies and integrated follow-up and implementation are an imperative for achieving sustainable development. In this regard, let me share the following thoughts.

First, the absence of a clear commitment to providing the necessary means of implementation and internationally agreed financing, including for the operational activities of the United Nations in the field of development, remains a major hurdle to achieving sustainable development. The recent trends of declining official development assistance commitments and the continuing decline in programme budget financing in favour of voluntary funding compound the lack of predictability in financing sustainable development. Moreover, they run contrary to the spirit of the major outcomes of United Nations conferences and summits, which emphasize the principles of national ownership, sovereignty and national policy space. As such, the efforts of developing countries towards achieving sustainable development are still lacking sufficient means of implementation, as well as a favourable international climate. The quantity and quality of

official development assistance provided to developing countries should be enhanced, international initiatives to reduce debt should be strengthened, and a formula addressing the imbalance in the international trading system should be found.

Secondly, while the implementation and follow-up mechanisms and coordination of these outcomes already exist in the General Assembly and the Economic and Social Council, the political will to ensure their fulfilment at all levels, including at the international level, remains elusive. Indeed, at some point the exaggerated emphasis on implementation at the national level in developing countries, while not placing similar importance on implementing commitments either by developed countries or at the international level, detracts from the universality of these outcomes and their global intent.

Thirdly, we underscore the importance of efforts to support the work of the High-level Political Forum on Sustainable Development to provide the political leadership and direction necessary to implement the ambitious 2030 Agenda and promote the integration of the three dimensions of sustainable development at all levels, and of ensuring the implementation and follow-up of all United Nations conferences and summits in the economic, social and environmental fields, including the means of implementation.

Fourthly, in the light of all this, the coordinated follow-up of the integrated decisions of summits and conferences requires improving the Organization's performance and raising the efficiency of services provided within the framework through maximizing the utilization of available resources. As such, there is a need to tread with caution with respect to issuing new mandates or replacing follow-up mechanisms and reviews with processes already in place.

Finally and in conclusion, it is of the utmost importance to maintain the credibility of the General Assembly as well as that of the Economic and Social Council in dealing with international development challenges through the faithful implementation of, effective follow-up to and respect for the outcomes of the major conferences and summits in the economic, social and related fields. That could be achieved through coordinated and effective implementation; otherwise, less than universal implementation would ultimately result in the erosion of the credibility of concerted international action in the area of sustainable

development, which would undermine the role of the United Nations — a possibility that we all wish and indeed have the means to avoid.

Mr. Shava (Zimbabwe): I would like to extend our appreciation to the President of the Economic and Social Council, Ambassador Oh Joon, for his informative presentation of the Council's report for 2015 (A/70/3).

The implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (resolution 70/1) requires an integrated, coordinated and universal response. The new Agenda therefore adopts a high level of ambition and poses a significantly more formidable challenge for implementation than the earlier Millennium Development Goals agenda. While the eradication of poverty remains at the heart of the new Agenda, along with advancing sustainable development, other critical challenges — including those resulting from climate change, urbanization and increasing interdependence — have grown in importance. There are also significant interlinkages and interdependencies among the new Sustainable Development Goals and targets. For example, the Goals related to ending poverty in all its forms everywhere, the promotion of sustained, inclusive and sustainable economic growth, full and productive employment and decent work for all, and the reduction of inequality within and among countries are highly integrated and interrelated.

Consequently, as we welcome the Economic and Social Council's report to the General Assembly, we would like to underline the important role for the Council and the Economic and Social Council system as a whole in addressing those interrelationships, as well as the integration and coordination of policy responses. The Economic and Social Council and the High-level Political Forum will play a central role in the follow-up and review of the 2030 Agenda and the Addis Ababa Action Agenda at the global level. The need for a revitalized global partnership cannot be overemphasized, and the dialogue with the international financial and trade institutions should contribute to the development of practical mechanisms to mobilize resources for implementation.

We expect the Committee of Experts on International Cooperation in Tax Matters to contribute to measures to address illicit financial flows, which are bleeding significant resources from African and other developing countries. The Multi-stakeholder Forum on Science, Technology and Innovation, the Technology

Facilitation Mechanism and the Global Infrastructure Forum need to be operationalized. It will therefore be critical for the Economic and Social Council to define how it will carry out its important follow-up mandate going forward. Addressing those issues will determine some of the changes required at all levels for implementing the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and moving from commitment to results.

In view of the issues we have highlighted, the 2016 Economic and Social Council theme “Implementing the post-2015 development agenda: Moving from commitments to results” is timely and fitting. All countries therefore will need to work together and regularly share progress on implementation, particularly through voluntary reports to the High-level Political Forum on Sustainable Development. We also see an important role for the United Nations in promoting, implementing and facilitating follow-up to the Agenda at the national, regional and global levels.

The Acting President: May I take it that the General Assembly takes note of the report of the Economic and Social Council contained in document A/70/3?

It was so decided.

The Acting President: The General Assembly has thus concluded this stage of its consideration of agenda items 9 and 15.

Agenda item 116 (*continued*)

Follow-up to the outcome of the Millennium Summit

Specific meeting focused on development

The Acting President: I have been informed that no member State has requested to take the floor under this item. The General Assembly has thus concluded this stage of its consideration of agenda item 116.

The meeting rose at 10.55 a.m.