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

later: Mr. Shava (Vice-President) (Zimbabwe)

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The meeting was called to order at 5.10 p.m.

Agenda item 5: High-level segment (*continued*)

(a): Ministerial meeting of the high-level political forum on sustainable development, convened under the auspices of the Economic and Social Council

General debate

1. **Mr. Plasai** (Thailand), Permanent Representative of Thailand to the United Nations, speaking on behalf of the Group of 77 and China, said that the leadership of the high-level political forum was crucial to the eradication of poverty. The forum must improve coordination within the United Nations system and ensure all stakeholders' participation to meet all 17 of the Sustainable Development Goals, taking a bottom-up, transparent approach to their follow-up. It was necessary to identify how not to leave behind those that were already furthest behind, namely African countries, least developed countries, landlocked developing countries, small island developing States, countries in conflict and post-conflict situations, middle-income countries and peoples living under foreign occupation. Leaving no one behind necessitated the implementation of the principles recognized in the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, and required respect for every State's full, permanent sovereignty over its wealth, natural resources and economic activity. Laws and regulations with extraterritorial impacts, and all other unilateral, economic and financial coercive measures by developed countries against developing countries that ran contrary to international law and the Charter of the United Nations, constituted a threat to the effective implementation of the 2030 Agenda and must be eliminated.

2. To successfully implement the 2030 Agenda, the international community and relevant stakeholders must enhance support to developing countries, including through the Summit of the Group of 20 (G-20) to be held in China in September. They must respond to climate change, mobilizing new and additional resources to combat it; develop more sustainable infrastructure for development; and tackle illicit financial flows and repatriate resources. Peer learning and South-South cooperation could also support implementation. At the Fortieth Annual Meeting of

Ministers for Foreign Affairs of the Group of 77, to be held in September, members would share their experiences implementing the Sustainable Development Goals; the forum would seek to cultivate a sustainability mindset.

3. **Mr. Mimica** (European Union), European Commissioner for International Cooperation and Development, said that Governments must all take the Sustainable Development Goals into account in their responses to economic, social and environmental challenges. They must continually monitor progress towards the Goals, accelerate implementation and foster inclusivity and transparency. He welcomed the follow-up action already taken. The list of global indicators prepared by the United Nations Statistical Commission provided an adequate framework, but it required further adjustments. Statistical and monitoring capacity and data disaggregation needed strengthening. The European Union was encouraged by the level of participation in the national voluntary reviews on implementation of the 2030 Agenda, presented at the high-level political forum. Implementation called for a multi-stakeholder approach, participatory and representative decision-making and public access to information. The theme of leaving no one behind was broad, encompassing issues such as irregular migration and women's and girls' empowerment. To succeed in leaving no one behind, it was necessary to tackle the root causes of conflict, invest in peace and good governance, and strengthen links between development, humanitarian, peace and security and migration policies.

4. The European Union and its member States were already contributing to the implementation of the 2030 Agenda, with, inter alia, a new initiative on the circular economy. Later in 2016, the European Union would put forward an initiative mapping out how it would contribute to the Sustainable Development Goals, as well as a European Consensus on Development, which would link European countries' development policies to the 2030 Agenda. It would continue to work closely with its partners, especially those in need, and to seek innovative forms of cooperation with them.

5. **Mr. Montás** (Dominican Republic), Minister of Economy, Planning and Development, speaking on behalf of the Community of Latin American and Caribbean States (CELAC), said that the high-level political forum must take national realities into

consideration in its implementation of the 2030 Agenda, and must recognize that regional and global progress reviews would be based on national-level processes. It should seek to provide a platform for regular dialogue with a view to the generation of political guidance and recommendations for Member States and the United Nations system.

6. He highlighted the advances made by Colombia, Mexico and the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela in incorporating the 2030 Agenda into their national sustainable development strategies, and said that he looked forward to learning from the experiences of the other countries currently preparing national reviews. He welcomed the establishment of the Forum of the Countries of Latin America and the Caribbean on Sustainable Development, which would contribute to guiding the work of the high-level political forum, and of the forum on financing for development of the Economic and Social Council. Baseline data for some of the targets under the Goals was not available; in that connection, timely support for strengthening data collection and building capacity was essential. CELAC was strongly committed to ending extreme poverty, hunger and inequality in Latin America and the Caribbean. The implementation of the 2030 Agenda required the unequivocal commitment of the international community as a whole. Developed countries must honour their official development assistance (ODA) commitments. South-South cooperation also had a role to play, notably through capacity-building and knowledge exchange.

7. The international community must address sustainable development holistically, responding to the challenges faced by middle-income countries. Countries' policy space must be respected; however, national efforts must be bolstered by an enabling international economic environment and strong global economic governance. CELAC rejected unilateral economic, financial or commercial measures that were incompatible with international law and the Charter of the United Nations. Implementing the 2030 Agenda called for improved coherence across the United Nations development system in support of national development priorities. The 2016 quadrennial comprehensive policy review would provide a useful opportunity for long-term planning and the provision of guidance to Member States.

8. **Mr. Haque** (Bangladesh), Foreign Secretary, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, speaking on behalf of the Group of Least Developed Countries, said that they remained the most vulnerable group of countries, with a high percentage of their populations living in extreme poverty and their development efforts constrained by poor productive capacity. In recognition of that, 24 of the targets under the 2030 Agenda were directly related to the least developed countries. The least developed countries had collectively failed to achieve most of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs); the international community would have to provide more support if they were to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals. As a starting point, the United Nations Statistical Commission should incorporate all of the least-developed-country-specific indicators into the indicators for the Sustainable Development Goals. The groups of countries in special situations must be given particular consideration in all relevant forums and reports, including the Sustainable Development Goals progress report, the *Global Sustainable Development Report* and the Economic and Social Council forum on financing for development follow-up. The Economic and Social Council should play a greater role in monitoring implementation of the Istanbul Programme of Action for Least Developed Countries. States Members of the United Nations should support adoption of the political declaration of the midterm review of the Istanbul Programme of Action as a General Assembly resolution.

9. **Mr. Kampasa** (Zambia), Permanent Secretary in charge of Policy Analysis and Coordination, Cabinet Office, speaking on behalf of the Group of Landlocked Developing Countries, said that in addition to their unique geographical disadvantages, they faced difficulties such as inadequate infrastructure and disproportionately high transport and trade costs, which isolated them from world markets and hindered their economic and social development. Recent challenges caused by climate change and price volatility compounded the pressure. The theme of "Ensuring that no one is left behind" was therefore of particular relevance to the landlocked developing countries.

10. Progress in the most vulnerable countries, which comprised nearly half of United Nations membership, was essential for the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals. The ministerial declaration to be produced as a result of the current meeting should thus

reaffirm the Economic and Social Council's commitment to addressing the plight of the landlocked developing countries. Both the 2030 Agenda and the Addis Ababa Action Agenda of the Third International Conference on Financing for Development enhanced the efficacy of the Vienna Programme of Action by supporting landlocked developing countries' efforts to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals — notably Goals 7, 9 and 10, which made special reference to the landlocked developing countries and addressed issues such as resilient infrastructure, innovation and industrialization, and access to energy. The 2030 Agenda and the Vienna Programme of Action were mutually supportive and must be implemented together. Moreover, they should be followed up in conjunction with other global processes to maximize outcomes for the landlocked developing countries.

11. The landlocked developing countries were committed to mainstreaming international development priorities into their national development programmes. However, enhanced global development partnerships were needed in order for them to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals. In particular, they required assistance in developing capacity for data collection and analysis.

12. **Ms. Luveni** (Fiji), Speaker of the Parliament, speaking on behalf of the Group of Pacific Small Island Developing States, said that the international community's work to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals must be informed by the simple promise to "leave no one behind". Implementation measures must be tailored to national circumstances and nationally owned. As recognized in the SIDS Accelerated Modalities of Action (SAMOA) Pathway (Samoa Pathway), genuine, durable partnerships would be critical; the Partnership Exchange and Partnership Dialogue organized by the Department of Economic and Social Affairs were useful in that regard. The United Nations development system, and specifically its presence on the ground, was vital for institutional capacity-building. The recommendations concerning the reform of United Nations systems support for small island developing States should be implemented to better help countries address their specific challenges and needs.

13. Stressing that Pacific small island developing States were particularly vulnerable to the effects of climate change, she called for an early entry into force

of the Paris Agreement and for universal ratification. Moreover, more ambitious mitigation targets were needed. As the impacts of climate change became more significant, increased financial support for adaptation and resilience was necessary, and procedures for applying for support must be simplified. Healthy oceans were key to poverty eradication; in that connection, the Group of Pacific Small Island Developing States looked forward to the high-level United Nations Conference to Support the Implementation of Sustainable Development Goal 14, to be held in Fiji in 2017. However, the burden of conserving the oceans must not fall disproportionately on small island States.

14. **Mr. Khiari** (Tunisia), Permanent Representative of Tunisia to the United Nations, speaking on behalf of the Group of African States, said that both the African Union Agenda 2063 and the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD) were underpinned by the ideal of freeing Africa from poverty and underdevelopment, and were designed to transform African economies with a view to enabling African integration into regional and global supply chains. They would support a move away from reliance on exporting commodities, which would make Africa less vulnerable to external price shocks and hence reduce poverty.

15. To make the most of synergies between Agenda 2063 and the 2030 Agenda, the focus should be on awareness-raising; optimal resource allocation, avoiding overlaps; development of an integrated monitoring and evaluation framework; and collaboration with the national authorities responsible for the implementation of both programmes to ensure coherent, harmonized reporting. NEPAD must also be supported as part of the process. The ambitious transformative agenda he was describing could not be realized without effective means of implementation and a serious effort by the international community to curb illicit financial flows from African countries. It would also be necessary to revitalize partnerships to accelerate sustainable development in Africa; ensure that development partners met their official development assistance (ODA) commitments to African countries and aligned them to national development priorities; share lessons learned from the transition from the MDGs to the Sustainable Development Goals and Agenda 2063; and ensure inclusion, especially at the community level.

16. **Mr. Charles** (Trinidad and Tobago), Permanent Representative of Trinidad and Tobago to the United Nations, speaking on behalf of the Caribbean Community (CARICOM), said that implementation of the 2030 Agenda must build on lessons learned from the MDGs and the knowledge that the essential requirements for sustainable development were poverty eradication, promotion of sustainable patterns of consumption and production, and protection and management of the natural resource base. Implementation of the 2030 Agenda could easily be undermined by the region's high debt-to-gross domestic product (GDP) ratio. Despite the region's middle-income status, its economies remained small and vulnerable, with limited diversification, and were highly dependent on international trade and vulnerable to the impacts of climate change. Debt relief, economic grants and increased ODA could foster sustained economic growth and employment. The termination of correspondent banking relations in the region also had the potential to threaten economic stability and capacity to remain integrated into global financial, trade and economic systems.

17. For small island developing States, implementation of the 2030 Agenda was tied to that of the Samoa Pathway. He noted with appreciation that the high-level political forum had fulfilled its mandate with regard to the sustainable development of small island developing States. As CARICOM member States worked to integrate the Sustainable Development Goals into their national development plans, high-quality, timely data was of the essence. Support for strengthening national statistical systems for data collection and disaggregation was therefore crucial. The Strategic Plan for the Caribbean Community 2015-2019 was designed to support the region's attainment of economic, social, environmental and technological resilience, while emphasizing inclusiveness and integrated approaches to development; it would underpin the implementation of the 2030 Agenda in the region. The United Nations development system must support national development priorities in the implementation of the 2030 Agenda in order to ensure that no one was left behind. CARICOM welcomed the intergovernmental processes related to the implementation of the 2030 Agenda, including the United Nations Conference on Housing and Sustainable Urban Development (Habitat III).

18. **Mr. Perera** (Sri Lanka), Minister of Sustainable Development and Wildlife, speaking on behalf of the Group of 15 (G-15), said that the G-15 foreign ministers envisioned contributing to the implementation of the 2030 Agenda as a niche group of the global South. A holistic approach to the 2030 Agenda, in which it was implemented in coordination with other multilateral frameworks such as the Addis Ababa Action Agenda, was critical. In that connection, the G-15 welcomed the recent launching of the Council's forum on financing for development follow-up as a platform for assessing progress, identifying challenges and facilitating the delivery of the means of implementation. The current high-level segment of the Council offered an opportunity to lay a solid foundation for future assessment of implementation of the 2030 Agenda. The follow-up and review mechanism adopted must respect national sovereignty.

19. In order to ensure that poverty eradication remained at the centre of efforts and that developing countries made sufficient progress, global partnerships from the MDG era should be intensified, and commitments to provide capacity-building support, financial resources and ODA must be met. Lastly, a technology facilitation mechanism should be developed that would promote the development, transfer and dissemination of clean and environmentally sound technologies.

20. **Mr. Gutierrez Espeleta** (Costa Rica), Minister of Environment and Energy, speaking on behalf of the Like-minded Group of Countries Supporters of Middle Income Countries, said that, while the Group recognized the primary responsibility of Governments for the implementation, follow-up and review of the 2030 Agenda at the national level, the high-level political forum had a central role to play in overseeing those processes at the global level. He also acknowledged the importance of the forum's universal intergovernmental character; its political leadership, guidance and recommendations for sustainable development; and its role in integrating the three dimensions of sustainable development in a holistic and cross-sectoral manner at all levels. In that regard, adequate support should be provided for Member States presenting their voluntary reviews in 2016 and 2017.

21. Lessons learned and best practices should be disseminated, and knowledge-sharing and technology transfers should be promoted in order to strengthen national capacities, particularly of developing countries, towards sustainable development. In that connection, mechanisms to facilitate knowledge-sharing and technology transfers to developing countries would be critical for reducing inequalities in access to technology within and among countries, an essential condition for implementing the Sustainable Development Goals. The United Nations development system could contribute to that effort by ensuring the full and effective operationalization of the Technology Facilitation Mechanism. In addition, close attention should be paid to financing for development, ensuring adequate and predictable means of implementation for the 2030 Agenda, respecting each country's policy space and creating an enabling international economic environment for national development efforts.

22. The meetings of the high-level political forum should concentrate on the challenges facing developing countries, particularly the most vulnerable among them, as well as middle-income countries. Similarly, driven by the principles of universality, integrality and the need to ensure that no one was left behind, efforts to implement the 2030 Agenda should target those in need, irrespective of their geographical location, and should address the specific needs and vulnerabilities of all countries. Particular attention must be paid to ensuring that the challenges faced by middle-income countries did not set back their development efforts, while taking into account their diversity and capacity to support the implementation process. In that regard, the United Nations development system should establish a system-wide, inter-agency action plan for coordination of sustainable development in middle-income countries, underpinned by solid evidence, clear objectives, indicators and sources of financing.

23. While important progress had been achieved by the Department of Economic and Social Affairs, further efforts were needed to develop transparent indicators of progress towards sustainable development, beyond income criteria, that recognized poverty in all its forms and dimensions, as well as the social, economic and environmental dimensions of domestic output and structural gaps at all levels. National institutions, including statistical institutions, must be strengthened, and new data sources and data collection technologies

must be identified to ensure that Governments had access to high-quality, timely, disaggregated and reliable data to support evidence-based decision-making and effective public policy implementation. In that regard, international support and multi-stakeholder partnerships should be strengthened to promote targeted capacity-building for middle-income countries with a view to supporting their national development plans for implementing the Sustainable Development Goals.

24. **Mr. Rai** (Papua New Guinea), Permanent Representative of Papua New Guinea to the United Nations, speaking on behalf of the Pacific Islands Forum, said that the call to leave no one behind in pursuing poverty eradication and the delivery of a transformative, inclusive agenda was timely, particularly in the early stages of implementation, and should remain at the forefront of the work of the high-level political forum and all stakeholders.

25. The leaders of the States members of the Pacific Islands Forum were committed to implementing the Sustainable Development Goals, the Samoa Pathway, the Paris Agreement, the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015-2030 and the Addis Ababa Action Agenda, and to addressing the unfinished business of the Millennium Development Goals, drawing on the political commitment and road map provided by the Framework for Pacific Regionalism. While considerable progress had been made towards promoting access to education and improving child and maternal health in the region, further work was needed to promote inclusive economic growth and employment; combat climate change; ensure healthy, productive and resilient oceans; strengthen governance; foster gender equality and empowerment, including by reducing violence against women and girls; and tackle the growing crisis of non-communicable diseases. Members of the Forum were increasingly integrating those commitments into national and regional policy responses tailored to the challenges and vulnerabilities specific to the region. In particular, the initiative demonstrated by Samoa, as the first-ever member of the Forum and the first small island developing State to submit its voluntary national review to the high-level political forum, attested to the region's leadership in implementing the 2030 Agenda.

26. The Forum had also established a task force to support the development of a road map to guide implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals in the region, particularly with a view to addressing transboundary issues; identifying common national priorities that could be addressed through collective delivery, monitoring and reporting; and identifying global experiences, best practices and national successes that could be adapted regionally.

27. To ensure that no one was left behind, Forum members would take ownership of the 2030 Agenda in collaboration with regional and external development partners, in particular to address the specific vulnerabilities of small island developing States and the rising regional and global inequalities that amplified their sustainable development challenges. They would also work to improve the resilience of national economies, infrastructure and communities to global economic downturns and to climate change and natural disasters, which were increasing in frequency and intensity across the region. Two recent cyclones in Fiji and Vanuatu had resulted in large-scale loss of life and displacement, and significantly set back their efforts to implement the 2030 Agenda. Particular attention would be paid to reducing damage to the Pacific Ocean, a main source of livelihood for States members of the Forum, in particular the destruction of its coral reefs from ocean acidification, and the threat to fisheries posed by illegal, unreported and unregulated fishing. To that end, Forum members remained staunchly committed to implementing Sustainable Development Goals 13 and 14.

28. National and regional capacities, institutions and systems, particularly in the area of data collection and analysis, should likewise be strengthened to ensure the effective review, follow-up and implementation of the 2030 Agenda. National and regional efforts to implement the Goals, the Addis Ababa Action Agenda and the Paris Agreement must also be supported by the means of implementation relating to global partnerships set out under Goal 17, and should place special emphasis on realizing Goal 16 on the promotion of strong institutions. In addition to mobilizing domestic resources, notably through ensuring just returns for fishery resource utilization, Forum members would focus on developing lasting global partnerships, including with stakeholders from civil society, the private sector and academia, and ensuring reliable and

accessible financing for development in implementing the 2030 Agenda. Lastly, he called for strengthened South-South, North-South and triangular cooperation to unlock the potential of science, innovation and technology to mitigate the remoteness and vulnerabilities of many Forum members.

29. **Mr. Perera** (Sri Lanka), Minister of Sustainable Development and Wildlife, said that, as the first country in the Asia-Pacific region to establish a ministry for sustainable development and the current Chair of the Asia-Pacific Forum on Sustainable Development, Sri Lanka was in a unique position to champion the transition towards sustainable development. To that end, the Parliament of Sri Lanka would soon consider a national law on sustainable development in conformity with the Sustainable Development Goals that was aimed at formulating a national policy and strategy on sustainable development and providing the legal and institutional framework for its development and implementation. The law mandated ministries, provincial councils, local governments and all public sector agencies to prepare sustainable development strategies, perform audits and provide annual progress reports based on sustainable development standards, guidelines and indicators. In addition, the Ministry of Sustainable Development and Wildlife was developing a national road map for sustainable development, for which regional sustainability plans would be a key input. To ensure that no one was left behind, the Ministry had launched national and provincial sustainable development engagement platforms bringing together political officials, administrators and representatives of local government, civil society, academia, business, development agencies, women and youth.

30. To better define their roles and responsibilities, his Government had been mapping the linkages among 169 targets and over 400 mandated agencies involved in the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals, with a view to developing a three-phase model of implementation. The philosophy of ecological rights on which the Ministry of Sustainable Development and Wildlife had been founded was derived from the conviction that those in power were merely the guardians of the land, which belonged to the people and all living beings. Urgent efforts must therefore be undertaken to safeguard the survival of the planet and the prosperity of humankind.

31. **Mr. Ibrahim** (Maldives), Minister of Environment and Energy, said that his country had achieved five of the eight MDGs ahead of the 2015 deadline, making it South Asia's only "MDG+" country, and was thus well poised to implement the 2030 Agenda. The Maldives' substantial progress towards the MDGs demonstrated its commitment to robust development, particularly in social sectors such as health and education.

32. His country was greatly encouraged by world leaders' efforts to ensure that no one was left behind in the pursuit of poverty eradication. Cognizant of the importance of its diverse marine resources, including its coral reefs, for its fishing and tourism industries and overall economic development, the Maldives had been using those resources sustainably to great success, as evidenced by its graduation from the category of least developed countries in 2011. His country would continue to capitalize on the centrality of sustainable development to its traditions and culture, which had enabled it to draw on its narrow resource base to achieve social and economic development without compromising the environment. In particular, the Maldives would continue to promote the conservation and sustainable use of oceans, which played a critical role in achieving global economic development, regulating global climates and fostering biodiversity, and to call for more ambitious action to address climate change.

33. While the basic principles underlying the Sustainable Development Goals were already addressed in his country's Constitution, efforts were being undertaken to map the Goals' alignment with existing policies, particularly the government manifesto and sector plans, which had been found to cover 70 per cent of the sustainable development targets. Further work would be done to identify additional gaps. At the institutional level, the Ministry of Environment and Energy was tasked with coordinating the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals, and a ministerial committee would be established to oversee the monitoring and coordination of national implementation efforts. A technical committee comprising all stakeholder ministries, as well as representatives of the private sector and non-governmental organizations (NGOs), had also been established to guide the implementation process. Lastly, he called on all Member States to

expedite their efforts to deliver on the transformative 2030 Agenda.

34. **Ms. Smerkolj** (Slovenia), Minister for Development, Strategic Projects and Cohesion, said that the significant challenges to ensuring inclusive sustainable development could only be overcome with the international community's unified determination, unconditional mutual support and commitment to capacity-building at all levels.

35. Slovenia had begun drafting its Vision 2050 and 2030 development strategy, which provided an integrated policy framework designed to ensure internal coherence among sectoral, domestic and foreign policies and the alignment of national priorities with the Sustainable Development Goals. The reduction in the administrative burden related to monitoring, reporting and follow-up on the implementation of the Goals resulting from such policy integration was particularly beneficial to small countries like Slovenia. National implementation efforts would require close collaboration with key domestic stakeholders, identification of common challenges and priorities, and alignment of policies and actions.

36. Each community and Member State should contribute to implementing the 2030 Agenda to its fullest capacity within available resources. Slovenia would continue to contribute to efforts to eradicate poverty and to promote gender equality, human rights, environmental protection and good governance. To ensure effective results, Slovenia's Ministry of Foreign Affairs had begun drafting guidelines outlining thematic and geographic priorities in the area of sustainable development. Her country would also continue to prioritize ODA as a critical source of development funding.

37. To be effective, national development strategies and the 2030 Agenda must be mutually reinforcing. It was therefore critical for Member States to take concerted action to safeguard the planet and prepare future generations for the challenges of an increasingly interconnected and complex world.

38. **Mr. Immongault** (Gabon), Minister of Sustainable Development, the Economy and the Promotion of Investments and Forecasting, said that, drawing on lessons learned from the MDGs, the Parliament of Gabon had adopted in 2014 a framework

law on sustainable development in alignment with the Sustainable Development Goals and the African Union's Agenda 2063, following a robust, multi-stakeholder debate. The new law would be implemented by integrating the Goals in national development planning processes. With the support of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), Gabon had organized its first workshop, in July 2015, to promote national ownership of the 2030 Agenda, the African Union's Agenda 2063 and the Paris Agreement, with the participation of civil society organizations, members of Parliament, academics, representatives of local communities and public and private administrators. Participants had identified the main challenges to the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals and had developed a road map providing for the establishment of a working group tasked with monitoring their implementation, which comprised representatives of civil society and the public and private sectors.

39. In line with its commitment to leaving no one behind, Gabon had undertaken structural reforms to diversify its sources of economic growth in pursuit of inclusive sustainable development. Focusing on endogenous drivers of growth, the reforms aimed to improve social conditions by expanding universal health insurance coverage and strengthening social and legal protection, in line with the equal opportunity programme launched by his Government in 2016.

40. **Mr. Trečiokas** (Lithuania), Minister of Environment, underscored the significance of Sustainable Development Goal 16 aimed at building peaceful and inclusive societies based on the rule of law and promoting access to justice, good governance and corruption-free and accountable institutions. In addition, given that women's equal participation in society contributed to poverty reduction, stronger economic growth and higher standards of living, his delegation attached particular importance to Goal 5 on ensuring gender equality. The contributions of the women entrepreneurs leading over 60 per cent of rural businesses in Lithuania illustrated the critical importance of harnessing women's entrepreneurial potential in the context of implementing the 2030 Agenda.

41. Environmental protection was critical to the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals. In that regard, policy integration and coherence must

serve as a guiding principle for implementation efforts, with a view to capitalizing on the synergies among the Goals and targets in different sectoral policies. Lithuania's success in reducing its greenhouse gas emission levels by more than 50 per cent in the previous 25 years, while simultaneously increasing its GDP by 30 per cent, demonstrated that environmental protection and economic growth were not mutually exclusive. Moreover, as a result of its climate change mitigation policy based on the sustainable and efficient use of energy from renewable sources, renewable energy production now accounted for more than half of total electricity and heat production in Lithuania. As part of its efforts to mitigate the impact of climate change, his Government had also launched an extensive apartment building modernization programme aimed at increasing home heating efficiency while creating additional jobs to bolster the economy. Lithuania's efforts in support of the Sustainable Development Goals illustrated the importance of capitalizing on their interlinkages to achieve poverty eradication, well-being for all and healthy ecosystems, in addition to economic growth. Ambitious national objectives and political will and the engagement of civil society, the scientific community and the private sector, together with the joint efforts of the international community, would contribute effectively to the Agenda's implementation.

42. **Mr. Cardona** (Honduras), Minister of Development and Social Inclusion, said that the 2030 Agenda articulated a vision for a world without hunger and disease, where human rights and dignity were universally respected, each country enjoyed inclusive and sustainable economic growth and decent work, and humankind coexisted harmoniously with nature. Developed countries should do their part to implement the 2030 Agenda and to ensure that no one was left behind.

43. The challenges to implementation of the Agenda were magnified by the ongoing depletion of natural resources and, in particular, climate change, which undermined States' efforts to achieve sustainable development. While many middle-income countries had improved their income situation, they remained home to 70 per cent of the world's poor and faced specific challenges that required the differentiated and targeted attention of the United Nations development system. In that regard, as recently underscored by the

Deputy Secretary-General during the ministerial portion of the high-level political forum on sustainable development, the forum had identified useful criteria that could serve as the basis for concrete proposals to guide the system in supporting middle-income countries' efforts to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals. While much remained to be done, his country trusted in human solidarity and the strength of global political will to carry out the actions necessary to ensure that no one was left behind. In that connection, he underscored his Government's recent implementation of a public policy aimed at improving the lives of Honduras's poorest and most vulnerable. Honduras was shifting from income-based poverty measurement to a multidimensional poverty index. Lastly, expressing his gratitude to the Department of Economic and Social Affairs for supporting his Government's efforts to implement the 2030 Agenda, he emphasized the need for transformative leadership in attaining the Sustainable Development Goals.

44. **Mr. Kiunjuri** (Kenya), Cabinet Secretary, Ministry of Devolution and Planning, said that Kenya was implementing the Sustainable Development Goals as part of its Kenya Vision 2030 development plan, which reflected its commitment to the three dimensions of sustainable development. Despite his country's considerable progress towards implementing the MDGs, poverty and inequality persisted, clearly indicating that segments of the population had been left behind. In particular, inadequate data continued to prevent the effective identification of vulnerable groups. Given the comparatively ambitious scale of the Sustainable Development Goals, urgent efforts must be made to improve the quality, quantity, reliability and timeliness of disaggregated data to assess progress towards the more comprehensive set of indicators identified. In that context, national statistical capacities and geospatial information systems for the correction, analysis, production and dissemination of disaggregated data should be enhanced. In particular, assistance to build the capacities of the national statistical offices of developing countries should be provided on a demand-driven basis.

45. To monitor and review progress towards the Sustainable Development Goals, Kenya would implement an integrated monitoring and evaluation system at the national and county level that would provide a results-based framework and enable delivery of feedback to

policymakers and the public on progress towards development targets. In addition, the next five-year plan adopted under Kenya Vision 2030 would address gaps identified in a review of its current five-year medium-term plan.

46. Stakeholder participation was critical for the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals. In that regard, the Kenyan Constitution emphasized the role of citizen participation in governance. Moreover, in collaboration with relevant stakeholders, the Government had developed guidelines on public participation for actors involved in public service delivery, with the aim of strengthening democracy, governance, accountability, inclusivity and ownership.

47. *Mr. Shava (Zimbabwe), Vice-President, took the Chair.*

48. **Mr. Raveloharison** (Madagascar), Minister of Economy and Planning, said that Madagascar, a vulnerable country, had begun work on its voluntary review in line with its commitment to implementing the 2030 Agenda. Since the return of constitutional order, Madagascar had sought to take high-level ownership of the Sustainable Development Goals and to involve a broad range of development actors in the implementation process. Two national consultations had been organized to map the Goals against existing development frameworks, which had allowed for the identification of 47 priority targets, and efforts had been undertaken to strengthen accountability and mutual understanding among actors involved in the implementation process. The environmental pillar of sustainable development was a long-standing priority for Madagascar, as evidenced by its participation as a pilot country in the Wealth Accounting and the Valuation of Ecosystem Services project aimed at developing natural capital accounting methodologies. Moreover, in an effort to leave no one behind, its Government was focusing particular attention on the population in the southern part of the country, which endured cyclical crises due to natural disasters, and had adopted a national social protection policy aimed at the most vulnerable segments of society.

49. Developing sustainable development indicators remained a challenge for his country. The issue of identifying appropriate baselines, which required significant financing, time and technical capacities, would be addressed in the context of strengthening the

national statistical system. His Government was also finalizing a national domestic resource mobilization strategy that recognized the contribution of non-financial resources — including human capital, natural and cultural resources — to national development. The Government would also host an upcoming conference for donors and investors as part of its ongoing efforts to mobilize international financial and technical assistance. Lastly, he called for active, coordinated and accountable partnership in support of the 2030 Agenda.

50. **Ms. Diallo** (Guinea), Minister of Planning and International Cooperation, said that least developed countries deserved special attention, given their vulnerability to internal and external shocks. While Guinea had achieved some success in transforming its economy and reached the completion point under the Heavily Indebted Poor Countries Initiative, the recent Ebola epidemic had stymied progress. Having realized the importance of creating strong and resilient institutions, her Government was now focused on building capacity and infrastructure, and promoting energy, agricultural and agro-industrial production. The new national economic and social development plan was aimed at strengthening the productive and structural bases of the economy and incorporated the Sustainable Development Goals and Agenda 2063. It would be presented to partners in early 2017 with a view to mobilizing the resources necessary for implementation. Her Government was grateful for the financial contributions made by participants in the 2015 International Ebola Recovery Conference and urged those who had not yet fulfilled their pledges to do so.

51. **Ms. Rubio Márquez** (Mexico), Vice-Minister for Planning, Evaluation and Regional Development, recalled that since 1990, significant progress had been achieved in terms of social development: infant mortality rates, as well as the numbers of people living in poverty or suffering from insufficient nutrition, had been halved, while both the levels of enrolment in primary education and access to drinking water had been increased to 91 per cent. However, much remained to be done in order to remedy lingering social injustices.

52. Given the decidedly comprehensive and ambitious nature of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, national implementation efforts should be equally robust. The first to undergo the voluntary review of its

progress on the implementation of the Agenda, Mexico considered efficient follow-up mechanisms, and appropriate partnerships and resources to be integral to successful implementation. In that regard, much more than the 0.7 per cent of national gross domestic product to be contributed by each State in official development assistance would be necessary to cover the estimated \$2-3 trillion cost of implementing the Agenda. More domestic and international resources, as well as greater transparency and accountability, were necessary.

53. Her Government was implementing an inclusion strategy intended to enable Mexicans to exercise their rights. Good tools and practices would fuel optimism and, with improved opportunities, sustainable development and its fruits would be attainable.

54. **Ms. Velo** (Italy), Under-Secretary, Ministry of Environment, Land and Sea, said that a variety of actors were involved in the creation of the national strategy to implement the 2030 Agenda. Italy understood that to promote such development, it was necessary to address the root causes of the humanitarian crisis in the Mediterranean. Accordingly, her Government had invested in vulnerable groups, in particular young people and women. Moreover, it was crucial to reduce the vulnerability of populations to environmental disasters, and international development cooperation played an important role in that regard. Italy, a Paris Agreement implementation partner, had significantly scaled up its financial contributions, making it one of the countries with the largest increase in official development assistance.

55. Having launched a number of initiatives dedicated to the sustainable use of marine resources, Italy urged States to join efforts to achieve Sustainable Development Goal 14.

56. Italy would assume the presidency of the Group of Seven and join the Security Council as a non-permanent member in 2017, during which time it would spare no effort to promote the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals.

57. **Ms. Edillon** (Philippines), Deputy Director-General, National Economic and Development Authority, said that her Government was working to identify strategies that would help to fulfil the aspirations of the Filipino people and contribute to an increase in economic and social equality. With over 10 million of its nationals

living as permanent and temporary migrants in 221 countries worldwide, the Philippines welcomed the inclusion of migrants, in addition to other vulnerable groups, as a priority in efforts to implement the 2030 Agenda. To ensure that no one was left behind, the international community should not shy away from adopting strong language on such issues as inequality and poverty. The frequent, timely and accessible disaggregation of official statistics was also crucial to implementation efforts. In that regard, academic and research communities were urged to develop methodologies for cost-effective monitoring systems.

58. **Mr. Zalkaliana** (Georgia), First Deputy Minister for Foreign Affairs, said that his Government had made significant progress in the protection of vulnerable groups. Relevant legislation, policies and programmes had been implemented to counter discrimination, ensure equality and integration, and foster inclusive education. In the realm of education, for example, the access of members of minority groups to Georgian language classes and institutions of higher learning had been facilitated. Action plans for the protection of the rights of women and persons with disabilities had recently been adopted.

59. Georgians who had been internally displaced as a result of the 2008 Russo-Georgian war and subsequent occupation of Georgian territories required special attention. Recent tragic events should remind the international community of the need to develop new approaches to protection and assistance at the national and international levels. It was important to gain an understanding of the root causes of forced displacement and to favour preventive measures in order to avoid crisis situations. In that connection, he welcomed the outcome of the recent World Humanitarian Summit. It was crucial that all members of the international community adhere to fundamental humanitarian principles and their commitments under international humanitarian law.

60. **Mr. García** (Uruguay), Director, Office of Planning and Budget, Office of the President, said that States should prioritize efforts to eradicate poverty, empower women and girls and achieve gender equality. The achievement of the international community's shared development goals would depend on such efforts in addition to the willingness to change unsustainable consumption and production patterns. Developed

countries should contribute in that regard, including in the management of chemicals and waste.

61. States were urged to ratify the World Health Organization Framework Convention on Tobacco Control. Already a party to that Convention, Uruguay trusted that its well-known anti-tobacco policy and the recent judgment against the Philip Morris corporation would serve as useful precedent in that area.

62. Uruguay took a results-based management approach to public expenditures and planned to mainstream the Sustainable Development Goals in its development strategy. It was also working to create a new system of governance to monitor implementation of the Goals at the national level in addition to identifying synergies with indicators being developed in Latin America and the Caribbean.

63. The achievement of sustainable development would also depend on the amount of support afforded to developing countries (provision of resources, technology transfer and capacity-building, including strengthening national statistics) with a view to enabling national ownership.

64. **Mr. Chanthaboury** (Lao People's Democratic Republic), Vice-Minister of Planning and Investment, said that it would be impossible to eradicate poverty or to implement the 2030 Agenda without action to further strengthen international development cooperation within the framework of a global partnership. Donor countries were therefore urged to honour their commitment to provide core and non-core resources for United Nations operational activities, with a view to supporting development countries' efforts to implement the global development agenda.

65. His Government was particularly focused on addressing the issue of poverty and graduating from least-developed-country status. To that end, several development policies and programmes had been formulated to spur economic development and enhance regional integration by providing greater access to public services such as health and education, and to domestic, regional and global markets. The Sustainable Development Goals had been mainstreamed into the most recent five-year plan and almost 60 per cent of the plan's indicators were linked to Sustainable Development Goal indicators. It would also continue its efforts to reduce the impact of unexploded ordnance,

consistent with the local Sustainable Development Goal 18 adopted for his country.

66. The global development framework should include mechanisms that would enable Member States to achieve their development objectives. In that vein, follow-up and review of the implementation of the Agenda should cover all its Goals and targets and should capture all components of the related activities of developing countries. Exchange of best practices and mutual learning at the national, regional and global levels would also be essential.

67. **Ms. Gould** (Canada), Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of International Development and La Francophonie, said that Canada was committed to implementing the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development at the national and international levels. Domestically, efforts had been undertaken to reduce inequality, address climate change and improve the Government's relationship with indigenous peoples. The sum of \$120 billion would be invested in infrastructure over the next decade, and further investments were being made in the areas of children and youth.

68. Abroad, Canada had committed \$2.65 billion over five years to assist developing countries in tackling climate change, and had provided over \$1.1 billion in development and humanitarian assistance over three years to address the needs of those affected by the crisis in the Middle East. Canada had also increased its contribution to the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria to \$785 million for the 2017 to 2019 period. Moreover, Canada would host the Fifth Replenishment Conference of the Fund in September.

69. A review of Canada's international assistance, incorporating the views of the public, experts and a variety of international partners, was under way. Though her country's future approach to international assistance had not been concretized, advancing gender equality and empowering women and girls would be central to its efforts.

70. **Mr. Foradori** (Argentina), Deputy Minister for Foreign Affairs, said that his Government was strongly committed to implementing the 2030 Agenda. It was crucial for national budgets to be invested in the needs of the population, such as education, health, training

and safe schools as opposed to consumer goods. Joint efforts would be required to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals. At the national level, efforts were being made to coordinate the legislative adaption, follow-up and implementation processes. Indicators were being developed and efforts were being made to incorporate gender and disability perspectives into national policies. His Government planned to have a complete list of goals and objectives by the end of 2016 and to begin the monitoring process in 2017 to ensure accountability.

71. An exchange of national experiences would be crucial to achieving the Goals. Although the Agenda was universally applicable, States should respect the principle of shared but differentiated responsibilities and take into account varying levels of development, resources and capacities as well as national policies and priorities. In addition, State action should be supplemented by that of stakeholders, including the United Nations, private sector and civil society.

72. **Mr. Kovacs** (Hungary), Deputy Secretary of State for International Cooperation, Ministry for Foreign Affairs and Trade, said that the Sustainable Development Goals would be best achieved if implemented in line with the Paris Agreement, which all States were encouraged to sign. Hungary had already begun to develop its own framework of implementation, with the relevant bodies meeting regularly to discuss and track progress, and mainstream the Goals into relevant plans and strategies. Monitoring and measuring progress required intense cooperation at the national and international levels, and for that purpose a relevant national network had been created. The building of a balanced indicator system had proved to be a major challenge.

73. Deeply committed to water-related issues, Hungary wished to point out the highly fragmented nature of the existing water governance structure. As with other important issues, a dedicated intergovernmental body on water was necessary to be able to address the issue in an integrated and comprehensive manner, and to improve water governance. His Government would host a conference later that year to boost implementation of the water-related agenda.

74. **Ms. Muschett** (Panama), Vice-Minister of Social Development, said that her Government was working on a road map for the implementation of the Sustainable

Development Goals that would be supported by all sectors of society. In its efforts to achieve Goal 1, Panama had begun preparation of a poverty index that would incorporate various dimensions of poverty to supplement income-based measurements. Greater focus would also be placed on the design and monitoring of poverty-reduction strategies.

75. Given the cross-cutting nature of the 17 Goals, her Government attached particular importance to inter-institutional policies that would affect such vulnerable groups as women, children, and indigenous peoples. It had invested 70 per cent of the general budget in such areas as health, housing, infrastructure, transport, basic sanitation and environmental sustainability with a view to overcoming poverty, accumulating human capital and protecting the environment.

76. After concretizing the plan to implement the Sustainable Development Goals, the next step would be to establish local ownership of the plan and to design concrete mechanisms to align actions at all levels with implementation of the Agenda.

77. **Mr. Yogevaran** (Malaysia), Deputy Director-General, Economic Planning Unit, Office of the Prime Minister, said that his country's development agenda was people-centred and aligned with the Sustainable Development Goals. Inclusivity was the key principle in Malaysia's national socioeconomic development agenda. Its aim was to ensure that no section of society experienced deprivation, as reflected in the key development themes of growth with equity, balanced growth and people-centred development. That approach had reduced poverty and narrowed income inequality between rich and poor.

78. In order to implement the 2030 Agenda, Malaysia had developed a five-year plan for the period 2016-2020 which put people at the heart of development efforts, reflected the multidimensional nature of the Sustainable Development Goals and would serve as an overarching and guiding policy for social development. As well as measuring gross domestic product, the plan would assess the impact of development efforts on individuals. A Malaysian well-being index had also been introduced to ensure that development efforts translated into a better quality of life and improved prosperity for citizens.

79. The Sustainable Development Goals had been integrated into Malaysia's national planning framework for the period 2011-2015 through strategies to enhance inclusiveness and move towards an equitable society, improve well-being, increase human capital for developed countries, pursue environmentally friendly growth for sustainability and resilience, strengthen infrastructure to support economic expansion, and re-engineer economic growth to increase prosperity.

80. To achieve Goal 13, Malaysia had committed to reducing greenhouse gas emissions, while sustainable consumption in production practices would be implemented to achieve Goal 12 and contribute to reducing greenhouse gas emissions in sectors such as transport and waste. The key actions to be taken included developing a domestic market for green products and services, implementing environmentally friendly growth and procurement, promoting environmentally friendly buildings and industries, managing energy resources more efficiently, and encouraging low-carbon transport through the use of public transport and energy-efficient vehicles.

81. In order to adapt to climate change and prevent the country's development progress from being negatively affected by climate-related disasters, Malaysia would initially focus on the most affected sectors, including water, agriculture and infrastructure. Furthermore, to ensure the smooth and effective implementation of the 2030 Agenda, Malaysia was in the process of formulating a national road map for the Sustainable Development Goals; setting up a high-level committee with representatives from the Government, the private sector, civil society and local authorities; and improving data related to the Goals.

82. **Mr. Jespersen** (Denmark), Under-Secretary for Global Development and Cooperation, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, said that Denmark was developing a strategic action plan for following up national and international progress in achieving the Sustainable Development Goals. Government ministers, civil society representatives, the private sector and academia were involved in the formulation of the action plan, which was being coordinated by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. However, to underline the universality of the 2030 Agenda, the Ministry of Finance would be the focal point for coordinating achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals.

83. The action plan would identify key national and international priorities while respecting the universality and interdependence of the Sustainable Development Goals. Its priorities would build on sustainable growth, development cooperation and the Danish welfare system, but it would also identify areas where more effort was required.

84. The follow-up framework for the Sustainable Development Goals also included multi-stakeholder engagement, as well as national and international partnerships. Furthermore, a national dialogue forum had been established to drive implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals while securing the ownership and engagement of, inter alia, the private sector, civil society and academia.

85. Denmark was working with the European Union on a follow-up mechanism and was committed to supporting developing countries in their implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals. His Government's new development strategy would focus on selected Goals, based on available skills, opportunities to create partnerships and possibilities for progress.

86. Official development assistance continued to be important to sustainable development as a catalyst for generating diversified investment. It was in the interest of all developed countries to contribute to international peace, prosperity and security by meeting the ODA target of 0.7 per cent of gross national income.

87. Lastly, human rights, particularly gender equality and the empowerment of women were essential to sustainable development and the creation of a better world for all.

88. **Ms. Belskaya** (Belarus), Deputy Head, Division of Economic Cooperation and Sustainable Development of the Directorate General of Multilateral Diplomacy, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, said that the United Nations system, its specialized agencies and the international financial institutions must harmonize their actions for achieving the Goals. That was particularly relevant for middle-income countries, which were home to the majority of the global population and accounted for one third of the global gross domestic product and one quarter of global exports and imports. Achieving sustainable development in those countries would therefore be a huge stride towards achieving it worldwide.

89. To that end, the United Nations should focus on creating conditions in which middle-income countries could participate in development in a fair and mutually beneficial way, and which would foster consultative financial and technical support focusing on innovative development. Furthermore, it would be useful to establish an inter-agency coordination mechanism for middle-income countries through the United Nations development system; the risks and problems of those countries should be analysed in the *Global Sustainable Development Report*.

90. Belarus had adopted a national strategy for sustainable development and its first review was scheduled for 2017. A national coordinator on achieving the Sustainable Development Goals would be appointed in late 2016. In the belief that all of society should be involved in achieving the Goal, Belarus had organized a meeting on achieving sustainable development which had been well attended. Furthermore, alongside the United Nations Development Programme, Belarus was organizing an event to be held in late 2016 which would focus on eliminating inequalities and creating the necessary conditions to broaden opportunities for the most vulnerable groups in achieving the Goals.

91. **Mr. Badenoch** (World Vision) said that the pledge to leave no one behind could bring about transformative change for the world's poorest and most marginalized children. To that end, Member States and other stakeholders must guarantee the fair and systematic financing of essential services, including health, quality education and child protection, and ensure that children had access to those services. Furthermore, children must be treated equally by tackling discriminatory policies, norms and behaviours, including ending violence against children. In addition, children must be guaranteed accountability and supported in participating in global and national accountability processes. The United Nations must therefore enable the engagement of young people.

92. The theme of leaving no one behind should continue to ensure progress for the most excluded and marginalized groups. The high-level political forum must also examine progress made on children's issues in its follow-up and review. That would require significant input from intergovernmental bodies, although no intergovernmental group relating to children existed.

Though children had not been mentioned frequently in the forum and the synthesis of voluntary national reviews, their well-being was central to the 2030 Agenda. An intergovernmental space to review progress and provide substantive input to the forum on children's issues should therefore be created.

93. **Mr. Figezky** (International Federation of Organic Agriculture Movements) said that farmers were often among the poorest and most vulnerable people in the world, despite their essential role in sustainably producing food and realizing the right to food. Family farmers, small-scale producers, women, young people, pastoralists and the rural poor were among the marginalized farming groups for whom enhanced access to information and justice, as well as prior and informed consent for policy development and implementation actions in areas including land expropriation, transactional power imbalances, food insecurity and tenure rights, were crucial.

94. In order to provide cheap and nutritious food while using natural resources sustainably and in an environmentally friendly manner, farmers had to make compromises. He called for national initiatives to raise public awareness of the environmental consequences of producing inexpensive food, as well as the subsequent impact on climate change and human health. Placing a clear monetary value on the benefits of sustainable food production systems would strengthen support for policy mechanisms that rewarded the development of systems which delivered positive outcomes for the environment and public health. All countries should take such action, which would have a positive impact on their implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals.

95. As women were crucial to food security, knowledge and sustainable development, a concerted effort should be made to ensure their rights. There must also be tenure security for productive agricultural land, which would provide protection against land expropriation by extractive industries, developers and government and private sector actors.

96. The economic needs of the rural poor must be addressed by ensuring the resilience of natural resources, for example, through the use of both traditional and new varieties of seeds that could improve yields and nutrition while reducing input. Furthermore, best management practices and new

technologies should be disseminated through the support and promotion of participatory extension programmes at the grass-roots level. The global promotion of best management practices and both technological and agricultural products was sorely needed in order to promote ecological intensification, improve farm management, reduce food waste and ensure more efficient transport of agricultural products.

97. Lastly, agricultural producers must be able to play an active and major role by integrating local, national and international farmers' organizations into implementation, monitoring and evaluation processes.

98. **Ms. Openshaw** (International Service for Human Rights) said that the involvement of all relevant stakeholders would be critical to implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals. Her organization was concerned that voices from around the world would not be heard because restrictions were being placed on civil society at national levels, and at the United Nations, by the practices of the Council's Committee on Non-Governmental Organizations.

99. In June, 230 non-governmental organizations from 45 countries had written an open letter to the Council to express their concern at the use of procedural tactics by some Committee members to delay or effectively block the granting of consultative status to certain organizations. The engagement of non-governmental organizations with the United Nations, as enabled through Council resolution 1996/31, was vital, and the United Nations had a legal obligation to strengthen civil society participation through the Declaration on Human Rights Defenders.

100. The 230 signatories to the open letter requested that Council members ensure that the Committee's practice and procedures were in keeping with resolution 1996/31; that the Committee practice was uniformly applied, apolitical, fair, consistent and expeditious; that the Committee's actions did not, by design or impact, hinder the right of non-governmental organizations to access and communicate with the United Nations; and that the recommendation made by Chile, Mexico and Uruguay in July 2015 to institute webcasting at Committee sessions was adopted so that non-governmental organizations with applications under consideration, but which did not have the resources to travel to New York, could follow proceedings.

101. Unfortunately, Committee practice often reflected the growing national restrictions on civil society that made access to the United Nations all the more important. The Council should therefore redouble its efforts to promote a safe, transparent and enabling environment which would allow the United Nations to take full advantage of the expertise and insight provided by non-governmental organizations to enhance the legitimacy and credibility of its work.

102. **Ms. Moller-Loswick** (Saferworld) said that, unless something changed, almost two thirds of people living in extreme poverty were likely to be residing in conflict-affected and fragile States by 2030. Furthermore, although violence and security were universal challenges, the most marginalized people were the hardest hit by their effects.

103. In order to honour the commitment made by world leaders in 2015 to promote more peaceful, just and inclusive societies, all countries should engage in peacebuilding, underpinned by universal justice, inclusion and political freedom. That peace must be distinct from unsustainable stability and weapons-based force. In addition, patriarchal gender norms and systems of power, which perpetuated gender inequality and could contribute to violence and insecurity, must be challenged.

104. Furthermore, the international community must cease to use short-term securitized approaches that were known to be ineffective. The vision set out in the 2030 Agenda must have the effect of supporting change in all Governments and societies, as political backing and solidarity were more important than technical and financial support. In that regard, international actors must ensure that they were not contributing to existing problems by, for example, worsening insecurity through exploitative commercial investments, entrenching the status quo through arms exports, or enabling the theft of a country's resources through its own banks and financial system. In a globalized world, domestic policy was as important to development cooperation as international cooperation.

105. Lastly, new data would need to be generated to assess the success of implementing the 2030 Agenda. Data gaps could be filled by investing in national statistics systems, providing training and developing measures to ensure the independence of those systems. Other stakeholders must all contribute to creating more

pluralistic data systems and the capability of the international community to address social exclusion must be recognized.

106. **Ms. Bahceci** (Women for Women's Human Rights) said that achieving gender equality through the empowerment of women and girls and the realization of their rights was essential to achieving the Sustainable Development Goals. In addition to gender equality, a human rights framework and criteria for justice and sustainability must be central to all actions.

107. In order to implement the 2030 Agenda, official documents must reflect best practices to emerge from the high-level political forum, including the participation of civil society and progressive taxation systems. Political will, increased resources and accountability were needed to make progress quickly; despite the centrality of means of implementation and related systematic issues to the 2030 Agenda, they were largely absent from forum discussions.

108. Although it was necessary to address the global concentration of wealth, fiscal policies were being ignored. The forum and its regional follow-up processes must tackle systematic barriers and challenge the existing development paradigm, which contributed to intensifying inequalities, exclusion, and social, economic and environmental exploitation. In order for the Sustainable Development Goals to be successful, issues such as land and resource distribution and corporate accountability needed to be addressed and the means of implementation must be clarified and enforced.

109. Furthermore, there should be transparent and non-hierarchical cooperation between States, civil society and social movements in implementing the Goals. Feminist groups and organizations for the lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender community must be provided with adequate funding and training to support their role as rights holders, agents of change and evaluators of progress.

110. The 2030 Agenda should be shown to be useful and meaningful to all. In addition, to ensure that the review process was human rights-based, accurate and continuous, each country should report three or four times before 2030, with national and local civil society organizations involved at all levels. Lastly, formal mechanisms should be established to create opportunities

for dialogue between the reporting country, major groups and all rights holders to increase accountability.

111. **Ms. Dawson** (International Presentation Association of the Sisters of the Presentation of the Blessed Virgin Mary) said that it would be possible to reach the most vulnerable in society if money spent on arms, lost through illicit financial flows or hidden in tax havens was spent on developing the capacities of individuals.

112. A human rights-based approach to social protection was necessary to ensure that the most vulnerable, including those living in poverty and migrants, had access to health care and basic income security. That would require enhanced collaboration between Governments, as well as community-based initiatives capable of augmenting government schemes and provide opportunities for the progressive growth and empowerment of people.

113. Social protection floors had been shown to have positive impacts on both human development and productivity, and on macroeconomic stabilization. Furthermore, it had been proven that reforms to health care systems led to rapid improvements in the health of mothers and children. There were also strong evidentiary links between social protection floors and reductions in poverty, inequality and greater autonomy for women. Indeed, there was sufficient evidence to show that when government-sponsored social protection floors were supported by committed civil society engagement, the 2030 Agenda could be truly transformative, thanks to the motivation of communities to engage in development.

114. **Mr. Jourdan** (Global Foundation for Democracy and Development) said that his organization had campaigned for capacity-building in developing countries through technological transfers to address national and regional priorities, and for the promotion of innovation and multi-stakeholder partnerships to meet the enhanced funding requirements necessitated by the 2030 Agenda. The Global Foundation for Democracy and Development had also actively contributed to post-2015 intergovernmental negotiations and had highlighted the need for developing countries to develop their own technology infrastructure by supporting resource and knowledge transfer. To that end, the leader of the Global Foundation had jointly moderated a high-level panel in 2015 to promote triangular cooperation in the international community

to ensure that the technology gap between North and South did not widen and that sustainable development was promoted in the South.

115. An unprecedented level of financial resources would be required to fulfil the 2030 Agenda, and existing investment patterns would not be adequate for sustainable development. Innovative mechanisms for financing development, including taxes on airline tickets and social impact bonds, could be scaled up by Governments pledging an annual amount to support them. Engagement with the private sector would be vital in delivering financial products to the communities that needed them most, such as the use of mobile phones to make pension payments in some African countries. Furthermore, the numerous opportunities to raise and deliver resources must be recognized by the United Nations development system through its funding practices and partnership approaches.

116. **Mr. Vazquez** (International Federation for Family Development) said that his organization had been promoting research among lawmakers, academics and civil society representatives on challenges the 2030 Agenda posed for families. The International Federation for Family Development was currently involved in a project with family experts from around the world to develop practical methods of assessing how families could contribute to a given issue or be affected by it and whether the involvement of families would result in more operational solutions. In that regard, pilot programmes would take place in various countries in accordance with the relevant family policy decisions.

117. Tools to help policymakers effectively and provide the guidance needed for successful implementation of policies should be developed. With regard to Goal 1, poverty relief strategies should be developed which treated the family as a unit, promoted its well-being and recognized that family breakdown could be both a cause and result of poverty. Policies should address different aspects of family life, including the work-life balance, women's empowerment and child development, to ensure that no one would be left behind.

118. With regard to Goal 3, action should be taken to promote the psychological well-being of children and young people, taking into account their individual family situations, and including efforts to prevent violence, treat addiction, discourage juvenile delinquency and help young people transition from education to

employment. Foster care and support between different generations within families would be vital to achieving Goal 4. Volunteer work by older persons in schools and by young people in programmes and facilities for the elderly, as well as equal access to resources such as parenting classes and mentoring programmes, should be arranged.

119. **Sister Marie Madeleine** (Fraternité Notre Dame) said that her organization aimed to improve the living conditions of, inter alia, women, the elderly, persons with physical or mental disabilities, the homeless, the unemployed and orphans. In keeping with its religious vocation to help the most vulnerable people in society, it had, among other actions, opened a soup kitchen and dispensaries.

120. In order to tackle the problem of exclusion, it was necessary to educate young people and teach them how to help others. Many existing global problems were caused by selfishness, violence and moral decadence. In that regard, Fraternité Notre Dame had founded several schools, as it considered compulsory secularism to be detrimental to humanity. The absence of Christianity from many young people's lives had left them without ideals and had led many to join extremist groups. Nonetheless, education should teach a message of love, charity, fraternity and friendly cooperation. In conclusion, she pointed out that many of today's Christian martyrs were not respected by the societies they lived in.

121. **Mr. Mokhtar** (General Forum of the Arabic and African Non-Governmental Organizations) said that NGOs would play a part in implementing the 2030 Agenda, and achieving the Sustainable Development Goals and their targets. To that end, the outcome of the high-level political forum would pave the way for identifying best practices and tools for realizing the Sustainable Development Goals. The positive and negative aspects of the MDG experience must also be taken into account.

122. Achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals would ensure prosperity and peace the world over. To that end, adoption of the Goals as guidelines by the planning ministries of all Member States would push up growth rates and bolster national growth policies. There should be no barriers to participation in that process for either individuals or non-governmental organizations. Non-governmental organizations that

enjoyed consultative status with the United Nations must be provided with opportunities to participate with stakeholders.

123. **Mr. Karmakar** (International Committee for Peace and Reconciliation) said that modern slavery was an issue that would impact realization of the Sustainable Development Goals and their targets. It was important to reflect on people who had been left behind by society and recognize universal needs, such as food, shelter, education, health care, job opportunities, physical protection and freedom.

124. According to the Walk Free Foundation, over 45 million people remained enslaved; men, women and children were trafficked and forced into sexual slavery and domestic or agricultural labour. The numbers of people in slavery were highest in India, China, Pakistan, Bangladesh and Uzbekistan. Reactionary terrorist groups, such as Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant and Boko Haram, also deliberately abducted vulnerable people and forced them into slavery.

125. Lastly, as social injustice, slavery, mass destruction, global warming, war, poverty and economic disasters were all caused by human beings, it was logical that they could be prevented and eliminated by human beings.

126. **Mr. Parmegiani** (Legião da Boa Vontade (Legion of Good Will)) said that the pledge to leave no one behind required unprecedented commitment in a spirit of good will and genuine cooperation. Through its experience in promoting education and social services to reduce poverty and social inequality in seven countries, the Legion of Good Will had learned that the most effective way to overcome poverty was through a holistic approach that addressed the diverse biological, psychological, social and spiritual needs of individuals. It was as important to provide essential social services and quality education as it was to restore hope and human dignity, and to work towards a solidary, altruistic and ecumenical society.

127. Over the previous five years, more than 1.7 million people had benefited from the work of his organization, which had increased academic performance and social mobility in the most vulnerable communities. Strengthening education was vital to global citizenship as it would empower people to meet global challenges.

128. Lastly, he encouraged Council members and observers to read his organization's recommendations, which contained its best practices for promoting education, sustainability and global citizenship as levers for sustainable development.

The meeting rose at 9.05 p.m.