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Chair: Mr. Andambi (Vice-Chair) (Kenya)

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In the absence of Mr. Djani (Indonesia), Mr. Andambi (Kenya), Vice-Chair, took the Chair.

The meeting was called to order at 3.05 p.m.

Agenda item 16: Information and communications technologies for development (continued)
(A/C.2/71/L.15)

Draft resolution on information and communications technologies for development (A/C.2/71/L.15)

1. **Ms. Aueareechit** (Thailand) introduced draft resolution [A/C.2/71/L.15](#) on behalf of the Group of 77 and China. The draft resolution was built on two important pillars of the midterm review of the implementation of the outcomes of the World Summit on the Information Society in 2015: the vision of a people-centred, inclusive and development-oriented information society; and the need for alignment to harness the potential of information and communications technology (ICT) in order to accelerate progress towards the achievement of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. The draft resolution also elaborated on complementarities with other mechanisms, such as the Technology Facilitation Mechanism.

2. In recognition of the complex digital divides between and within countries, and between women and men, the draft resolution considered issues related to ICT access. It presented an action-oriented agenda that reaffirmed the common interest in providing quality access to ICT for all and, to that end, encouraged international cooperation and technology transfer and dissemination among Governments, the private sector, civil society, the technical community and all other relevant stakeholders, taking into account their respective roles and responsibilities.

3. The text elaborated on the challenges and opportunities guiding collective efforts over the coming year from an action-oriented perspective that considered means of implementation. The important role of official development assistance (ODA) and concessional finance for ICT was highlighted, in accordance with the Addis Ababa Action Agenda of the Third International Conference on Financing for Development. Capacity-building could provide opportunities ranging from women's empowerment to connecting those left behind.

Agenda item 22: Groups of countries in special situations (A/71/422)

(a) **Follow-up to the Fourth United Nations Conference on the Least Developed Countries** (A/71/66-E/2016/11, A/71/363 and A/71/539; A/CONF.228/3)

(b) **Follow-up to the second United Nations Conference on Landlocked Developing Countries** (A/71/313 and A/71/416)

4. **Mr. Acharya** (Under-Secretary-General and High Representative for the Least Developed Countries, Landlocked Developing Countries and Small Island Developing States) introduced the report of the Secretary-General on the implementation of the Programme of Action for the Least Developed Countries for the Decade 2011-2020 ([A/71/66-E/2016/11](#)), the report on the Comprehensive High-level Midterm Review of the Implementation of the Istanbul Programme of Action for the Least Developed Countries for the Decade 2011-2020 ([A/CONF.228/3](#)) and the Note by the Secretary-General on the Technology Bank for the Least Developed Countries ([A/71/363](#)).

5. The Programme of Action for the Least Developed Countries for the Decade 2011-2020 (Istanbul Programme of Action) had entered the second half of its implementation cycle. The Comprehensive High-level Midterm Review of the Implementation of the Istanbul Programme of Action for the Least Developed Countries for the Decade 2011-2020, which had taken place in Turkey in 2016, had involved a thorough appraisal of the status of implementation and had made recommendations on the way forward. The scale of high-level participation in the Midterm Review demonstrated the international community's willingness to stand by the least developed countries. The least developed countries and their development partners had expressed determination to deliver on their respective commitments. The private sector, civil society and parliamentarians had expressed support for the least developed countries and had organized their own events in collaboration with his Office. United Nations organizations had held a high-level event and had launched a toolkit for mainstreaming the Istanbul Programme of Action into their plans and programmes.

6. The Midterm Review had found that, since the adoption of the Istanbul Programme of Action, the least developed countries had made considerable progress in a number of areas. Most had experienced steady economic growth following the global economic slowdown and increased benefits from interregional trade, including through South-South cooperation. Progress had been made in human and social development, such as on access to education, the representation of women in politics, good governance and the rule of law. With regard to graduation, 10 least developed countries were expected to enter the graduation process in the coming years. Uneven progress had been noted within countries, not just between the least developed countries and the rest of the world. The least developed countries faced significant challenges to sustainable development, such as high unemployment, limited structural transformation, extreme vulnerability to external shocks, public health emergencies and the devastating impacts of climate change.

7. As a group, the least developed countries were experiencing a slowdown in their economies, as growth rates fell from 5.1 per cent in 2014 to an estimated 4.5 per cent in 2015, which was lower than the growth rate between 2001 and 2011 and fell short of the Sustainable Development Goal target of at least 7 per cent gross domestic product (GDP) growth per annum. Although the Millennium Development Goal (MDG) to halve poverty had been achieved globally, progress in the least developed countries remained slow. At the halfway stage, most had not met the targets of the Istanbul Programme of Action on human and social development, despite acceleration efforts over the previous five years, and many of the other targets were not on track.

8. Progress on building productive capacity had been mixed. The share of manufacturing in the least developed countries had remained stagnant during the period 2011-2014, although progress had been made on access to the Internet and mobile telephones. The role of the private sector, including small and micro-enterprises and rural enterprises, would be critical to progress in that regard. Modest improvements had been registered in transport and access to electricity, although road and railway infrastructure remained underdeveloped. In 2015, ODA to the least developed countries had increased by 4 per cent in real terms,

although total ODA flows were still below the level reached prior to the global economic crisis of 2008. South-South cooperation was making a growing contribution to the least developed countries.

9. The political declaration of the Comprehensive High-level Midterm Review of the Implementation of the Istanbul Programme of Action for the Least Developed Countries for the Decade 2011-2020 (A/CONF.228/3, Chapter I) had reiterated the international community's commitment to giving special attention to the least developed countries in the implementation of the Istanbul Programme of Action and the 2030 Agenda. The flagship report *State of the Least Developed Countries 2016* had been launched and provided an in-depth analysis of progress on the goals and targets of the Istanbul Programme of Action since 2011 and its coherence and synergies with the 2030 Agenda. It highlighted the growing convergence of goals and targets, and the fact that effective implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals and the Istanbul Programme of Action at the national, regional and global levels would be mutually reinforcing.

10. The Midterm Review had reaffirmed the commitment to full, effective and timely implementation of the Istanbul Programme of Action and the 2030 Agenda, and support for mainstreaming them into the national development policies and programmes of the least developed countries. It suggested exploring ways to improve the effectiveness of food reserve mechanisms for those countries. The commitment to allocate a higher share of the Aid for Trade initiative to the least developed countries had been reiterated. Donor countries were encouraged to provide 0.2 of gross national income (GNI) as ODA to those countries, which should be implemented as early as possible. The principles of aid and development effectiveness should be upheld, including predictability and transparency, harmonization, country ownership and untied aid. There would be a multiplier effect if a greater amount of ODA went to the productive sector and if it were used to leverage resources for infrastructure development, energy and domestic resource mobilization.

11. The Midterm Review had stressed that measures at the national and international levels should be enhanced to mitigate and manage risks and address the

vulnerability of the least developed countries to shocks and crises. It had been decided to undertake a study on crisis mitigation and resilience building for the least developed countries. Guidance from the current session of the General Assembly on the parameters of that study would be welcome. It had also been decided at the Midterm Review that the United Nations System Chief Executives Board for Coordination would consider investment promotion regimes for the least developed countries. The following Economic and Social Council forum on financing for development follow-up would discuss the adoption and implementation of investment promotion regimes, which would then be considered by the high-level political forum on sustainable development.

12. At the Midterm Review, Member States had reaffirmed their commitment to fully operationalize the Technology Bank by 2017. The Governing Council of the Technology Bank had met in July 2016 to draft the Charter and a three-year strategic plan. The draft Charter had been transmitted to the General Assembly in document [A/71/363](#). The Technology Bank would be funded by voluntary contributions from Member States and other stakeholders, including the private sector and foundations. Turkey had offered to host the Technology Bank.

13. Migration was a vital issue for the least developed countries, since they were both countries of origin and host countries. In 2015, the least developed countries had provided asylum to 4.2 million refugees, which was 26 per cent of the global total. Migration should be tackled holistically to maximize its development benefits and remittances for host and originating countries. The key priorities of the least developed countries should be reflected in the future global compact for safe, orderly and regular migration.

14. Discussions on the quadrennial comprehensive policy review of operational activities for development of the United Nations system were crucial to implementation of the 2030 Agenda and other United Nations programmes of action. Since the least developed countries were in dire need of support from the United Nations system, their priorities should be addressed in that review.

15. Similarly, the issues, concerns and aspirations of the least developed countries should be taken into account in the acceleration of efforts to achieve the

Sustainable Development Goals and implement the Paris Agreement under the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, in order to eradicate poverty and achieve structural transformation and resilience in those countries. His Office had organized specific events and articulated the concerns of the least developed countries through institutional mechanisms within and outside the United Nations system. Advocacy and coordination with other global institutions, including financial and economic institutions had been enhanced. In the light of strengthened efforts to implement the Istanbul Programme of Action, his Office remained committed to enhancing its advocacy, analytical study and support to Member States during intergovernmental negotiations, and coordination with the United Nations and other stakeholders.

16. Introducing the report of the Secretary-General on the implementation of the Vienna Programme of Action for Landlocked Developing Countries for the Decade 2014-2024 ([A/71/313](#)), he said that it provided an update on the implementation of the Vienna Programme of Action that focused on six key priority areas: fundamental transit policy issues; infrastructure development and maintenance; international trade and trade facilitation; regional integration and cooperation; structural economic transformation; and means of implementation. The report stressed the importance of the 2030 Agenda and its overarching principle of leaving no one behind. The close linkage between the 2030 Agenda and the Vienna Programme of Action meant that effective implementation of the latter would be instrumental to achieving the former in landlocked developing countries. The Vienna Programme of Action had become a holistic development framework that reflected the international community's commitment to supporting the world's 32 landlocked developing countries. It was important to foster coherence between the Vienna Programme of Action and the 2030 Agenda and also with other development processes, including the Paris Agreement, the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015-2030 and the Nairobi Package of the Tenth Ministerial Conference of the World Trade Organization (WTO).

17. In 2015, only six landlocked developing countries had experienced GDP growth of more than 7 per cent, while three countries had experienced negative growth. The GDP figures were closely linked to trade performance, where landlocked developing countries'

share of global exports had continued to decline, from 1.2 per cent in 2011 to 0.96 per cent in 2015, largely due to a sharp drop in commodity prices. The data indicated continued marginalization in the global trading system and demonstrated the need to reverse that trend, including through support to diversify exports, promote value addition and connect international and regional value chains. Although the proportion of the population in landlocked developing countries living below the international poverty line of \$1.90 per day had declined from 49 per cent in 2002 to 31 per cent in 2012, poverty remained prevalent in those countries.

18. With regard to fundamental transit policy issues, 10 landlocked developing countries and 15 transit countries had ratified the WTO Agreement on Trade Facilitation. He encouraged Member States, especially landlocked developing countries and transit countries, to consider ratifying the Agreement as soon as possible to speed its entry into force. Ratification should be encouraged of other international conventions that supported cooperation on transit and trade facilitation between landlocked developing countries and transit countries, such as the Customs Convention on the International Transport of Goods under Cover of TIR Carnets (TIR Convention) and the Protocol of Amendment to the International Convention on the Simplification and Harmonization of Customs Procedures (revised Kyoto Convention on the Simplification and Harmonization of Customs Procedures). It was encouraging that one landlocked developing country and two transit countries had become parties to the revised Kyoto Convention while Pakistan and China had acceded to the TIR Convention.

19. With respect to infrastructure development and maintenance, landlocked developing countries and transit countries, in cooperation with their development partners, were making efforts to expand and upgrade road transport and border crossing infrastructure. The mobilization of additional resources for infrastructure development was critical to complementing domestic efforts. Many landlocked developing countries were making progress on trade facilitation, but it was important to move forward on such issues as one-stop border posts, electronic single-window systems and electronic payment systems for customs duties and taxes. The high trade costs experienced by landlocked developing countries made it important to scale up

effective trade facilitation interventions and strengthen collaboration among landlocked developing countries and transit partners.

20. Landlocked developing countries were each party to an average of four regional trade agreements, which indicated their commitment to improving regional integration and cooperation through connectivity, market expansion and increased trade potential. On structural economic transformation, trends in value addition activities in the agricultural and manufacturing sectors as a percentage of GDP had continued to decline, underscoring the need to build capacities and nurture sustainable and inclusive industrialization. With respect to means of implementation, net ODA to landlocked developing countries had decreased since 2013. As the main source of external finance for landlocked developing countries, it was crucial to enhance ODA.

21. Successful implementation of the Vienna Programme of Action hinged on the ability to mainstream it into national and sectoral development plans. He therefore encouraged landlocked developing countries to mainstream the Sustainable Development Goals into their development strategies in a way that would foster coherence with the implementation of the Vienna Programme of Action.

22. The report highlighted the joint work of the United Nations system and international and regional organizations to ensure effective implementation of the Vienna Programme of Action. The Fifth Meeting of the Ministers of Landlocked Developing Countries Responsible for Trade, which his Office had organized in collaboration with WTO in June 2016, had adopted a forward-looking declaration. A High-level Seminar "Accelerating Sustainable Energy for All in Landlocked Developing Countries through Innovative Partnerships" would shortly be hosted in Austria, with a view to harnessing partnerships and initiatives at the national, regional and international levels. Similarly, the Government of Viet Nam had offered to host a high-level meeting for the Eurasian region on improving cooperation between landlocked developing countries and transit countries on transit, trade facilitation and the implementation of the 2030 Agenda, to be held in early 2017. His Office would do its best to carry out its mandate in support of the full, effective and timely implementation of the Vienna

Programme of Action and to assist landlocked developing countries in fostering coherence between that Programme of Action, the 2030 Agenda and other development frameworks.

23. **Ms. Liwjaroen** (Thailand), speaking on behalf of the Group of 77 and China, said that, for the least developed countries, the Istanbul Programme of Action was an expression of support for their efforts to eradicate poverty in all its forms and dimensions and achieve structural transformation and sustainable development. Despite progress in the first five years of implementation of the Istanbul Programme of Action, most of the least developed countries continued to face pervasive poverty, structural impediments to growth, low levels of human development and high exposure to shocks and disasters. In that regard the Group welcomed the political declaration of the Midterm Review of the Istanbul Programme of Action, which reaffirmed the commitment to further strengthen the global partnership for development for the least developed countries in all priority areas and ensure the timely and effective implementation of the Istanbul Programme of Action in the context of the 2030 Agenda, the Addis Ababa Action Agenda, the Paris Agreement and the Sendai Framework.

24. International cooperation was crucial to ensure effective development and achieve the eventual objective of graduating the least developed countries from that category, especially with respect to the fulfilment of commitments to those countries, such as the provision of ODA and the timely and lasting implementation of duty-free and quota-free market access. The decline in the mobilization of resources for the Aid for Trade initiative should be reversed. Although foreign direct investment (FDI) was an important enabler to build a strong economic base, less than 2 per cent of global FDI had been directed to the least developed countries and, in turn, that had been focused mostly on the extractive sector. Stakeholders should consider enhancing investments in the least developed countries that would lead to structural transformation, productive employment generation and equitable and sustainable growth. Unilateral economic measures imposed on the least developed countries must be lifted, since they had a negative impact on the development and prosperity of affected countries and their efforts towards graduation. Development partners were urged to fully support the least developed

countries by ensuring the meaningful functioning of the Technology Bank by 2017.

25. The Group reiterated its recognition of the special needs and challenges faced by landlocked developing countries caused by their lack of territorial access to the sea and aggravated by remoteness from world markets and high risks and transit costs, which constrained export earnings, private capital inflow and domestic resource mobilization. The Vienna Programme of Action should be mainstreamed to meet the priority needs and drive the socioeconomic progress of landlocked developing countries. Development partners, transit countries and international organizations must mainstream the Vienna Programme of Action, in line with the 2030 Agenda and the Addis Ababa Action Agenda, for its effective, integrated and coherent implementation, and should establish special facilities for the landlocked developing countries as appropriate. Infrastructure development played a key role in reducing the cost of development for the landlocked developing countries. The Global Infrastructure Forum should therefore be welcomed as a follow-up to the Addis Ababa Action Agenda that would help to develop sustainable, accessible and resilient infrastructure for developing countries, including landlocked developing countries.

26. The least developed countries and landlocked developing countries were frequently affected by climate change, health crises, natural disasters, commodity price fluctuations and external financial shocks. The international community must enhance development assistance to help those countries overcome their vulnerabilities, build resilience and set themselves on the path to sustainable social and economic development.

27. **Mr. Phansourivong** (Lao People's Democratic Republic), speaking on behalf of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN), said that groups of countries in special situations continued to face challenges like poverty and vulnerability to external shocks and climate change, which hindered their efforts to achieve national development objectives and realize agreed global development agendas. The development of the least developed countries and landlocked developing countries should be prioritized because they could not overcome their challenges without the support of the international community.

The Istanbul and Vienna Programmes of Action had identified the priorities for those groups of countries in order to help them address their special needs and challenges, and eventually graduate from their status as underdeveloped countries.

28. The 2030 Agenda was a historic milestone for the international community, since it set the lofty goal of sustainable development that left no one behind. It included a commitment to support and assist the groups of countries in special situations through goals and targets to eradicate extreme poverty and support their development. The quadrennial comprehensive policy review in 2016 should therefore take into account the special needs and unique challenges of those countries by providing relevant strategic guidance to United Nations agencies, in particular with a view to supporting implementation of the priority areas of the Istanbul and Vienna Programmes of Action.

29. The development gap in his region should be narrowed, since some members of ASEAN were still countries in special situations. ASEAN had adopted frameworks and declarations to alleviate poverty and promote sustainable development, including the Initiative for ASEAN Integration Work Plan III and the Master Plan on ASEAN Connectivity 2025.

30. Given their specific development challenges, the groups of countries in special situations needed adequate and predictable financial support from development partners — as reflected in the 2030 Agenda and the Addis Ababa Action Agenda — to implement and follow up on the Istanbul and Vienna Programmes of Action. The fulfilment of all ODA commitments remained a crucial source of external financing for development for the least developed countries and landlocked developing countries. He called on development partners to continue supporting the groups of countries in special situations to enable them to overcome their unique development challenges.

31. **Ms. Naeem** (Maldives), speaking on behalf of the Alliance of Small Island States (AOSIS), said that as a group of countries that faced significant challenges due to their specific circumstances, AOSIS expressed its full solidarity with the least developed countries and landlocked developing countries. Eight members of AOSIS were least developed countries that were

“sealocked” rather than landlocked. As island and coastal States, they understood the challenges of a remote situation and limited connectivity.

32. It was important to fully integrate the Istanbul and Vienna Programmes of Action in the 2030 Agenda, including by establishing links between their follow-up and review processes. While the 2030 Agenda provided an overarching framework to achieve sustainable development, the Programmes of Action offered targeted approaches for specific circumstances to support the efforts of countries in special situations to achieve sustainable development and economic growth. The group of least developed countries included small island developing States that faced insurmountable structural challenges — such as limited access to resources and vulnerability to climate change — as well as the economic and social challenges of the least developed countries.

33. To move forward, the United Nations system must offer continually strengthened and coherent support to countries in special situations. AOSIS looked forward to discussions on the quadrennial comprehensive policy review and to other efforts to reflect on the support that countries received at ground level to ensure national ownership of sustainable development activities. The international organizations, including international financial institutions, must align their support programmes with the 2030 Agenda to ensure implementation of the processes negotiated during the previous two years, including the 2030 Agenda. Transparent measurements of progress on sustainable development that went beyond per capita income should be considered, since they were crucial for all countries in special situations. Income-based indicators did not reflect the advancement, vulnerabilities or resilience of a society, or address the unique circumstances and specific challenges of each country. That distinction was important when assessing countries for graduation. Many least developed countries on track for graduation were extremely vulnerable to shocks, including large-scale disasters that could wipe out years of development gains. Since more countries were being assessed for graduation, a priority must be sustaining their development gains.

34. **Ms. Nazaire** (Haiti), speaking on behalf of the Caribbean Community (CARICOM), said that the Istanbul Programme of Action had entered a critical

phase following the Midterm Review. CARICOM fully supported the political declaration of that Midterm Review. The Istanbul Programme of Action must remain the centre point for the least developed countries within a set of complex processes aimed at the elimination of poverty and the establishment of sustainable development worldwide. The architecture of the global development system must reinforce coherence, effectiveness and synergies at all levels for strategic direction and action.

35. The results of the Istanbul Programme of Action were far from conclusive. Only two countries had graduated since 2011 and, while 10 others had reached the threshold for reclassification in 2015, only five of them met the graduation criteria. Progress was insufficient for the majority of the least developed countries and most MDGs had not been achieved. Stakeholders should redouble their efforts to achieve those goals of the Istanbul Programme of Action by 2020, and fulfil their commitments and implement all technical and financial aspects of the partnerships set out in the Istanbul Programme of Action, the 2030 Agenda, the Addis Ababa Action Agenda and the Paris Agreement.

36. Despite progress, the least developed countries had failed to achieve the structural transformations needed for sustainable economic, social and environmental changes. The majority of people in the least developed countries worked in the agricultural sector, where gains had been stagnant since 2010, and the rural areas where they lived had the highest prevalence of hunger and malnutrition. During the previous five years, progress on the diversification of production and value addition had been slow, while integration in global and regional value chains remained limited. FDI had fallen and, like exports, was sensitive to external shocks due to high sectoral and geographic concentration. The least developed countries had experienced a decline in GDP, compared to 2011, which remained below the 7 per cent target recommended by the Istanbul Programme of Action. The trends outlined were delaying poverty eradication and sustainable development and, without reversal, would lead to further marginalization.

37. The least developed countries and their development partners should prioritize and strengthen forms of cooperation that had brought positive results,

even if advances were moderate and multiplier effects slow. Greater use must be made of the potential offered by the growth of domestic resource mobilization and by strengthening public-private partnerships — as exemplified by the Sustainable Energy for All initiative — and South-South and triangular cooperation. She welcomed the establishment of the Technology Bank.

38. The criteria for graduation from the group of least developed countries should be reconsidered, in particular with regard to debt sustainability and preferential access to foreign markets. Lessons should be drawn from the difficulties faced by heavily indebted middle-income countries that were vulnerable to external shocks, including those from CARICOM. Urgent reflection was needed on more flexible measures for the elimination of concessional loans and commercial advantage, in order not to undermine transit countries' chances of sustainable graduation.

39. As a group comprising small island developing States, CARICOM attached great importance to strengthening resilience to natural disasters. Fifteen days previously Haiti had been hit by a category 4 hurricane that had caused death, displacement and considerable destruction to infrastructure and agricultural capital stock. That damage had exacerbated a precarious situation and threatened food security, health, employment and survival in the affected areas and beyond. In the face of recurrent, foreseeable threats, the least developed countries must avoid an endless circle of rebuilding from nothing. She urged developed countries and multilateral bodies to activate and fulfil the mechanisms designed to improve the resilience of the least developed countries, in particular the Crisis Response Window and the Least Developed Countries Fund.

40. **Mr. Islam** (Bangladesh), speaking on behalf of the Group of Least Developed Countries, said that the Istanbul Programme of Action represented a shared vision and the common aspirations of the least developed countries and their development partners. The least developed countries were the most vulnerable of countries, as recognized by the 2030 Agenda, the Addis Ababa Action Agenda, the Paris Agreement and the Sendai Framework. Effective national policies, enhanced global support and appropriate mechanisms

at all levels were needed to achieve the Istanbul Programme of Action.

41. The least developed countries' MDG performance had been impressive. The number of Internet users per 100 people in the least developed countries had doubled between 2010 and 2014, while access to electricity had increased. Initiatives to enhance transport networks in Asia and Africa had almost doubled those countries' share of air freight in world transport in the same period. With respect to establishing an enabling environment for the private sector, 11 of the least developed countries were ranked among the top 100 countries in which to start a business.

42. Nonetheless, the pace of development had been slow and uneven. Many of the least developed countries had been unable to achieve most MDGs and some had experienced sharp declines in GDP growth in 2014 due to extreme weather, drops in commodity prices and regional security challenges. Significant obstacles to structural transformation remained. Only three countries had increased the share of manufacturing in GDP and, since the least developed countries were predominantly dependent on agriculture for economic growth, it was discouraging to hear that the average share of value added in agriculture as a percentage of GDP had declined from 25.4 per cent in 2011 to 23.7 per cent in 2014. The least developed countries were mostly food deficit and they lagged behind on science, technology and innovation. Although the least developed countries' share of world exports had almost doubled between 2001 and 2010, progress had been slow thereafter and their share had declined between 2013 and 2014, mainly due to lower commodity prices. Exports remained highly concentrated, with almost 70 per cent of merchandise exports depending on three main products in 2014. Despite the difficulties, 10 additional least developed countries had reached the graduation thresholds by March 2015.

43. The Midterm Review of the Istanbul Programme of Action had affirmed that speedy progress in the least developed countries would require a holistic, multi-stakeholder approach and strong political commitment, follow-up and monitoring. There was no alternative to strengthening global partnerships to enhance productive capacity-building. Much higher

investment was required in the least developed countries and efforts to make technology available to them should be stepped up. The Group of Least Developed Countries looked forward to the adoption of the Charter of the Technology Bank and that Bank's entry into operation. He called on all stakeholders to make generous contributions in that regard.

44. Development partners must fulfil their ODA commitments towards the least developed countries and products from those countries must be provided with duty-free and quota-free market access. Strong international support was needed to help the least developed countries face their vulnerability to climate change, disasters and outbreaks of life-threatening diseases. The key priorities of the least developed countries and support for them should be reflected in the quadrennial comprehensive policy review. Global financial, economic and trade institutions and other rule-making bodies should be more inclusive of the least developed countries and more responsive to their concerns and aspirations. The least developed countries needed additional sources of financing and tailored programmes and initiatives for different productive sectors. Support to implement the Istanbul Programme of Action and the 2030 Agenda should be extended to the least developed countries under the framework of South-South cooperation.

45. **Mr. Mundanda** (Zambia), speaking on behalf of the Group of Landlocked Developing Countries, said that he welcomed the recognition in the 2030 Agenda and the Addis Ababa Action Agenda of the special needs and challenges of landlocked developing countries related to their lack of territorial access to the sea, remoteness from world markets and high transit costs and risks. Those factors eroded their competitiveness and limited their ability to harness the benefits of international trade, structurally transform their economies and overcome the adverse impacts of climate and environmental change to achieve sustainable development. Landlocked developing countries could not attain the Sustainable Development Goals without realizing the priority goals of the Vienna Programme of Action. Success in the new development agenda would require synergy and coherence in the implementation, follow-up and review of both processes. Their success was critical to transforming landlocked developing countries into "landlinked" countries and ensuring that no one was left behind.

46. The previous month, the Ministers of Foreign Affairs of the landlocked developing countries had held a meeting in New York and had discussed fostering coherence in the implementation of the Vienna Programme of Action, the 2030 Agenda and other global development frameworks and follow-up processes. The High-Level Meeting on Sustainable Transport of Landlocked Developing Countries had been held in the Plurinational State of Bolivia the previous week. Both meetings had adopted outcome documents that raised important issues on the development of landlocked developing countries that were also mentioned in the report of the Secretary-General on the implementation of the Vienna Programme of Action (A/71/313).

47. He expressed concern that landlocked developing countries' economic growth and social well-being remained vulnerable to external shocks, in particular volatility in commodity prices. High commodity dependence had caused such countries' global share of exports to fall in 2015 and they continued to face high costs in transport and trade transactions, despite progress on improving transport infrastructure and trade facilitation.

48. A number of key issues needed to be addressed to advance implementation of the Vienna Programme of Action, which should be mainstreamed into the development agenda to ensure its effective implementation. In that regard, he commended the United Nations organizations that had already mainstreamed the Programme of Action and encouraged others to join them.

49. Another important area was the establishment and maintenance of secure, reliable, efficient and high-quality infrastructure and transit and transport systems, which remained critical to reducing transport and trading costs and to enhancing competitiveness and integration in regional and global markets. However, the magnitude of resources required for investment in infrastructure development and maintenance was still a challenge. He therefore urged the international community to support the efforts of landlocked developing countries to develop infrastructure and called on multilateral financial and development institutions and regional development banks to establish dedicated infrastructure funding or special windows to meet their needs. The Global Infrastructure

Forum should ensure greater participation from landlocked developing countries and address infrastructure and capacity gaps, in particular transit infrastructure needs.

50. Trade was also critical for landlocked developing countries. Improved trade facilitation would lower trade and transaction costs, increase the competitiveness of exports and contribute to the promotion of rapid and inclusive economic development and structural transformation. The WTO Agreement on Trade Facilitation would help to minimize the challenges through improved customs' efficiency, lowered trade costs and reduced delays at border crossings. It could also help landlocked developing countries to diversify their economies in terms of export and market reach and enhance their participation in global value chains. He urged all WTO member States to rapidly ratify and implement the Agreement on Trade Facilitation. Development partners should support efforts on trade facilitation, including increased Aid for Trade resources for landlocked developing countries.

51. Lastly, landlocked developing countries needed to urgently increase their resilience to commodity price fluctuations through accelerated industrialization, value addition, the promotion of services and integration into global value chains. In that regard, international organizations and development partners should provide financial and technical support to those countries. The international community should assist landlocked developing countries to undertake research and analysis on the impact of their situation on sustainable development and on effective participation in international trade and achieving the priorities of the Vienna Programme of Action and the Sustainable Development Goals.

52. **Mr. Peña** (Paraguay) said that significant steps had been taken since the official recognition of landlocked developing countries in 1957 following the adoption of General Assembly resolution 1028 (XI). Those countries' needs had since been given greater consideration at the multilateral level. Despite such progress, however, they continued to be marginalized in trade flows and global investments due to their distance from international markets, the high costs for the transport and transit of their goods and their relatively small internal markets. The Almaty

Programme of Action: Addressing the Special Needs of Landlocked Developing Countries within a New Global Framework for Transit Transport Cooperation for Landlocked and Transit Developing Countries, adopted in 2003, had provided a platform to include the concerns of landlocked developing countries in the multilateral agenda. In 2014, the Vienna Programme of Action had been adopted as an action-oriented programme with six priorities to address the special needs and challenges of landlocked developing countries. Those instruments were vital to addressing common interests and had been strengthened by the 2030 Agenda, which recognized the value of international trade as a tool for development, and the Addis Ababa Action Agenda.

53. The landlocked developing countries had met in December 2015 during the Tenth WTO Ministerial Conference, where they had advocated for the implementation of a specific work plan for such countries in that organization. They had further urged the rapid ratification and implementation of the Agreement on Trade Facilitation and had urged member States to continue to offer sustainable technical and financial assistance for capacity-building and development. The Fifth Meeting of Trade Ministers of Landlocked Developing Countries in June 2016 had promoted ratification of the Agreement on Trade Facilitation, which indicated their commitment to the multilateral trading system. On that occasion a ministerial declaration had been adopted that reaffirmed the importance of the 2030 Agenda in recognizing the special needs and challenges of landlocked developing countries and in which United Nations agencies were urged to work closely with those countries to promote the implementation of the Vienna Programme of Action.

54. Further meetings of landlocked developing countries had taken place at the fourteenth session of the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD), where a consensus had been reached on supporting the special needs of those countries in matters of trade, investment and development, and in the Plurinational State of Bolivia the previous week, where a declaration had been adopted that highlighted the priorities of those countries in transport and transit. Landlocked developing countries must work hard to prepare policies that were adapted to their specific needs and

challenges. Efforts to implement the Vienna Programme of Action should be redoubled and the international frameworks on the specific needs of landlocked developing countries should be mainstreamed and support for those countries strengthened.

55. **Mr. Sinha** (India) said that, although each country faced specific challenges in the pursuit of sustainable development, the most vulnerable countries, including African countries, the least developed countries, landlocked developing countries and small island developing States, deserved special attention. The Midterm Review of the Istanbul Programme of Action had assessed the opportunities and challenges for the least developed countries in the context of the adoption of the 2030 Agenda, the Addis Ababa Action Agenda, the Sendai Framework and the Paris Agreement.

56. India was committed to partnering rapid growth and development in the least developed countries, guided by a vision of common destiny. In that spirit, the Government of India had contributed \$300,000 to the success of the Midterm Review. The development partnership between India and the least developed countries was focused on capacity-building, sharing technological expertise and financial assistance. Assistance was provided through various programmes, including the flagship Indian and Technical Economic Cooperation Programme that had been running since the 1960s. Scholarships and training placements had been provided in priority sectors, such as agriculture, medicine and banking, with close to 4,600 placements provided to the least developed countries in 2016. India had been the first emerging economy to offer a duty-free trade preference scheme for the least developed countries.

57. The three India-Africa Forum Summits held to date and the summit of the Forum for India Pacific Cooperation had crystallized the special relationship between India and countries in special situations. At the India-Africa Forum Summit in October 2015, India had extended additional concessional credit of \$10 billion to African countries over the following five years. Further grant assistance of \$600 million had been extended, which included funding for an India-Africa Development Fund and an India-Africa Health Fund. More than 50,000 scholarships had been offered to Africa for the

following five years, and capacity-building institutes for various sectors had been set up in Africa. The Pan-African e-Network Project was operational in nearly 50 countries. At the multilateral level, India, Brazil and South Africa enjoyed an active partnership with the United Nations Development Programme on South-South cooperation to assist developing countries. While aid levels from donor countries had declined, support from India, as part of South-South cooperation, continued to expand.

58. The majority of the least developed countries were commodity exporting economies. A strong focus should therefore be placed on their productive capacities and the mobilization of adequate resources to fill the development financing gap. Donor countries should urgently fulfil their ODA commitments. India had concluded bilateral cooperation agreements with its landlocked neighbours for easy transit of their goods and remained committed to meeting their critical infrastructure needs.

59. **Mr. Sareer** (Maldives) said that he wished to express his support for the least developed countries and landlocked developing countries. In 2011, Maldives had been the third country to graduate from the list of least developed countries. As the international community constantly reviewed the graduation process and, at that time, had had limited experience of it, the graduation process had not gone smoothly. Although the process had a clear structure on paper, it had not been simple. He wished to share some reflections on that experience.

60. First, investing in the diversification of the economy and its people was key. In preparation for the development challenges resulting from the loss of least developed country status, investment in Maldives had been directed to its major industries of tourism and fishing. Public sector investment had been increased and efforts had been made to create an enabling environment for the private sector. Added emphasis had also been placed on human development as the driving force of economic progress and the key factor in attaining the graduation threshold. In many instances, however, the large-scale financing needed for infrastructure projects had become difficult to access due to the loss of preferential and concessional funding arrangements. Those limitations jeopardized

the development gains that had enabled graduation in the first place.

61. Second, it was important to enhance international cooperation to accompany national efforts for transition. International cooperation was the backbone of the smooth transition strategy developed jointly by the graduating country, development partners and the United Nations system. A smooth graduation depended on the international community rallying around the graduating country to avoid a relapse in its development trajectory. The international community, including the United Nations system and international financial institutions, should take into account a country's vulnerabilities and harmonize efforts to achieve the Vienna Programme of Action and the 2030 Agenda.

62. His country had long advocated recognition of the specific vulnerabilities of small island developing States, which were uniquely susceptible to a variety of environmental and institutional shocks. Although economic vulnerability was a benchmark for graduation, one of the three main indicators could be overridden in the vast majority of assessments. Hence the need for further review of the criteria for graduation.

63. Similarly, the existing criteria for graduation used GDP per capita as a major determining indicator. However, that indicator was not adequate to measure the real progress of a society or its vulnerabilities, since it did not reflect vulnerability to structural challenges, resilience to exogenous shocks or new crises, or account for wealth inequalities and difficulties in wealth distribution due to geography. The concept of economic vulnerability should be better integrated in the measures for development, in order to take a holistic approach.

64. **Ms. Medvedeva** (Russian Federation) said that the 2030 Agenda recognized that the least developed countries and developing countries in special situations required priority attention from the international community and the United Nations development system. Those countries faced great difficulties in achieving sustainable development and the gains made were generally unsustainable and, without the provision of timely support, reversible. In that context, it was essential to ensure effective links between sessions of the high-level political forum on

sustainable development and the review arrangements of United Nations processes on least developed countries, small island developing States and landlocked developing countries, as set out in General Assembly resolution 70/299. The 2017 high-level political forum should consider the implementation of the 2030 Agenda by the least developed countries, while taking into account the political declaration of the Midterm Review of the Istanbul Programme of Action.

65. Implementation of the Vienna Programme of Action was crucial to meeting the special needs of landlocked developing countries. Given that a major factor in the vulnerability of countries in special situations was poorly diversified economies, reflected in a dependence on commodities, it was important to step up assistance for that category of countries in the fields of industrial production and trade capacity.

66. She welcomed the establishment of the Technology Bank and its Governing Council. The latter should ensure optimal coordination and cooperation between the Technology Bank and the Technology Facilitation Mechanism. The efforts of UNCTAD to improve technical cooperation programmes on industry modernization and production stimulation deserved support. At the fourteenth session of UNCTAD, the Russian Federation had proposed the establishment, within the UNCTAD framework, of a special programme on access to new technologies for the least developed countries.

67. Her country followed a consistent policy of simplifying the trade regime for countries in special situations. The Regulations on the Conditions and Procedures for the Application of a Single System of Tariff Preferences of the Eurasian Economic Union — whose membership included the landlocked countries of Armenia, Belarus and Kyrgyzstan — had come into force in April 2016. In the same month the Russian Federation had ratified the Agreement on Trade Facilitation, which, on entry into force, would reduce the delay for import and export procedures by 45 per cent and 90 per cent respectively.

68. As part of the Greater Tumen Initiative, a capacity-building programme for the Mongolian customs services had been approved while the Russian Federation and the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific would host a seminar in April

2017 on simplifying trade procedures in Northeast Asia. The Greater Tumen Initiative was also implementing a project to evaluate regional cooperation on energy efficiency that was being led by the Russian Federation.

69. **Ms. Karabaeva** (Kyrgyzstan) said that the Vienna Programme of Action was a crucial institutional framework to resolve the problems and challenges faced by landlocked developing countries. The implementation of that Programme of Action would assist the inclusive development of landlocked developing countries and make a significant contribution to achieving the 2030 Agenda. To implement the Programme of Action, Kyrgyzstan had developed an inter-agency plan, integrated the Programme in national and sectoral instruments, and improved the institutional framework. A report on the national implementation of the Programme of Action had been presented to the Office of the High Representative for the Least Developed Countries, Landlocked Developing Countries and Small Island Developing States.

70. She welcomed the recently held High-Level Meeting on Sustainable Transport of Landlocked Developing Countries in the Plurinational State of Bolivia, the forthcoming High-level Seminar “Accelerating Sustainable Energy for All in Landlocked Developing Countries through Innovative Partnerships” in Austria and the first Global Sustainable Transport Conference that would shortly take place in Turkmenistan. Those events would facilitate the inclusive development of landlocked developing countries.

71. Ensuring sustainable economic growth was a key challenge for Kyrgyzstan and, in that context, she emphasized the role of multilateral trade and supported the call of the WTO Fifth Meeting of Trade Ministers of Landlocked Developing Countries for a work plan for landlocked developing countries. Participation in the multilateral trade system, with a focus on stimulating trade and help for trade and services and access to markets, would assist economic growth in her country.

72. Kyrgyzstan was developing trade and economic links through its membership of the Eurasian Economic Union, which had opened up access to a market with a population of over 180 million people.

Road transport infrastructure was being developed and a new transit highway would become part of the international transport artery travelling through Kyrgyzstan. The CASA-1000 project involved building high-voltage lines that would connect the energy systems of Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan with Afghanistan and Pakistan to export electrical energy from Central Asian countries, and developing the agreements and mechanisms needed to trade in electrical energy, in accordance with international standards.

73. Regional and global cooperation should be boosted to resolve remaining problems. In particular, transport and transit, tariff and non-tariff restrictions were still in place between States. The international community, donor countries and international organizations should take further measures to resolve and eliminate the factors that had a negative impact on trade and economic relations, and to encourage regional integration and provide financing, in accordance with the Addis Ababa Action Agenda.

74. **Mr. Sharma Pokharel** (Nepal) said that the least developed countries were the most vulnerable segment of the world community. The special situation of those countries had been recognized by the United Nations in 1971 and emphasized in subsequent development agendas. The number of least developed countries had increased from 25 in 1971 to 48 in 2016. Only four of those countries had been able to graduate from the category, which was an indication of the gravity of the challenges they faced. In 2011, the Istanbul Programme of Action had set the ambitious target of graduating half of the least developed countries by 2020. Although many least developed countries held the ambition of graduation, they continued to face challenges due to structural weakness and natural disasters. The importance of a smooth and sustainable graduation process, through enhanced predictability and continued international support measures, had been emphasized by the Kathmandu Declaration 2014 of the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation. A core issue was not merely acknowledging the special challenges but providing means of implementation, resources, reliability, predictability and sustainability.

75. The implementation of international commitments had been insufficient and incoherent. Nepal appreciated the efforts of development partners who had met their ODA commitments and strongly encouraged others to

follow suit and to earmark 0.15 to 0.20 per cent of GNI for ODA to the least developed countries. International efforts should be aligned with the priorities of the least developed countries and should focus on building productive capacity. The acquisition, transfer and diffusion of technology and the corresponding know-how was crucial for accelerating development trajectories. In that context, Nepal welcomed the establishment of the Technology Bank and called on all relevant stakeholders to lend their support for its successful operation. The least developed countries and landlocked developing countries faced greater challenges, mostly due to the high costs of doing business and undertaking development activities. By enabling their meaningful participation in global value chains and international trade, the experience of landlocked countries could become one of “landlinked” countries.

76. Nepal continued to face complex challenges to its development efforts. Lack of access to the sea, expensive infrastructure and poor connectivity had a cumulative negative impact on development and made Nepalese products less competitive, leading to a trade deficit. Connectivity, trade facilitation, technology transfer and investment promotion were priorities. The overarching goals of eradicating extreme poverty by 2030 and achieving sustainable development could not be achieved without bringing the least developed countries and landlocked developing countries on board. The world could not wait any longer for full implementation of the 2030 Agenda. The Istanbul and Vienna Programmes of Action and the SIDS Accelerated Modalities of Action (SAMOA) Pathway were integral parts of the 2030 Agenda. The Sustainable Development Goals would not be achieved without their full and timely implementation.

77. **Mr. Sukhee** (Mongolia) said that landlocked developing countries continued to face considerable challenges linked to their geographical handicaps. They were among the hardest hit by the global economic slowdown, falling commodity prices, food and energy shortages and the impact of climate change. Those challenges affected economic growth and had major implications for the social and environmental aspects of development, thereby affecting the implementation of the Vienna Programme of Action and the Sustainable Development Goals. Owing to their continued marginalization in the global economy,

landlocked developing countries needed increased international assistance for export diversification, value addition, infrastructure development, institutional and productive capacity-building and better market access.

78. Subregional and regional cooperation played an important role in advancing the Vienna Programme of Action. During a tripartite summit of China, Mongolia and the Russian Federation in Tashkent in June 2016, an agreement on establishing an economic corridor and a customs cooperation agreement had been signed. Mongolia had proposed the establishment of an investment centre in Ulaanbaatar to mobilize funding and a regional cooperation planning centre to carry out coordination and feasibility studies for projects. In addition, the three countries were finalizing an intergovernmental agreement on international road transport on the Asian Highway Network, which would be a historic trilateral transit agreement. In the interests of regional economic integration, Mongolia had concluded negotiations with the six participating States of the Asia-Pacific Trade Agreement and expected to complete ratification of that Agreement by the end of 2016. Mongolia was committed to implementing the goals set forth in the six priority areas of the Vienna Programme of Action, which were reflected in the national development strategy, including the 2030 Sustainable Development Vision and the Government's action plan for 2016-2020.

79. In April 2016, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the International Think Tank for Landlocked Developing Countries and the Office of the High Representative for the Least Developed Countries, Landlocked Developing Countries and Small Island Developing States had organized a national workshop on the implementation of the Vienna Programme of Action. Representatives from government ministries, the private sector and academia had learned about mainstreaming the Programme of Action into national and sectoral development plans in areas including transit, infrastructure development and trade and trade facilitation.

80. Research and analysis on the impact of being landlocked were crucial. An upcoming research project on the economic diversification of landlocked developing countries, which would include the case of Mongolia and was supported by the Perez-Guerrero Trust Fund for South-South Cooperation, would

provide evidence-based policy recommendations to assist landlocked developing countries in building their productive capacities, diversifying their economies and undergoing structural transformation.

81. **Ms. Ocampo** (Mexico) said that, one year after the adoption of the 2030 Agenda, the principle of leaving no one behind should be the centre of action in order to fulfil the commitments undertaken. To that end, the focus should be placed on the most marginalized and vulnerable countries and also on the specific difficulties faced by middle-income countries. She supported the recommendations and conclusions contained in the report of the Secretary-General on the implementation of the Istanbul Programme of Action (A/71/66-E/2016/11). Various forms of international cooperation for development would be essential for ensuring the sustainable graduation of the least developed countries, the eradication of extreme poverty and the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals.

82. The least developed countries were in an unprecedented situation — exposed to economic crises, natural disasters and climate change. It was therefore essential to maintain international support for them and strengthen their institutional capacity and the resilience of their economies and societies. Haiti, the only least developed country in the Latin American and Caribbean region, had suffered loss of life, injury and material damage due to hurricane Matthew. In response, the Mexican agency for international development cooperation had provided water containers and packets of purifying tablets with instructions in the local language.

83. The Addis Ababa Action Agenda also recognized the role of international development cooperation in complimenting the efforts of countries to mobilize public resources domestically, particularly for more vulnerable countries with limited domestic resources. In addition to ODA, all forms of financing would be required to promote sustainable development and other innovative mechanisms to facilitate access to science, technology and capacity-building. Cooperation needed to be effective and predictable and include timely information on provided or foreseen medium-term support, in order to maximize results. The Global Partnership for Effective Development Cooperation could act as an ally of the United Nations development

system by supporting the national efforts of the least developed countries to ensure that no one was left behind. Mexico welcomed the report of the Secretary-General on the implementation of the Vienna Programme of Action (A/71/313) and agreed that consistent measures should be promoted, including enhanced collaboration from transit countries, as well as revitalized partnerships for development in accordance with Sustainable Development Goal 17.

84. **Ms. Pham Thi Kim Anh** (Viet Nam) said that effective cooperation between landlocked developing countries and transit countries was crucial to the former's participation in international and regional trade and for the development of transit and transport infrastructure. Landlocked developing countries were important to the transit countries, since they provided connections to other countries in the region. The Vienna Programme of Action emphasized the important areas of such cooperation and partnerships, while the 2030 Agenda recognized that landlocked developing countries deserved special attention. Measures to support them should include deepened cooperation with transit countries to boost trade and economic growth.

85. In the Eurasian region, landlocked developing countries and their transit partners had made progress in infrastructure development and regional connectivity that had brought their trade closer to international markets. Investments had been made to improve roads, railways, ports and transport logistics systems. The Asian Highway Network and the Trans-Asian Railway Network were examples of efforts to facilitate transit cooperation and transit trade by connecting landlocked developing countries to major Asian and European markets.

86. In March 2017, Viet Nam would host a high-level Eurasian regional meeting that would focus on improving cooperation between landlocked developing countries and transit countries on transit, trade facilitation and the implementation of the 2030 Agenda. The meeting would be jointly organized by the Government of Viet Nam, the Office of the High Representative for the Least Developed Countries, Landlocked Developing Countries and Small Island Developing States and the International Road Transport Union, with the collaboration of UNCTAD

and the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific.

87. **Mr. Hikmatov** (Tajikistan) said that it was time to move from commitment to action. The recently held High-level Meeting on Sustainable Transport of Landlocked Developing Countries, and the forthcoming High-level Seminar "Accelerating Sustainable Energy for All in Landlocked Developing Countries through Innovative Partnerships" were sources for fresh ideas and new impetus to promote and strengthen cooperation, identify challenges and suggest areas for stronger partnership. Tajikistan was committed to the Vienna Programme of Action and had taken additional measures to develop national transport and transit infrastructure and communications. Particular importance was attached to improving transport and energy infrastructure in Tajikistan and to expanding subregional and regional trade. Efforts to introduce the single window concept had been boosted. Tajikistan had four active free economic zones, two of which were located on the border with Afghanistan. The International Think Tank for Landlocked Developing Countries, which Tajikistan was preparing to join, provided a good platform for knowledge sharing, exchange and support.

88. The transport and energy sectors were a priority for Tajikistan. Integrating the development of hydropower and other types of renewable energy could increase capacities and ensure sustainability while increasing energy efficiency and reducing detrimental emissions. Tajikistan had been consistently developing its energy potential on that basis. Some experts claimed that the world population would grow to 9 billion by 2050 and that more than 50 per cent of the world's population would be experiencing water scarcity by that point, in particular in the most vulnerable countries, like the least developed countries, landlocked developing countries and small island developing States. More serious collective action was needed to address water scarcity, which had been discussed — along with other issues related to water — in Dushanbe in August 2016 at the High-level Symposium on Sustainable Development Goal 6 and Targets: Ensuring that No One is Left Behind in Access to Water and Sanitation, organized by the Government of Tajikistan and the United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs. A side event on consolidating efforts towards implementation of the

water-related Sustainable Development Goals and targets had taken place on 23 September in New York.

89. **Mr. Madisa** (Botswana) said that the landlocked developing countries faced challenges that were compounded by their geography and remoteness from world markets. As noted in the report of the Secretary-General on the implementation of the Vienna Programme of Action (A/71/313), those challenges were exacerbated by problems such as poor infrastructure, low levels of development in ICT and difficulty accessing energy. Most of those countries were heavily dependent on a single commodity and therefore exposed to the damaging effects of fluctuations in global demand and commodity prices.

90. Implementation of the Vienna Programme of Action was integral to the 2030 Agenda; all 17 Sustainable Development Goals were relevant to landlocked developing countries and both instruments should be implemented in a coherent and integrated manner. To mainstream the Vienna Programme of Action and the 2030 Agenda in the national development plans of Botswana, such as Vision 2036, a workshop had been held for national stakeholders in 2015 that had focused on sectoral initiatives. Nonetheless, global cooperation and partnerships remained important. Transit countries and regional and subregional partners were needed alongside development partners to fully implement both the Vienna Programme of Action and the 2030 Agenda.

91. WTO remained critical to integrating the landlocked developing countries in global trade. The establishment of a specific work plan to address their needs and concerns for increased participation in the multilateral trading system was therefore very important.

92. The High-level Meeting on Sustainable Transport of Landlocked Developing Countries had emphasized the role of sustainable transport in driving regional integration and economic development. It had also recognized the transformative potential of transport for structural economic change when transport was fully aligned with the logistics and economic development opportunities of the people.

93. Lastly, Botswana agreed that the landlocked developing countries should accede to or ratify the relevant international instruments to promote trade and

transit facilitation, effective border crossing and the cross-border movement of goods and services.

94. **Mr. Fox-Drummond Gough** (Brazil) said that it was important to address the specific challenges facing the least developed countries and landlocked developing countries. The slow and uneven recovery of the world's economy posed real challenges for those countries. Reduced demand, coupled with the end of the global commodity boom had generated setbacks for the performance of such countries. The setbacks suffered by the Doha Development Round and the hurdles to full implementation of the Bali Package had further complicated the prospects of harnessing the transformative power of trade as an engine for more inclusive and sustained economic growth.

95. The Midterm Review of the Istanbul Programme of Action had provided an opportunity to renew and strengthen the resolve to support the development of the least developed countries in light of the goals of the Istanbul Programme of Action and the 2030 Agenda. The Vienna Programme of Action indicated support for landlocked developing countries and had set a new level of commitments and a new standard of follow-up to implementation that was intended to align its structure and contents with the achievements of the Open Working Group on Sustainable Development Goals. Both outcome documents laid the basis for a common endeavour to ensure the sustainable development of the least developed countries and landlocked developing countries.

96. The Midterm Review had renewed the collective impetus to achieve the goals of the Istanbul Programme of Action in its eight priority areas, with a view to meeting the general goal of graduating half of all least developed countries from the category by 2020. In that regard, Brazil welcomed the steps taken to put the Technology Bank into operation by 2017. Progress towards the urgent priority of adopting investment promotion regimes for the least developed countries was encouraging. Although development partners should make every effort to realize their ODA commitments as the most critical form of financing for the least developed countries, South-South cooperation played an increasing and complementary role. The South-South Technology Transfer Facility for the least developed countries was expected to make an important contribution in that regard.

97. With respect to the landlocked developing countries, Brazil had actively participated in the Vienna Programme of Action process and remained committed to ensuring full implementation of the outcome document. Brazil continued to work, bilaterally and through the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean, with its landlocked neighbours, to identify and implement initiatives that enhanced their capacity to take advantage of transit facilities and arrangements for international trade.

98. **Ms. Taremba** (Zimbabwe) said that her Government was committed to implementing the Vienna Programme of Action, in particular the priority area of structural economic transformation, which was in line with the priorities of the Zimbabwe Agenda for Sustainable Socioeconomic Transformation. That national agenda included efforts to increase industrial value for better returns on exports of her country's primary products. Foreign investors were encouraged to take advantage of opportunities under that agenda, particularly in the areas of value addition and infrastructure development and maintenance.

99. She appealed for coherent and coordinated international support to implement the Vienna Programme of Action, the Addis Ababa Action Agenda and the 2030 Agenda. The timely and full implementation of the Vienna Programme of Action and the Bali Package, in particular the Agreement on Trade Facilitation, were key. The United Nations development system, in collaboration with other international and regional organizations and development partners, should provide technical support for mainstreaming the Vienna Programme of Action into national and sectoral development strategies.

100. For a long time, landlocked developing countries had been unable to participate in regional or global value chains to generate economic growth through greater integration in world markets. Regional development banks, international development organizations and the United Nations development system should therefore put in place frameworks to help those countries diversify their economies and exports, and integrate into regional and global value chains. Development partners should also facilitate the integration of small and medium-sized enterprises in international trade and strengthen institutions to

support trade, foster competitiveness and build spaces for public-private dialogue.

101. The 2030 Agenda and the Vienna Programme of Action acknowledged the contribution of international trade to sustainable development. Given that landlocked developing countries accounted for 1.2 per cent of global merchandise exports owing to high trade costs, urgent action was needed to address their trade-related challenges. Through Aid for Trade, WTO must provide support for capacity-building to diversify economies, build productive capacities, strengthen trade-related infrastructure and add value to export products. Access to adequate and affordable trade finance was critical to deriving greater benefits from international trade.

102. She called on multilateral financial and development institutions and regional development banks to address the problems of inadequate transport and logistics infrastructure by establishing dedicated infrastructure funding for landlocked developing countries and a special window for the allocation of resources to infrastructure development and maintenance. The Global Infrastructure Forum should strive for action-oriented programmes that addressed the infrastructure needs of landlocked developing countries in a focused manner. The measures taken in her country, including the policy on one-stop border posts, would contribute to transforming Zimbabwe from a landlocked country to a "landlinked" country.

103. **Ms. Al-Zayd** (Kuwait) said that the Midterm Review of the Istanbul Programme of Action had provided an important opportunity to review progress and find the best way for countries in special situations to implement the 2030 Agenda. Despite improvements to the economic situation, most of the least developed countries fell short of graduation; they could not graduate without innovative international partnerships. Development partners must fulfil their ODA commitments to the least developed countries to help close the development gap and implement the right to development, thereby changing the lives of the people in those countries. The United Nations system had made efforts to help countries in special situations overcome the obstacles to implementation of the Istanbul and Vienna Programmes of Action and achieve their development aspirations, in accordance with the 2030 Agenda and the Paris Agreement. In light of the

scarcity of resources, areas of focus included building sustainable resilience to development shocks, particularly due to climate change and natural disasters. The principles of peace and security must be fostered to achieve development goals.

104. Her country fostered international cooperation for growth and development by extending development assistance throughout the world, in particular to countries in special situations. Kuwait remained committed to fulfilling its pledged contributions; it submitted double the internationally agreed ratio of ODA, in addition to extending emergency relief and humanitarian assistance to States in need. Overall, 10 per cent of total assistance was distributed to States in need through United Nations agencies working in the field. In 2015, the Kuwait Fund for Arab Economic Development had set aside \$15 billion to finance development projects in developing countries for a period of 15 years. The lofty initiatives of the Amir of Kuwait, Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, included a \$2 billion development fund to finance development projects in Asian and non-Arab least developed countries, to which the Amir of Kuwait had donated \$300 million, and the provision of concessional loans to African States. The United Nations should be commended for its impartial role in translating the principles of its Charter to achieve international cooperation and action while observing the right of every State to development and to build its own resources and capacities in accordance with its priorities, with a view to building a sustainable future for all.

105. **Mr. Erciyes** (Turkey) said that development cooperation was an integral part of his country's foreign policy, which prioritized the challenges faced by countries in special situations. His Government would continue contributions in support of the sustainable development efforts of the least developed countries, landlocked developing countries and small island developing States and, in that spirit, had hosted the Midterm Review of the Istanbul Programme of Action in Antalya in May 2016. The political declaration of that Midterm Review had paved the way for further action to graduate half of the least developed countries from that category by 2020. Development cooperation from his country focused on the objectives, principles and priorities of the Istanbul Programme of Action and beyond. Turkish assistance to the least

developed countries had exceeded \$1.5 billion over the previous five years. Excluding humanitarian aid, approximately 20 per cent of Turkish ODA was delivered to those countries, principally through the Turkish Cooperation and Coordination Agency. That Agency had taken action in 29 of the least developed countries, in line with the Busan Partnership for Effective Development Co-operation.

106. As a long-standing priority of the least developed countries that had been confirmed in the Istanbul Programme of Action and the Sustainable Development Goals, the Technology Bank and the science, technology and innovation supporting mechanism would address the technology gap and build a robust base for science, technology and innovation in the least developed countries by mobilizing international support. The General Assembly should endorse the Charter of the Technology Bank as soon as possible, with a view to making it operational before 2017 and achieving the Sustainable Development Goal target on its full operationalization. His country was doing its part and had made progress in negotiating the host country agreement. In view of the need for general and sustained support to ensure the success of the Technology Bank, his Government was preparing its financial pledge. Member States and other stakeholders, including the private sector, should contribute to the trust fund of the Bank, and the Secretariat should take steps to mobilize the required financial and human resources.

107. **Ms. Manale** (Morocco) said that the Committee's discussion had reiterated the international community's commitment to supporting the least developed countries and landlocked developing countries to overcome their structural problems, eradicate poverty and achieve the 2030 Agenda. The Istanbul and Vienna Programmes of Action inspired hope and remained the appropriate frameworks to lead a policy for sustained and integrated economic and social development. Specific measures for sustainable development still needed to be taken in the countries in special situations and could not be applied effectively without the support of the international community.

108. The Midterm Review had provided an occasion to accelerate the implementation of the Istanbul Programme of Action and to support the most

vulnerable countries. Action could also be stepped up in such areas as poverty reduction, infant mortality, gender equality and economic growth. She welcomed the operationalization of the Technology Bank. It was important to increase ODA to countries in special situations and to fulfil donor pledges made through bilateral and multilateral frameworks, since they would help alleviate the financial shortcomings of those countries.

109. In light of the fundamental role of trade in economic and social development, Morocco had strengthened its multisectoral cooperation with the least developed countries and landlocked developing countries, in particular countries in sub-Saharan Africa. That activity was part of the strategic vision for foreign trade policy and of work through bilateral, regional and multilateral frameworks. Her country continued to favour active, diverse, inclusive and renewed South-South and triangular cooperation, particularly in its region of Africa, which was a priority area for foreign policy. More South-South cooperation was needed for the successful implementation of the Istanbul and Vienna Programmes of Action, which required an enabling environment for trade in particular. In that context, Morocco had co-authored a proposal at WTO to improve implementation of the Decision on Measures Concerning the Possible Negative Effects of the Reform Programme on Least Developed and Net Food-importing Developing Countries. Similarly, Morocco had signed trade and tariff agreements with 17 African countries that provided preferential tariff treatment. Agreements on dual taxation and investment protection had also been concluded.

110. Visits by the King of Morocco, Mohammed VI, to certain African countries between 2004 and 2016 had further consolidated economic cooperation with those countries. The King of Morocco had also established a foundation for human development, which had its headquarters in Dakar, Senegal. Morocco had acceded to agreements on the African Legal Support Facility and the African Export-Import Bank. During its presidency of the forthcoming session of the Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change in November 2016, Morocco would prioritize those countries most vulnerable to climate change, including the least developed countries and landlocked developing countries. The Conference would focus on

action to strengthen the resilience of those countries to the environmental and disruptive impacts of climate change.

111. **Ms. Sann Thit Yee** (Myanmar) said that the Midterm Review of the Istanbul Programme of Action and the 2016 Annual Ministerial Meeting on Least Developed Countries had both adopted declarations that contained recommendations for the least developed countries on the eradication of poverty and achieving the Sustainable Development Goals. Those declarations also called for development partners to fulfil their commitments to the least developed countries. She noted that technology was a key enabler for development and emphasized the important role of science, technology and innovation in eradicating poverty and attaining sustainable development for the least developed countries. She anticipated support from the Technology Bank in those areas and looked forward to its full operationalization by 2017.

112. Although her country had been deprived of United Nations development assistance between 1993 and 2012, a fully-fledged country programme had resumed in 2013. That country programme focused on sustainable and inclusive community development, climate change, disaster risk reduction and democratic governance. She welcomed the financing programmes of the World Bank in her country and the recent selection of Myanmar as an additional country in the Global Financing Facility in support of Every Woman, Every Child. The new Country Partnership Framework for the period 2015-2017 would focus on rural poverty and the provision of basic services. Training on macroeconomic and financial policies had been provided by the International Monetary Fund. Her Government was determined to advance its socioeconomic reforms and promote democracy. Following six decades of internal armed conflict, peace was the most urgent aspiration of the people of Myanmar.

113. In July 2016, the Government had launched a new economic policy with four objectives that adhered to inclusive and sustainable development and a people-centred approach. The policy also highlighted the importance of national reconciliation and job creation for equitable development nationwide. Her country continued to face substantive infrastructure and human resources deficits that constrained social and economic

development, including challenges to the implementation of the second half of the Istanbul Programme of Action and the 2030 Agenda. Overcoming those challenges would require significant financial resources. Capacity-building was needed to make effective use of ODA, preferential treatment and international support measures in order to scale up private and public resources for inclusive and sustainable growth. Her country needed the continued support of the Office of the High Representative for the Least Developed Countries, Landlocked Developing Countries and Small Island Developing States and the international community to build resilient infrastructure, promote inclusive and sustainable development and foster innovation to ensure productive employment and decent work for all.

114. Graduation from the category of least developed countries was a means to achieve structural changes, poverty eradication and economic diversification, and would contribute to the successful implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals. Her country would make every effort to achieve inclusive development and graduate from that category. Assistance from the international community should be based on the different challenges and levels of development and needs of the least developed countries. Those countries needed the support of the international community and the United Nations to achieve the 2030 Agenda.

115. **Mr. Yacouba** (Niger) said that the geographic situation of the landlocked developing countries made them strongly reliant on transit countries for their maritime trade. In 2003, the Almaty Programme of Action had been adopted, which had responded to the needs and problems of landlocked developing countries in five priority areas. Ten years later, the Economic Commission for Africa and the Office of the High Representative for the Least Developed Countries, Landlocked Developing Countries and Small Island Developing States had jointly organized the African Regional Review Meeting on the Almaty Programme of Action. Since the adoption of the Almaty Programme of Action, landlocked developing countries had announced higher rates of economic growth, yet had experienced a decline in manufacturing value addition and agricultural productivity.

116. Landlocked developing countries had experienced a positive trend in the Human Development Index since 2003 and had also made advances on some MDGs. Their transport and transit policies and legislation had been increasingly harmonized, with the streamlining of border procedures, the development of supportive institutional frameworks and the implementation of trade facilitation initiatives, including one-stop border posts. Work was also underway on the road network and dry ports were being built in all regions, including in Niger, Burkina Faso and Ethiopia.

117. In the priority area of international trade and trade facilitation, exports from landlocked developing countries had increased from \$42 billion in 2003 to \$224 billion in 2011. However, the challenges faced by those countries went beyond the difficulties of delivering merchandise to international markets on time and for a reasonable cost. The challenges included a lack of productive capacities, a largely informal private sector and limited progress on structural transformation. As a result, landlocked developing countries would need a broader development programme and a new analytical and political discourse on the way in which development could be promoted in the face of specific structural weaknesses and geographical disadvantages.

118. His Government was implementing the Istanbul Programme of Action and had taken part in all the meetings of the national focal points that reviewed the annual state of progress in each country concerned. It had also participated in the Midterm Review of that Programme of Action and the prior meeting of focal points that had taken place in March 2016.

119. **Ms. Simati** (Tuvalu) said that, following the Midterm Review, global aspirations and visions must be aligned with the 2030 Agenda and its Sustainable Development Goals and the parallel processes of the Sendai Framework, the Addis Ababa Action Agenda and the Paris Agreement. Collaboration was vital to deal with the unique challenges that the least developed countries faced in ensuring inclusive and sustained development. Genuine partnerships were needed for ICT transfer and she therefore looked forward to the development of the Technology Bank. Although the least developed countries relied heavily on ODA, grants, soft loans, private investments and remittances, they were increasingly leveraging

domestic resources. She urged partners to honour and mobilize all financial pledges of ODA and to collaborate to provide easy access to climate funding for the least developed countries and small island developing States.

120. The least developed countries must have stable and democratically elected administrations and strong institutions and legal frameworks to ensure investment and inclusive infrastructure and services. Many of those countries were caught up in conflicts; the root causes of violence and extremist mentalities should be examined, while family values and community coherence should be promoted. Partnerships could only be sustainable in the context of the country-specific development priorities set out in each country's development plan. Her country's national strategy for sustainable development had been launched and would act as the nexus for partnership.

121. The damage caused by climate change and disasters particularly affected the least developed countries, especially low-lying atoll nations like Tuvalu. Rising sea levels brought social and economic stress that went beyond the capacity of affected nations to cope. The international community must build on the momentum of the Paris Agreement and individual intended nationally determined contributions. She urged all parties who had not done so to ratify the Paris Agreement.

122. The report on the Midterm Review of the Istanbul Programme of Action ([A/CONF.228/3](#)) and the report of the Secretary-General on the implementation of the Istanbul Programme of Action ([A/71/66-E/2016/11](#)) had noted with concern that only four countries had graduated from the category of least developed countries. Two of those countries were small island developing States. The four remaining Pacific small island developing States among the least developed countries were in the graduation pipeline. The graduation criteria needed to be reviewed to include an environmental index as a separate and compulsory criterion for graduation. With respect to dialogue on the future global compact for safe, orderly and regular migration, it was important not to be indifferent to the people who would be displaced by climate change, since they were not covered by existing refugee instruments.

123. **Mr. Gutulo** (Ethiopia) said that the overarching goal of the Istanbul Programme of Action was to overcome the structural challenges faced by the least developed countries to eradicating poverty, enhancing productive capacity and achieving structural transformation. As described in the report of the Secretary-General ([A/71/66-E/2016/11](#)), progress had been made in the implementation of the Istanbul Programme of Action, although significant development challenges remained. Only 12 of the least developed countries had achieved the growth rate set by that Programme in 2014, while some countries had experienced a sharp decline in growth due to low agricultural production, adverse weather conditions and an unfavourable global economy. The report had shown that progress was possible through enhanced and concerted national and international commitment.

124. Given that the 2030 Agenda, the Addis Ababa Action Agenda and the Paris Agreement reflected the special development needs and priorities of the least developed countries, their implementation should take a coordinated approach to supporting those countries and addressing their most urgent needs.

125. The sharp drop in ODA for the least developed countries in 2014 was a source of concern. Since ODA remained critical to filling the financial gaps faced by the least developed countries, it was vital to meet commitments on delivering ODA.

126. The impact of climate change on the least developed countries could not be addressed without adequate and predictable financing for adaptation and mitigation. In addition, technology development, transfer and capacity-building would be essential. In that regard, it was time to fully operationalize the Technology Bank.

127. The geographical reality of landlocked developing countries inhibited their full participation in global production networks. Impediments like low levels of ICT and limited access to reliable and modern energy should be addressed through effective implementation of the Vienna Programme of Action, in coordination with all internationally agreed development goals and targets.

128. In his country, the Istanbul and Vienna Programmes of Action had been mainstreamed and were being implemented with the aim of achieving

middle-income country status by 2025. Rapid double-digit economic growth had reduced poverty and assisted structural transformation. Infrastructure had been built to enhance productive capacity and global competitiveness.

129. His country actively promoted regional integration. The Ethio-Djibouti train line was a hallmark regional initiative that promoted connectivity to increase trade and investment and strengthened regional friendship and partnership. In that regard, his delegation was grateful for the continued support of development partners.

130. **Mr. Zhang** Yanhua (China) said that the current global economic recovery was fraught with uncertainties and imbalances between the North and the South, aggravated by humanitarian disasters and frequent outbreaks of natural disasters. The least developed countries and landlocked developing countries were the most vulnerable groups of the international community and faced a daunting task in pursuit of development. The political declaration of the Midterm Review of the Istanbul Programme of Action represented a firm commitment from the international community to support the development of the least developed countries and provided clear guidance on the comprehensive implementation of the Programme of Action. All parties concerned should join in the common effort to translate that commitment into action and effectively implement the outcome document to ensure that half of the least developed countries would meet the graduation criteria by 2020. All the required supporting measures should be taken to ensure a smooth transition for graduating countries.

131. The Vienna Programme of Action was a crystallization of the international consensus to step up support for the development of the landlocked developing countries. Developed countries in particular should honour that commitment by assisting with the challenges of geographical constraints, inadequate infrastructure and complicated and costly transit and transport. They should promote development in the six priority areas identified in the Vienna Programme of Action and the overall social and economic progress of landlocked developing countries.

132. China provided assistance to the least developed countries and landlocked developing countries in different forms and through various channels,

including South-South cooperation. As a transit developing country, China had always supported the development of landlocked developing countries and had advocated the development of a Silk Road Economic Belt to promote connectivity and networking between countries. Measures to help the least developed countries, landlocked developing countries and small island developing States, announced by the President of China at the seventy-first session of the General Assembly, were being implemented. In September 2016, the Group of 20 Summit had been held in China, where an initiative had been launched to support industrialization in Africa and the least developed countries.

133. **Mr. Tobgye** (Bhutan) said that the least developed countries were making good progress in the implementation of the Istanbul Programme of Action, with support from the international community. The Midterm Review had provided the political commitment and direction to realize the final phase of the Istanbul Programme of Action. A critical lesson from the years of implementation of that Programme of Action was that the least developed countries continued to face low levels of productivity, compounded by the impact of natural disasters and climate change. Economic structural transformation could contribute to building the productive capacity of the least developed countries for sustainable and inclusive growth.

134. The vast human potential in the least developed countries was yet to be tapped. A long-term development strategy based on quality education, including vocational skills and providing women and young people with avenues for entrepreneurship, would unlock their economic potential. Given the structural constraints faced by the least developed countries, global support in terms of resources, capacity and technical assistance would be critical to the full realization of the Istanbul Programme of Action. In most of those countries, the United Nations development system was an important development partner. The resolution on the quadrennial comprehensive policy review must therefore speak to the needs of the least developed countries. In light of the importance of national implementation of the 2030 Agenda, the United Nations development system should devote its expertise and resources to supporting the least developed countries at that level. The

development of the Technology Bank was welcome, since it would bring important benefits to the least developed countries. He called for the early ratification of the Charter of the Technology Bank, in order to bring the Bank into operation by January 2017.

135. As a landlocked developing country, a lack of access to sea ports coupled with mountainous terrain limited trade and transit within Bhutan and with neighbouring countries. Although building infrastructure and enhancing connectivity lay at the heart of addressing the structural constraints faced by landlocked developing countries, such projects were capital intensive and had long time frames for planning and execution. Infrastructure development was key to unlocking the potential of landlocked developing countries to realize the priorities of the Vienna Programme of Action and was therefore a main strategy for his country to achieve the national development objective of inclusive, equitable and sustained economic growth.

136. **Ms. Bozzhigitova** (Kazakhstan) said that her country was committed to supporting the efforts of the least developed countries, landlocked developing countries and small island developing States to achieve peace and development and mitigate climate change. The Almaty Programme of Action had created new linkages and strengthened existing partnerships between the landlocked developing countries, transit developing countries and partners, including multilateral institutions. The Government of Kazakhstan was mainstreaming a number of specific actions from the Vienna Programme of Action in its 100 Concrete Steps plan, proposed by the President of Kazakhstan, Nursultan Nazarbayev. The plan called for reforms in all key sectors with a view to upgrading human and institutional capacities, enhancing public sector service delivery and boosting economic productivity, diversification and competitiveness. As the furthest country from any seaport, Kazakhstan understood the need to develop effective transit systems and transport infrastructure. Work had started on new railway lines, renovated highways, upgraded airport infrastructure and on the development of a national merchant fleet and marine ports.

137. The Vienna Programme of Action was an integral part of the 2030 Agenda. The achievement of Sustainable Development Goal 7 on affordable and clean energy would have a multiplier effect on the

achievement of the other Sustainable Development Goals and was a major challenge for the least developed countries, landlocked developing countries and small island developing States. All delegations were invited to attend EXPO-2017 Astana, which would be a specialized international exhibition that would take place in summer 2017 under the theme "Future Energy".

138. The documents adopted in the previous two years were momentous for countries in special situations, given the commitment therein to eradicating poverty, fighting inequalities and securing the future of the planet and the well-being of future generations. They provided clear guidance on how countries in special situations could address obstacles to achieving sustainable and inclusive development. The integration of those programmes into national development frameworks, priorities and strategies would contribute to the achievement of common aspirations.

139. **Mr. Acharya** (Under-Secretary-General and High Representative for the Least Developed Countries, Landlocked Developing Countries and Small Island Developing States) said that he was grateful to all delegates for expressing their concerns as least developed countries or landlocked developing countries, or their commitment as partners to fully supporting those countries. Building on multi-stakeholder partnerships was the way forward to transform countries in special situations.

140. He drew the attention of delegates to two important meetings. First, the High-level Meeting on Sustainable Transport of Landlocked Developing Countries, held recently in the Plurinational State of Bolivia, which had produced concrete suggestions from landlocked developing countries to contribute to the first Global Conference on Sustainable Transport, which would be held in Turkmenistan in November 2016. Second, a high-level side event for the least developed countries and development partners that had taken place the previous day at the United Nations Conference on Housing and Sustainable Urban Development (Habitat III). That event had gone well and had considered harmonization, which was an issue that all countries faced but which affected African countries and the least developed countries more acutely due to its speed and intensity.

141. Lastly, he expressed his gratitude to all delegations for their continued support for his Office, thereby helping the least developed countries and landlocked developing countries to move forward on the goals that they, with the international community, had set for themselves, through the Istanbul and Vienna Programmes of Action and other global frameworks.

The meeting rose at 6.15 p.m.