



General Assembly

Seventieth session

Official Records

Distr.: General
30 November 2015

Original: English

Third Committee

Summary record of the 2nd meeting

Held at Headquarters, New York, on Tuesday, 6 October 2015, at 3 p.m.

Chair: Mr. Hilale (Morocco)
later: Mr. Mohamed (Vice-Chair) (Guyana)

Contents

Agenda item 28: Social development (*continued*)

- (a) Implementation of the outcome of the World Summit for Social Development and of the twenty-fourth special session of the General Assembly (*continued*)
- (b) Social development, including questions relating to the world social situation and to youth, ageing, disabled persons and the family (*continued*)
- (c) Follow-up to the International Year of Older Persons: Second World Assembly on Ageing (*continued*)


This record is subject to correction.

Corrections should be sent as soon as possible, under the signature of a member of the delegation concerned, to the Chief of the Documents Control Unit (srcorrections@un.org), and incorporated in a copy of the record.

Corrected records will be reissued electronically on the Official Document System of the United Nations (<http://documents.un.org/>).

15-17210 (E)



Please recycle 



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

Agenda item 28: Social development (*continued*)

(a) Implementation of the outcome of the World Summit for Social Development and of the twenty-fourth special session of the General Assembly (*continued*) (A/70/173 and A/70/178)

(b) Social development, including questions relating to the world social situation and to youth, ageing, disabled persons and the family (*continued*) (A/70/61-E/2015/3, A/70/118, A/70/156 and A/70/179)

(c) Follow-up to the International Year of Older Persons: Second World Assembly on Ageing (*continued*) (A/70/185)

1. **Ms. Mouflih** (Morocco) said that, despite overall progress in development, some regions were falling further and further behind. The number of failed States was growing, and terrorism threatened many States and regions. Over 836 million people still lived in extreme poverty, and over 60 million persons had fled violence, war and persecution. Those trends were an alarm call that pointed to an urgent need for more effective international cooperation that was based on development driven by the unique cultural, religious, economic, social and political strengths of each country and region.

2. Morocco continued to move towards democracy, as demonstrated by its 2011 Constitution, the strengthening of the human rights protection system and the political, economic and social reform processes. Economic growth had been steady since 2000. Thanks to environmental reforms and massive investment in renewable energy, it was a world leader in climate policy and reducing greenhouse emissions. It also had one of the world's best human development programmes. Morocco continued to promote effective South-South cooperation and to catalyse regional and subregional integration. Achievement of a more equitable and prosperous future for all hinged on the international community's ability to mobilize the necessary financial resources and to revisit its approach to development in a spirit of solidarity and cooperation. It must give top priority to ensuring peace and security, which were prerequisites for sustainable development.

3. **Ms. Landáburu** (Mexico), speaking as a youth delegate, said that her country took a multidimensional approach to the eradication of poverty, which included sustainable management of the environment and natural resources. It remained committed to sharing lessons learned and good practices in the collection and generation of statistical data. Poverty was not due solely to a lack of income, and its eradication would require the social and economic inclusion of marginalized groups such as migrants, indigenous peoples and persons with disabilities. Recognizing the critical role of young people, Mexico had instituted various programmes aimed at promoting youth inclusion, employment and volunteerism, creating educational opportunities and preventing adolescent pregnancies. The family was indeed the basic unit of society, but demographic changes, migration and other factors were resulting in many types of family structure. Within the family, it was important to promote greater gender equality, acknowledge the value of unpaid work and encourage men's participation in family activities.

4. In view of demographic trends, Mexico reiterated its appeal to the entities of the United Nations system to mainstream ageing-related issues in their development programmes. It also urged the United Nations to reform the working methods of the Commission for Social Development so that it might contribute more effectively to implementing the new development agenda. In closing, she invited the other youth delegates to meet with her to brainstorm creative proposals for attaining social development goals.

5. **Ms. Amadeo** (United States of America) said that the United States encouraged its humanitarian partners in crisis situations to protect and assist persons with disabilities and to maintain and improve their technical expertise in disability inclusion. It provided financial support to the International Committee of the Red Cross for physical rehabilitation projects, emergency medical care and psychological support for persons with disabilities, as well as to the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East for health services and the purchase of artificial limbs, mobility devices and other aids. With respect to families, her Government expected the General Assembly to acknowledge the need for family policies to take account of new family structures and compositions. Regarding older persons, the United States regularly reviewed its own national programmes

and policies to assist the elderly and had a strong history of laws, policies and programmes that promoted independent living. Additional programmes provided support for family and informal caregivers. A number of United States cities were participating in the World Health Organization's Global Network of Age-friendly Cities and Communities and leveraging government resources to provide accessible transportation, housing and health services. The United States also had a history of volunteerism, which had led to many useful projects at home and abroad.

6. **Ms. Gatto** (Italy) said that her country, which was serving as Vice-Chair of the Bureau of the Conference of States Parties to the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, was pleased that the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development addressed the needs of persons with disabilities. In addition to establishing a national observatory in accordance with the Convention, it had adopted guidelines and a first national action plan on disability. With respect to older persons, the Government promoted the concept of successful ageing and had organized a Group of 20 workshop on the silver economy in June 2015. It promoted youth education, training and volunteerism and had launched a package of measures to facilitate young people's access to credit for studies, housing and business. Lastly, it promoted social cooperatives as a means of economic empowerment for women and for people in rural areas.

7. **Mr. Näkkäläjärvi** (Finland), speaking as a youth delegate, said that young people represented more than half of the world's population and must be part of the solution to its problems. They could play a crucial role in reducing inequality, in particular by improving the status of women. Twenty years after the International Conference on Population and Development, many women had yet to realize the right to decide freely on questions of reproduction. Equal treatment and control of one's body and sexual identity were human rights that should be enjoyed by all, yet over a third of the world's women had experienced physical or sexual violence. Violence against women often revealed gender-based discrimination in society that originated from power structures favouring men. He therefore welcomed the entry into force in Finland of the Council of Europe Convention on preventing and combating violence against women and domestic violence.

8. The Sustainable Development Goals were a tribute to the success of international cooperation and the key to a better future. Their adoption implied a commitment to strengthening the rights and opportunities of women and girls as, without gender equality, it would not be possible to reach the other goals. Gender equality would change societies and, thereby, the world.

9. **Ms. Ng** (Singapore) said that Singapore would be a 'super-aged' nation by 2030 and remained fully committed to the Madrid International Plan of Action on Ageing. To harness the potential of longevity, it would be implementing an ambitious action plan for successful ageing that comprised over 60 initiatives. They included work, training, health and community-building activities that would contribute to older Singaporeans' sense of purpose and help to eliminate workplace discrimination; wage subsidies for employers that hired older workers; a fund to support community organizations training and deploying older volunteers; community and urban planning initiatives to strengthen family ties, promote intergenerational bonding and allow seniors to age in place; physical improvements to make the city of Singapore senior friendly; and quarterly cash supplements for low-income seniors. Legislative amendments would protect vulnerable adults from abuse and neglect and simplify the process of appointing a family member to represent the interests of a mentally incapacitated person.

10. **Mr. Meza-Cuadra** (Peru) said that the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development reaffirmed the three pillars of the Copenhagen Declaration on Social Development and Programme of Action of the World Summit for Social Development: poverty eradication, full and productive employment and social integration. Implementation of the social development component should focus on empowering the most vulnerable groups and promoting social integration in order to turn economic growth into improved quality of life for all.

11. **Mr. Gallardo** (Peru), speaking as a youth delegate, said that quality education for all and economic and social inclusion were prerequisites for sustainable development. As part of its national plan for productive diversification, Peru had helped more than a million young people escape poverty through training at its technology and innovation centres and other programmes. It was investing an increasing percentage of its gross domestic product in education

and had achieved almost universal primary education, while also providing scholarships for thousands of students to study at foreign universities every year. The national plan for gender equality provided for technical assistance to empower and train young women.

12. **Mr. Qassem Agha** (Syrian Arab Republic) said that, 20 years after the adoption of the Copenhagen Declaration on Social Development, poverty and hunger persisted, unemployment had risen, and terrorism and foreign occupation still posed threats to peace and security. The Syrian Arab Republic continued to do its utmost to promote national economic and social development, but it could accomplish little in the face of the destruction inflicted by foreign-supported terrorists and the continuing unilateral coercive economic measures imposed by the United States, as well as European and Arab States, which were a flagrant violation of the rights of the Syrian people to development and health. In response to a request from the Special Rapporteur on the negative impact of unilateral coercive measures on the enjoyment of human rights, his Government had pointed out that there were more than 58 packages of unilateral financial and economic measures that targeted all economic, financial, agricultural and industrial activity; the food, pharmaceutical, tourism and transportation sectors; and science and culture. Regrettably, the Secretary-General's reports on social development failed to give due consideration to the catastrophic impact on development of occupation and terrorism.

13. **Mr. González Franco** (Paraguay) said that, despite significant progress on social development, economic and social inequalities between and within countries continued to grow. Paraguay had experienced sustained economic growth over the past few years, but achieving inclusive growth was still the Government's main challenge. To bridge the economic gap, Paraguay had instituted various social strategies and programmes, resulting in a 50 per cent reduction in poverty and extreme poverty since 2002. Under its 2030 national development plan, which made social cohesion a priority, it was implementing a national extreme poverty reduction programme designed to boost the income of vulnerable families and improve their access to social services. As a land-locked developing country that was both a recipient and a provider of international cooperation, Paraguay wished to reaffirm the importance of the principles of country

ownership, alignment and harmonization, as well as social and cultural diversity, and it urged donors to continue to provide resources to assist national efforts to improve social inclusion.

14. **Mr. Hahn Choonghee** (Republic of Korea) said that, in view of persistent economic and social disparities, the work of the Commission for Social Development remained very relevant. The holistic approach of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development would allow the international community to capitalize on synergies among the social, economic and environmental dimensions, and its strong review process should allow the United Nations to accelerate implementation. The new framework was based on the belief that human dignity should take precedence over economic prosperity and considered social integration a prerequisite for sustainable development. Empowering disadvantaged groups would generate more revenue than expense because it would make the members of those groups more productive. Social safety nets would also prove cost-effective. Looking at the creativity, energy and strong dedication to justice of its young people, who also had the benefit of lessons learned by past generations, the Republic of Korea was confident in the future.

15. **Ms. Cho Moon Sun** (Republic of Korea), speaking as a youth delegate, said that empowering youth through quality education was one of the keys to social development. However, the direction of education was as important as its quality. Educational objectives should include the fostering of global citizenship and its values, rights and responsibilities, which educated young people could then pass on to other social sectors, including vulnerable groups.

16. **Ms. Moreno Guerra** (Cuba), stressing the importance of the Copenhagen Declaration and Programme of Action, said that social development could not be achieved without changing the inherently unjust and unsustainable international economic order. States should be the primary movers of social development policy, and international cooperation should not be genuine and not subject to political preconditions. Clearly, economic growth alone could not eradicate poverty but must be accompanied by national and international measures to create a macroeconomic environment that contributed to that goal. Implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development should give priority to social

justice and should preserve a focus on the three pillars of social development.

17. The United Nations of the United Nations to promote social progress and higher standards of living remained unfulfilled, while States' military expenditures amounted to over a billion dollars every year. The terms of trade had deteriorated, and official development assistance had shrunk in real terms. Technology transfer remained limited, and developed economy markets continued to raise high barriers to imports from poor countries, whose external debt, repaid many times over, continued to burgeon. Inequalities among countries were growing. Much could be done with very little to advance the right to development of billions of people, if the developed countries would meet their official development assistance commitments.

18. Despite the economic, commercial and financial embargo, Cuba had attained the Millennium Development Goals. It had one of the world's lowest infant mortality rates, full literacy and universal health care, and it devoted more than two thirds of its budget to promoting social development.

19. **Ms. Bunvanit** (Thailand), speaking as a youth delegate said that, in implementing the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, Member States should focus on narrowing the economic and social gap between rural and urban areas and on enhancing social integration for all, including poor youth. Her country had greatly reduced maternal and under-5 mortality rates by providing non-discriminatory basic health care and a health-care scheme for low-income households. To reduce poverty in remote areas, Thais were encouraged to follow the King's 'sufficiency economy' philosophy, which promoted self-sufficiency and environmental sustainability. Young people in rural areas were taught to use their free time productively to support their families and communities.

20. **Ms. Pomkhatkaew** (Thailand), speaking as a youth delegate, said that Thailand provided free primary and secondary education for all, including distance learning for pupils in remote areas. The Government also offered many university scholarships, including for students from remote areas. Thai centres for youth journalism gave young people a chance to share their views and develop skills. The Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific had encouraged volunteerism among Thai youth had

informed them about environmental issues during the recent National Training on Youth Volunteerism and Empowerment in Bangkok. She was grateful to the United Nations for its efforts to enhance youth participation in the work of the Organization, including in the formulation of the Sustainable Development Goals. It should continue such activities and should encourage the participation of young women and young people with disabilities, so that no group of young people was left behind.

21. **Mr. Boukadoum** (Algeria) said that, by adopting the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, Member States had committed themselves to combating poverty and promoting social integration and decent work for all. They would need to pay special attention to the needs of vulnerable and disadvantaged groups and to adopt a more coherent and integrated approach to development. They would also need to fulfil their official development assistance commitments in full and on time.

22. Over the preceding 10 years, Algeria had cut poverty in half, mainly by increasing social transfers. Initiatives to benefit disadvantaged groups had provided monthly solidarity allowances and tax exemptions. The Government had reduced unemployment through various measures to promote job and business creation, and it had achieved nearly universal primary and secondary education by providing incentives to poor families. It remained committed to strengthening older people's economic and social integration through a holistic approach.

23. **Mr. Shulgin** (Russian Federation) said that in the wake of the economic crisis, development efforts should focus on achieving social goals and expanding social rights, with particular emphasis on resolving the problems of the most vulnerable groups. The Commission for Social Development was an effective coordinator on those issues within the United Nations system.

24. Despite the complex economic situation, the Russian Federation was committed to meeting its social obligations to its citizens. The Government was striving to reduce material inequality and fight poverty through continued support for employment and, most recently, a stimulus package for small and medium-sized enterprises. It planned to create 25 million jobs by 2030. With regard to persons with disabilities, it was working alongside civil society to monitor the

“accessible environment” programme that was establishing barrier-free living conditions for people with disabilities. It had submitted its initial report under the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities in 2014 and was proposing a candidate for the 2016 elections for the Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities. With respect to ageing, the Government was working to improve the financial, material and health-care situation of older persons in accordance with the recommendations of the Madrid International Plan of Action on Ageing. Guided by the World Programme of Action for Youth, it sought to teach young people civic responsibility, tolerance, healthy habits, morality and the ideals of peace and friendship among nations. It attached great importance to strengthening the family and intergenerational solidarity as well as traditional family and moral values.

25. **Ms. Wachter** (Switzerland), speaking as a youth delegate, said that the commitments made at the World Summit for Social Development remained highly relevant, in view of the ever widening inequalities within and between countries. The adoption of the 2030 Agenda had caused a paradigm shift, and national strategies for implementing the Sustainable Development Goals would need to focus on the root causes of such negative trends. The private sector could enhance its already considerable contribution to social development through investment in key sectors, public-private partnerships and corporate social responsibility. The International Labour Organization (ILO) should lead sustainable development efforts to promote decent work for all. Her delegation called on all Member States to ratify the ILO core conventions and encouraged the tripartite social partners—Government, labour and business—to implement the ILO Declaration on Social Justice for a Fair Globalization.

26. Poverty in Switzerland was often caused by unemployment, as well as other socioeconomic factors such as household composition, educational level and health and migration status. The Government addressed poverty through prevention—by creating favourable economic conditions, applying an active labour market policy and providing training based on labour market needs—and an effective social safety net. Gender equality was an essential element of sustainable development. In many parts of the world, women and girls were deprived of the most basic human rights.

Even in Switzerland, women did not always receive equal pay for equal work and were underrepresented in politics and business. She hoped that the women and men of her generation would make gender equality a reality.

27. **Ms. Lange** (Germany), speaking as a youth delegate, said that German secondary students had many questions about the accomplishments of the United Nations. They saw that the Security Council could not take action because of veto powers, modest climate goals were set and then ignored, and United Nations resolutions were unenforceable. The United Nations claimed to foster fair working conditions, but did not pay its own interns. Meanwhile, young adults remained underrepresented in politics and the global community was inactive in the face of war, corruption, failed states and humanitarian disasters.

28. **Mr. Kauschanski** (Germany), speaking as a youth delegate, said that it was time to reform the United Nations, which was a sedentary, complex and sluggish institution. Progress in a country should be measured not by gross domestic product but in terms of well-functioning infrastructure, stable government, equal opportunities, fair wages, social justice and even-handed relations with other countries. All States should be held accountable for implementing the Sustainable Development Goals. Young people rejected hypocrisy and were drivers of change, and their energy and vision should be harnessed through permanent local, national and international mechanisms. Human rights were for everyone, everywhere, regardless of sexual orientation, gender identity or refugee status.

29. **Mr. Olguín Cigarroa** (Chile) said that one of his Government’s highest priorities was the reduction of poverty and inequality. To that end, it had introduced tax and labour reforms and was broadening access to quality education. Furthermore, it would measure the effectiveness of those changes against the new national multidimensional poverty index. It was striving to establish social protection schemes that would protect and promote the economic, social and cultural rights of all and to create a more inclusive society with fewer inequalities and more opportunities, especially for the young. Through coordinated national, regional and local efforts, it would continue working to ensure universal quality education, true gender equality, environmentally sustainable development and fair labour relations, in accordance with the Sustainable Development Goals. It had established a national

children's council and had introduced various bills aimed at protecting the rights of children. To protect the rights of older persons, it would be giving the National Service for Older Persons greater oversight of organizations providing services to them. The Government was also considering the establishment of an under-secretariat for disability affairs in order to protect the rights of the two million Chileans with disabilities.

30. **Mr. Abdrakhmanov** (Kazakhstan) said that macroeconomic and social stabilization strategies were required to achieve the well-being of people and the planet. Cognizant of the tremendous resources required to meet persistent, new or growing challenges to sustainable development, the President of Kazakhstan had recently proposed that each Member State should consider transferring 1 per cent of its defence budget to the Sustainable Development Goals Fund.

31. As a responsible Member State, his country had offered to host a United Nations regional hub for development and humanitarian assistance for Central Asia. Kazakhstan had an ambitious national strategy that was intended to make it one of the 30 most developed States in the world by 2050. As part of its development strategy, it would increase funding to programmes for children, youth, women, older persons and persons with disabilities, using income from the National Fund to provide quality education, health care, social housing and enhanced social security. The strategy also targeted labour practices and relations, employment, wage policies and information technology development. Its Road Map to Employment programme created jobs for young people and guaranteed them free formal education at all levels, vocational training and access to microcredit. Kazakhstan had recently ratified the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities and was continuing to implement the relevant national action plan. The Government was also committed to ensuring that older people could age in dignity and safety.

32. *Mr. Mohamed (Guyana), Vice-Chair, took the Chair.*

33. **Ms. Bardaoui** (Tunisia) said that the people-centred 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development gave new hope for social development. Tunisia's development model combined economic efficiency with a multifaceted social policy. Under its 2016-2020 development plan, Tunisia would improve its education

system in order to enhance the employability of graduates; monitor the return of optimism among children and young people; reform the social protection system; develop the health care system, and reform the pension and health insurance systems to provide better support for older persons and persons with disabilities. It would also take steps to empower and improve local and regional government with a view to reducing economic disparities between the coast and the less developed inland regions.

34. **Mr. Ciss** (Senegal) said that the new development agenda's holistic approach was consistent with the policies already applied in Senegal, which included social safety net programmes to strengthen the integration of vulnerable social groups. They included family stipends and universal health-care coverage that was available to the 80 per cent of the population working in the informal sector. The Special Opportunities Card and a national community-based rehabilitation programme provided services for persons with disabilities, and another programme provided support services and free health care for older persons.

35. **Ms. Murphy** (Ireland), speaking as a youth delegate, said that young people faced challenges everywhere. Even in a country such as hers, where 90 per cent of young people completed secondary school and half progressed to higher education, youth suicide remained an issue, especially for young men. The Government had just launched a new national youth strategy to help all young people to realise their potential. As a society, Ireland looked forward to further embracing minority groups and refugees. The Sustainable Development Goals were a universal call for action, and she asked Member States to consider the role, rights, abilities and contributions of young people when discussing resolutions and policies. Young people were not just the future, but also the present.

36. **Mr. O'Liatháin** (Ireland), speaking as a youth delegate, said that the Irish youth delegates had been inspired by their experience and wanted to continue to carry out the work of the United Nations. He encouraged more countries to take part in the youth delegate programme. Young people were affected by the issues of the day and had great capacity to make positive change. In Ireland, where homosexual acts had been a criminal offence until the 1990s, youth compassion, determination and organization had been largely responsible for making it the first country in the

world to adopt marriage equality through a national referendum. Young people should continue to participate in decision-making, and they should be involved in monitoring and implementing the Sustainable Development Goals.

37. **Mr. Baomran** (United Arab Emirates) said that the international community must find new ways to address existing and emerging challenges to social development, including population growth, unemployment, climate change, terrorism and armed conflict. At the domestic level, the United Arab Emirates had allocated half of its budget for the period 2014-2016 to social development. It had been able to practically eradicate poverty by creating an environment that promoted employment for all and by enacting social security legislation and adopting social protection schemes. It provided free education at all levels and was spending a quarter of the 2014-2016 budget on improving education and on teacher training. Old-age pensions, health care and at-home assistance for older persons were guaranteed by law. The Government was taking steps to promote the development of remote areas and support vulnerable families. Given the crucial importance of social development for achieving world peace and security, it had just launched Mohammed Bin Rashid Global Initiatives, a massive development foundation whose primary goals were to combat poverty and disease, disseminate knowledge, empower communities and promote entrepreneurship and innovation.

38. **Ms. Sandoval** (Nicaragua) said that universal attainment of all the Millennium Development Goals should be a basic goal of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. Its implementation should be based on the principle of shared but differentiated responsibilities and should lead to a new economic and financial model and new production and consumption patterns based on sustainability. In that context, Nicaragua would continue to fight for a more just and solidary world order. To succeed, developing countries would need sufficient financial and technological resources, capacity-building and the space to pursue their own national policies.

39. Nicaragua was close to achieving all of the Millennium Development Goals. Its efforts and policies had been recognized by the Pan American Health Organization, the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization and the Food and Agriculture Organization. It was continuing to enact

laws for youth, older persons and persons with disabilities and to involve them in decision-making on policies and activities affecting them. The young, the elderly and the family should continue to be a priority focus for all States. Nicaragua called on the United Nations system and the relevant actors to help to create inclusive employment and provide training for young people based on labour market needs.

40. **Mr. Rattray** (Jamaica) said that his Government had made social development a linchpin of its efforts to achieve people-centred sustainable development, and it encouraged all stakeholders to redouble their efforts to promote social integration and inclusive growth. In addition to enacting a landmark disabilities law, it had recently updated its national youth policy for the period 2015-2030 based on international and regional standards and was drafting a youth development law that would require youth-sensitive budgeting, provide appropriate levels of funding for youth development and mainstream youth issues. In recognition of the integral role of the family in social development, the Government had established a national parenting support commission. In June 2015 Jamaica had joined with the other countries of the Americas in unanimously adopting the Inter-American Convention on Protecting the Human Rights of Older Persons.

41. **Mr. Al-Obaidi** (Iraq) said that the rights of the young, the elderly and persons with special needs were enshrined in the Iraqi Constitution of 2005. They were implemented through the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs and had recently been further codified by a law on the care of persons with disabilities and a law on social protection. The 2013-2017 national development plan was designed to provide integrated health care; expand social protection for vulnerable groups; empower women and provide them with more opportunities and reduce youth unemployment. It would also expand the social protection network; empower persons with special needs and integrate them into society; strengthen the role of humanitarian and charitable organizations; follow up on issues related to migration and forcibly displaced persons; and attempt to reverse the brain drain. Given that social and economic development were intertwined, Iraq sought to reduce poverty by giving assistance to the poor, establishing microcredit programmes for the young, increasing social benefits and fighting corruption. Iraq's many challenges for social

development were compounded by the decline in oil prices and the destruction wrought by the terrorist gangs of Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant (ISIL). He called on the international community to provide support for efforts to alleviate the suffering of the victims of ISIL.

42. **Mr. Uğurluoğlu** (Turkey) said that the world faced the greatest humanitarian crisis since the Second World War as an ever-growing number of refugees fled prolonged conflict, which created additional challenges for social development in the host countries. Turkey had ratified all of the major international conventions relating to social development and was integrating them into its national legislation. Accomplishment of the Sustainable Development Goals would require the development of all human potential, including men and women of all ages, with or without disabilities. Turkey would continue to give priority to ensuring that people with disabilities were included in decision-making and had access to education, health care, employment and social and legal support; to raising awareness of the rights of older persons and providing for their needs; to promoting women's empowerment and gender equality and to providing quality education and decent employment opportunities for young people. The international community should place greater emphasis on the humanitarian development nexus by extending support to conflict-prone and post-conflict countries.

43. **Mr. Hassani Nejad Pirkouhi** (Islamic Republic of Iran) said that his delegation had been pleased to note that 9 of the 17 Sustainable Development Goals were related to social development. His Government attached great importance to ensuring that senior citizens enjoyed the rights accorded to them by culture, religion and law. To that end, it supplemented the support provided by family members, volunteers, communities and community-based organizations through a variety of services, including literacy education and an income security scheme, and provided free access to social and public services and recreation and treatment facilities. It made the family an integral part of all development plans and programmes, in which it encouraged and supported the participation of civil society and non-governmental organizations. Its investment in the education and health sectors had placed the Islamic Republic of Iran at the cutting edge of science and technology, despite the impediment of illegal, unjustified sanctions. It gave high priority to providing education and training for

persons with disabilities and offered incentives to employers who hired them. Every State should be able to make its own decisions on social issues, including birth control policies, in accordance with its own conditions and requirements, especially States in which the population growth rate was below the replacement level.

44. **Ms. Nymo Riseth** (Norway), speaking as a youth delegate, said that despite the high proportion of youth in the world's population, young people were grossly underrepresented in parliaments. That democratic deficit hindered the protection of their human rights. Students in some countries were expelled from university and persecuted for their political engagement, and in countries in conflict, schools were sometimes used for military purposes. The youth delegates urged Member States to endorse the Safe Schools Declaration and to provide assistance to students persecuted for their support of democracy and human rights.

45. **Mr. Laugsand** (Norway), speaking as a youth delegate, said that the Norwegian youth delegates were especially concerned about the human rights of young people living in the Non-Self-Governing Territory of Western Sahara. The best way to ensure sustained, independent and impartial monitoring of human rights in that territory was to incorporate human rights monitoring in the mandate of the United Nations Mission for the Referendum in Western Sahara. Indeed, a human rights mandate should be included in all United Nations operations. To ensure that persons with disabilities were not left behind, the indicators for the Sustainable Development Goals should refer to them specifically, and reliable data and statistics must be made available to decision-makers, experts and interested organizations. Youth should take an active part in the planning, implementation, evaluation and monitoring of the Sustainable Development Goals and should be included in decision-making at the local, regional and international levels, preferably through permanent structures.

46. **Mr. Sargsyan** (Armenia) said that his country had made significant progress on social development, despite social and economic hardships that had been exacerbated by conflict and the blockade imposed on Armenia. Most recently, his Government had updated the poverty reduction strategy to focus on human capital development, employment growth, the improvement of social protection and the

modernization of public administration. As part of its 2014-2025 development strategy, monetary assistance for socially vulnerable groups was gradually being replaced by comprehensive, needs-based packages of services aimed at building capacities and enhancing opportunities. Armenia's plan of action on human rights focused on social development, employment and improving the lives of the people. In view of the adoption of the Sustainable Development Goals, policies and programmes would need to be updated and harmonized. Regarding people with disabilities, much had been done in that regard since ratification by Armenia of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities. Rather than objects of compassion, they were now right-holders and entitled to receive services to support their participation and integration in society. To assist older persons, the Government had recently adopted a programme for enhancing social services to them, after consulting with all stakeholders.

47. **Ms. Poghosyan** (Armenia), speaking as a youth delegate, said that Armenia believed that strengthened national laws, policies and programmes were needed to protect the rights and address the needs of young people. Although Armenia had made significant progress in other areas, unemployment among people under 25 years of age was still twice the national average. Armenia needed to increase the quality of professional education and align it with labour market demands, development objectives and international standards. It also needed to assess the skills gap and help young job-seekers find decent employment. It should exploit young people's capacity for entrepreneurship and innovation by, for example, continuing to capitalize on successful innovation incubators and studios launched by the United Nations Development Fund, the United Nations Children's Fund and members of the Armenian diaspora.

48. **Archbishop Auza** (Observer for the Holy See) said that the economy existed to serve the human person and the common good. It was often asserted that economic development would eventually lead to social progress. However, experience had shown that when economic priorities were pursued for their own sake or for profit alone, the people whom development policies were meant to serve were the first to be left behind. An economic model driven solely by market forces considered the marginalized and excluded to have no value. The international community must strive to recover a healthy balance between economic

gain and the common good, in the interests of both people and the environment. He called on Member States and all stakeholders to strengthen their commitment to social development and inclusion within the context of the people-centred 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, whose success would be measured by the degree to which it left no one behind.

49. **Ms. Rainer** (Austria), speaking as a youth delegate, said that refugees were ordinary people escaping war, hunger or persecution. Member States could and should offer them the dignified life that they deserved. Fences were not a solution, for the wall that had once divided the European continent had only brought pain and violence. Member States must work together to find common ground on a global solution that preserved the values of the Charter of the United Nations. The solidarity currently being shown to the refugees in Austria made her proud to be Austrian. She dedicated her speech to the volunteers, many of them young people, who were stepping up to help refugees where the authorities were unwilling or unable to act.

50. **Mr. Lechien** (Belgium), speaking as a youth delegate, said that, according to the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, which Belgium had ratified, higher education should be made equally accessible to all by the introduction of free education. However, that traditional way out of poverty continued to be closed to many in Belgium on account of selection systems and cost. Member States should eliminate selection systems, fees and all other barriers in order to reduce the impact of discrimination in higher education. By doing so, they would also reduce discrimination in employment.

51. **Ms. El-Kaddouri** (Belgium), speaking as a youth delegate, urged the United Nations and its Member States to create sustainable, decent employment for young people in accordance with the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. In Belgium, where one out of five young people could not find work, ethnic minorities were three times more likely to be unemployed. Ethno-cultural discrimination was common in the labour market in many countries. With the world refugee crisis, the need for inclusive labour markets had become more urgent than ever. She asked the United Nations and its Member States to give special attention to the rights of minorities when addressing unemployment. The United Nations youth delegates were an example of the strength of diverse teams.

52. **Ms. Nguyen** Phuong Nga (Viet Nam) said that social development had always been a priority of her Government. With political commitment, significant investment and the engagement of all stakeholders, Viet Nam continued to make good progress in all areas of social development. It had a youth development strategy and was implementing policies and programmes for young people that, inter alia, created new jobs for more than a million young workers each year. Although Viet Nam's population was young, it was ageing rapidly. It also had laws, policies and national institutions to protect and promote the rights of older persons, and it supported the work of the Open-ended Working Group on Ageing, which it hoped would lead to the drafting of an international legal instrument. The Government continued to implement a development strategy for families, especially those in rural and mountainous areas. The family and its members were protected by law from domestic violence. As part of a sustainable development strategy, cooperatives, which had been important engines of social development in Viet Nam for 60 years, would play a substantial role in promoting sustainable production and consumption.

53. **Mr. Khan** (Pakistan) said that Goal 10 of the Sustainable Development Goals, on reducing inequality within and among countries, was of particular significance. Implementation of that Goal and achievement of the relevant targets of the other Sustainable Development Goals should accelerate progress towards full achievement of the objectives of the Copenhagen Declaration and Programme of Action. Pakistan remained committed to those objectives and was mindful of the needs of youth, persons with disabilities, the elderly and other vulnerable groups. Seeking synergies among development priorities, it would vigorously pursue its national goals and objectives within the context of the new 2030 Agenda.

The meeting rose at 6 p.m.