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Chair: Mr. Hilale (Morocco)

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

Statement by the Chair

1. **The Chair** said that the current historic General Assembly session would take place against the backdrop of the seventieth anniversary of the United Nations and the adoption of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. Over half of the new agenda's Sustainable Development Goals were directly linked to the work of the Third Committee. His country's Chairmanship constituted a recognition of Morocco's reforms and active engagement in the area of human rights, as well as an opportunity to represent the African continent and promote social development, democracy, human rights and the rule of law in the region through international cooperation. As Chair of the Committee, he would organize parallel events with the Second and Fifth Committees in order to discuss means of strengthening cooperation on implementing the Sustainable Development Goals.

2. The considerable challenges facing the international community in the areas of peace, security and human rights — the themes of the general debate at the current session — underscored the pressing need for the Committee to redouble its efforts to defend human dignity and, in so doing, to reject the use of such issues for political ends. The Committee must also foster the consolidation of democracy and the rule of law worldwide, in close collaboration with civil society.

3. The steady increase of the Committee's workload over the years had made it difficult for the vast majority of delegations to follow its activities effectively. The Bureau, therefore, had adopted measures to streamline the Committee's workload. He thanked delegations for their support and assistance in implementing those measures. In closing, he stressed that the importance of the matters dealt with by the Committee deserved a collective effort marked by mutual respect, transcending divisive issues, and reiterated his commitment to ensuring that its work was constructive, inclusive and transparent.

Organization of work (A/70/250, A/C.3/70/1, A/C.3/70/L.1/Rev.1 and A/C.3/70/L.1/Add.1/Rev.1)

4. **The Chair** said that the letter from the President of the General Assembly concerning the agenda items allocated to the Third Committee was contained

in document [A/C.3/70/1](#). The list of documents issued under each agenda item was contained in document [A/C.3/70/L.1/Add.1](#). Recalling the guidelines concerning the conduct of the Committee's work in chapter II of the report of the General Committee (A/70/250), he underlined the importance of punctuality and adherence to time limits for statements and rights of reply and to deadlines for submission of proposals and inscription on the list of speakers. He also highlighted specific guidelines contained in the General Committee's report concerning the need to reduce the number of resolutions adopted by the General Assembly and to ensure their brevity in order to maximize their political impact.

5. **Mr. Khane** (Secretary of the Committee) drew attention to changes from previous practice, noted in the report of the General Committee (A/70/250), regarding the deadlines for submission of draft proposals. The Bureau had introduced those changes with a view to providing more time for delegations and main sponsors to conduct and finalize informal consultations on draft proposals. Another change concerned the speaking time allotted to each delegation; statements made on behalf of groups would be given 12 minutes, while statements made by individual delegations would be given 5 minutes.

6. New electronic platforms would allow delegations to initiate and sponsor draft resolutions. As there was no legal requirement to introduce draft proposals during the meeting, desisting from the long-standing practice would save the Committee time. The Bureau would keep Committee members informed regarding the status of documentation. He read out a list of the special procedure mandate-holders and other experts scheduled to make presentations to the Committee at its current session.

7. **The Chair**, turning to the proposed organization of work, suggested that the Committee should respect the timetable to the extent possible in order to maximize the time and resources allocated to it, with the understanding that adjustments would be made as warranted. Delegations initiating draft proposals should inform the Secretary of the Committee or a member of the Bureau as soon as possible and those sponsoring draft resolutions that involved lengthy negotiations should draw them up as early as possible and observe deadlines scrupulously. Following past practice, the Committee would maintain a rolling list of speakers and delegations should be ready to take the

floor earlier than scheduled, if necessary. Whenever a delegation inscribed on the list was absent when scheduled to speak, it would be placed at the end of the list unless a change of time had been agreed in a timely manner with another delegation. Statements would be limited to 12 minutes for delegations speaking on behalf of a group of States and to 5 minutes for those speaking in a national capacity. The main sponsors of a draft resolution should make only one statement at the time of action, and introductory statements should not exceed 5 minutes, while statements in explanation of position or vote should not exceed 3 minutes.

8. He said he took it that the Committee wished to approve his recommendations.

9. *It was so decided.*

10. **The Chair** said he took it that, following past practice, the Committee wished to extend invitations to the special procedure mandate holders of the Human Rights Council, the Chairs of treaty bodies or working groups and others, to submit their reports to, and interact with, the Committee.

11. *It was so decided.*

12. **The Chair** said he took it that the Committee wished to approve the organization of work as contained in documents [A/C.3/70/L.1/Rev.1](#) and [A/C.3/70/L.1/Add.1/Rev.1](#), subject to amendment.

13. *It was so decided.*

14. **The Chair** said that he would inform the Committee shortly of the results of the selection process, currently under way, of a Committee Vice-Chair as facilitator for the draft resolution on the follow-up to the Fourth World Conference on Women.

Agenda item 135: Programme planning

15. **The Chair** said that, as there was no action expected under agenda item 135 at the current time, he took it that the Committee had completed its consideration thereof.

16. *It was so decided.*

Agenda item 28: Social development

(a) **Implementation of the outcome of the World Summit for Social Development and of the twenty-fourth special session of the General Assembly** ([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** ([A/70/61-E/2015/3](#), [A/70/118](#), [A/70/156](#), [A/70/161](#) and [A/70/179](#))

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

17. **Mr. Wu Hongbo** (Under-Secretary-General for Economic and Social Affairs) said that the recently adopted 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development sought to foster shared prosperity, reduce inequality and protect the planet. At its heart was the goal to end extreme poverty by 2030, building on the successes of the Millennium Development Goals. However, such challenges as refugee crises, rapid demographic changes, stagnant economic growth and youth unemployment threatened to stand in the way of making sustainable social development gains and building more inclusive societies.

18. The 1995 World Summit for Social Development had marked a turning point in development thinking, with its focus on people-centred development and on the issues of disadvantaged social groups. Since the Summit, considerable progress had been made in the form of instruments to promote inclusion and participation of marginalized groups in employment, education and politics. Those instruments were integral to realizing the 2030 Agenda.

19. Leaving no one behind would require rethinking social inclusion policies and removing barriers to participation, including discriminatory legal frameworks. Moreover, the transformative agenda must be matched by equally ambitious steps on the part of Governments, whose efforts would require a holistic, integrated approach. Governments should address the need to localize the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), engage all institutions and sectors of society in confronting the challenges relating to follow-up and tap into the power of the data revolution in order to strengthen data gathering.

20. Specific actions to be taken included making sustained investments in education, health and agriculture; working to mitigate and adapt to climate change; and pursuing integrated policies that promoted full employment and decent work. In closing, the success of the 2030 Agenda would hinge on a robust monitoring and review framework and a revitalized global partnership for sustainable development.

21. **Ms. Bas** (Director, Division for Social Policy and Development, Department of Economic and Social Affairs) introduced the reports of the Secretary General under agenda items 28 (a), (b) and (c). The report on the implementation of the outcome of the World Summit for Social Development (A/70/173) provided an overview of the discussions of the Commission for Social Development at its fifty-third session, which had the theme of rethinking and strengthening social development in the contemporary world. The report highlighted the progress which had been made so far by implementing the Copenhagen Declaration on Social Development and its goals of poverty eradication, social integration and full employment and decent work for all. It also addressed the special needs of Africa. The vision, principles and goals adopted at the World Summit continued to be relevant as, despite the fact that the goal to halve extreme poverty had been achieved, over 1 billion people still lived below the poverty line and around 2.2 billion people lived just above the poverty line on approximately \$2 per day.

22. Progress varied between regions, and the report highlighted the ongoing employment challenges faced by many countries. Although numerous countries had been promoting a wide variety of strategies for social integration, social inequality was still increasing and there were major challenges to social cohesion. Social development and social policy were fundamental to realizing the inclusive sustainable development envisioned in the 2030 Agenda, and a holistic approach was important in integrating policy framework actions in the social, economic and environmental fields.

23. The report on cooperatives in social development (A/70/161) explained the potential of cooperatives for meeting people's needs and their direct contribution towards achieving the Sustainable Development Goals in the 2030 Agenda. The main challenges faced by cooperatives included national legislation and policy framework, capacity-building constraints and raising awareness. In order to advance the cooperative model, the United Nations system must continue providing

technical support and capacity-building support to cooperatives and national governments, raising awareness of the cooperative model by establishing legislative and regulatory frameworks that recognized the unique characteristics of cooperatives, and strengthening the role of cooperatives in Africa's development.

24. The report on ways to promote effective, structured and sustainable youth participation (A/70/156) reviewed efforts and mechanisms to promote youth participation, including the design, implementation and assessment of United Nations youth policies, programmes and initiatives, as well as the vital participation of youth organizations in policy and decision-making and on the delegations of Member States. The different needs of young people must be represented in all areas of the 2030 Agenda.

25. As noted in the report on the celebration of the twentieth anniversary of the International Year of the Family in 2014 (A/70/61-E/2015/3), the Department of Economic and Social Affairs and the Division for Social Policy and Development introduced family-oriented policies and programmes, including on social inclusion and cooperation, and diverse policies supporting intergenerational solidarity and cooperation, which contributed to the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals. Reform of family laws might be necessary for gender equality and to offer better protection within families. The report highlighted the need to consider how family policies could implement the 2030 Agenda and reiterated that, as the definition of family could vary over time and between jurisdictions, the debate over the definition of a family should be put aside in order to consider how family policies could implement the 2030 Agenda. Family-centred policies and programmes should be advanced as part of an integrated and comprehensive approach to development.

26. The report on promoting social integration through social inclusion (A/70/179) addressed the active participation of people in civic, social, economic and political life. Within the overall effort to reduce inequality, the report highlighted national activities for reducing poverty, improving access to services and social protection, combating social discrimination and ensuring equal access to education. Advancing inclusive societies required equal participation in decision-making processes and the review of existing legal frameworks to remove discriminatory provisions.

The systematic exchange of good practices in social integration was also recommended in the report.

27. The report on the follow-up to the International Year of Older Persons (A/70/185) focused on six goals, namely ending poverty, ensuring healthy lives, achieving gender equality, promoting employment and decent work, making cities inclusive and combating climate change. It also provided updated information regarding ageing, including the perspectives of United Nations regional commissions, and concluded with recommendations to ensure that no older person was left behind.

28. **Mr. Llopert** (Chief, United Nations Volunteers Office, New York) said that the report on integrating volunteering in the next decade (A/70/118), submitted in response to the request contained in General Assembly resolution 67/138, reviewed the progress and state of volunteerism from 2012 to date and highlighted the growing public recognition of volunteerism as a common asset. Volunteerism helped to foster partnerships and support governance and could also expand social inclusion. It was an invaluable resource for the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. The report highlighted the growth in public recognition of volunteerism through research, international declarations and celebratory events, and the promotion of volunteer opportunities for marginalized groups. The global youth programme of United Nations Volunteers continued to promote youth volunteerism as a means of development for communities and young people.

29. Furthermore, the report recognized that volunteering in peace and development was facilitated through adopting supportive policies and laws, establishing volunteer management standards, providing adequate funding and implementing volunteer capacity-building programmes. Volunteering schemes and infrastructures, as well as online technology, were broadening formal and informal volunteering opportunities globally in both the public and private sectors, including in the context of South-South cooperation. Although the integration of volunteerism into national development strategies and United Nations plans contributed to achieving development results and peace gains, more attention needed to be paid to the social and physical protection of volunteers to ensure their sustained contribution.

30. The report contained a plan of action for the next decade and beyond to integrate volunteering into peace and development. The plan reiterated the importance of ownership of the development agenda through enhanced volunteering and civic engagement, encouraged the integration of volunteering into national and global strategies to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals and support implementation of the 2030 Agenda, and emphasized the importance of measuring volunteerism's impact on development and the role of volunteers in monitoring the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals. Lastly, the plan of action responded to the challenges of decreasing investment in the volunteering infrastructure, disparities in access to new technologies, gaps in research on volunteerism and concerns about volunteer security and protection.

31. **Ms. Kornfeld-Matte** (Independent Expert on the enjoyment of all human rights by older persons) said that, in accordance with Human Rights Council resolution 24/20, her mandate was, inter alia, to assess the implementation of existing international instruments with regard to older persons, identifying both best practices and gaps in the implementation of existing law related to the promotion and protection of the rights of older persons, and to assess the human rights implications of the implementation of the Madrid International Plan of Action on Ageing. The Council had requested that she take into account the views of stakeholders, including States, relevant regional human rights mechanisms, national institutions, civil society organizations and academic institutions and to integrate a gender and disability perspective into her work.

32. She had sought to raise awareness of the problems facing older persons in exercising their human rights and worked with States to foster the implementation of measures to promote and protect those rights without unnecessary duplication of national legislation. She had taken a comprehensive approach to ageing, taking into account all human rights and the necessity to understand the complexity and diversity of ageing and to identify the needs and interests of older persons and analyse how to incorporate them into national legislation and policies.

33. The autonomy and care of older persons had been priorities during the first year of her mandate and had been the subjects of her report to the Human Rights Council in September 2015, which had contained an analysis of existing regional and international instruments and a study on the content and range of

those instruments. The instruments analysed included the Protocol to the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights on the Rights of Older Persons in Africa, the Council of Europe Recommendation on the promotion of human rights of older persons and the Inter-American Convention on Protecting the Human Rights of Older Persons. The study contained recommendations intended to help States promote and implement effective frameworks to strengthen the autonomy of older persons in all areas, thereby improving their quality of life and well-being. There needed to be radical change to ensure the social inclusion of older persons at all levels in communities and environments. Abuse and violence against older persons, particularly women, were also priority issues, as well as climate change, which had a disproportionate effect on older persons, and the importance of a human rights-based approach for older persons with dementia.

34. She had participated in various events with older persons, experts, and representatives of States and civil society organizations to obtain information on the successful implementation of existing international instruments regarding older persons with the aim of creating an assessment incorporating gender, disability and the heterogeneity of ageing. All States and relevant actors had received a questionnaire to identify how States had adopted a human rights approach in implementing the Madrid International Plan of Action on Ageing. The information collected was currently being analysed and would be part of a detailed report to be submitted the Council at its thirty-third session.

35. At the invitation of Governments, she had undertaken official visits to various countries to identify good practices and shortcomings in the implementation of existing legislation. At the thirtieth session of the Human Rights Council she had presented the conclusions and recommendations from her visits to Slovenia, Austria and Mauritius. All countries could learn from each other's experiences in order to overcome the challenges associated with ageing. Good practices would be measurable, replicable and appropriate to the realities of each country, and she intended to also investigate promising practices. A second questionnaire would be sent out asking each State to identify good practices in the implementation of existing instruments which provided assistance to and protected older persons. The information collected would be included in her detailed report to be submitted in 2016.

36. She had vigorously defended the fundamental principles for establishing systems for the protection of human rights, including human dignity. Throughout the activities that she had carried out, she had emphasized that ageing affected the entire world. The principal aim of her mandate was to ensure better protection and promotion of the human rights of older persons in all circumstances. The detailed report to be submitted in 2016 would contain recommendations to support States in implementing coherent and effective measures which guaranteed that all older persons could live with dignity. The support of all Member States was necessary to continue to overcome the challenges faced by older persons around the world and to identify practices which could be replicated.

37. **Ms. González López** (El Salvador), said that, as the theme for the International Day of Older Persons 2015 was sustainability and age inclusiveness in urban environments, she wished to draw attention to a press release issued by her country on that topic in advance of the 2016 United Nations Conference on Housing and Sustainable Urban Development (Habitat III). She asked what States could do to promote the rights of older persons, particularly in urban environments.

38. **Ms. Ng** (Singapore) said that her Government had implemented new measures to make homes, public spaces and the transport system more accessible for older persons. Building codes and regulations had also been amended to require new developments and buildings undergoing refurbishment to incorporate barrier-free features. Older persons staying in public housing were now able to install senior-friendly features to make their homes safer with the assistance of a subsidy scheme. Other areas in urban planning and design would also be looked at to create a more accessible environment for the elderly.

39. **Mr. Gonzalez Serafini** (Argentina), referring to the aforementioned existing international and regional instruments which could be of value to other States, asked about the contribution of those instruments to addressing the integral and universal rights of older persons from a human rights perspective.

40. **Mr. Whiteley** (Observer for the European Union) said that the European Union's commitment to enabling older persons to enjoy all of their human rights had been reflected in 2015 at its conference on innovative financing opportunities for active and healthy ageing and the joint event organized by the

European Commission, the Council of Europe, non-governmental organizations and national human rights institutions on the occasion of World Elder Abuse Awareness Day. He asked the Independent Expert to elaborate further on her efforts aimed at raising awareness of the rights of older persons.

41. **Ms. Schneider Calza** (Brazil) asked how the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development could contribute to the autonomy of older persons.

42. **Ms. Mouflih** (Morocco) said that ageing population was one of the major new socioeconomic challenges, particularly for developing countries. It was expected that the segment of her country's population over the age of 60 would reach 20 per cent by the year 2040. Her Government was taking steps to address that demographic shift and had taken particular note of the recommendations on ensuring the autonomy and care of older persons contained in the report. She would be interested to hear the views of the Independent Expert on how ageing-related issues had been taken into account in the 2030 Agenda.

43. **Ms. Dravec** (Slovenia) said that Slovenia, the first recipient of a visit by the Independent Expert, welcomed her report, in particular its focus on the right of older persons to autonomy and care. Internet access, which continued to grow in importance, was a field in which Slovenian civil society had been active in recent years, including through projects based on the principle of intergenerational solidarity. However, access to new technology faced limitations, in particular economic and financial ones. She asked the Independent Expert whether she had observed any good practices or programmes aimed at empowering older persons in that regard.

44. **Mr. Al-Kumaim** (Yemen) said that, given the current security challenges and the situation of conflict in the Middle East and in Yemen in particular, every individual was exposed to the risk of violence. The elderly, however, were among the most vulnerable. He asked the Independent Expert what work the international community could undertake at the regional and international levels to ensure the rights of older persons in such circumstances.

45. **Ms. Brooks** (United States of America) said that her Government was concerned about the mistreatment and abuse of older persons and had participated in a number of relevant events. Her country was also seeking new avenues to raise the visibility of violence

against older persons, including through a presidential proclamation for Domestic Violence Awareness Month.

46. It should be recalled that the United States had attached a footnote to the Inter-American Convention on Protecting the Human Rights of Older Persons. Though her Government recognized the importance of the Organization of American States and the United Nations in addressing the challenges faced by older persons around the world, it was of the view that a regional convention on the matter was unnecessary to ensure the protection of the human rights of older persons, and therefore objected to the negotiation of a new, legally binding instrument.

47. Lastly, she asked the Independent Expert whether she had, in her examination of care facilities such as nursing homes and assisted living facilities, observed adequate procedures that allowed older persons to voice grievances about the quality of their care.

48. **Ms. Cid Carreño** (Chile) asked whether reference to overarching public policies could be included in future reports and how the rights of older persons could be integrated into such policies.

49. **Ms. Kornfeld-Matte** (Independent Expert on the enjoyment of all human rights by older persons) said that, although additional references to the issues of ageing within the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development would have been appreciated, the Agenda did include a number of relevant objectives that required the efforts of the international community.

50. Her office was working on the issues raised by Argentina, the United States and the European Union, using information provided by States. Her 2016 report would contain suggestions on best practices in that connection. Her office was also working on the issue of inclusive societies. The World Health Organization web page contained valuable information in that regard. Critical to such societies were accessible transportation for older persons and persons with disabilities, nearby health centres and recreational areas.

51. **Ms. Saran** (South Africa), speaking on behalf of the Group of 77 and China, welcomed the adoption of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, the success of which relied on the participation and inclusion of society as a whole. In that regard, synergies should exist between policies and ongoing work on the outcomes of the Rio+20 Conference and the 2030 Agenda. The international community should develop

comprehensive policy frameworks with a universal approach. Supportive national institutional structures and participatory mechanisms were also required.

52. Policies should promote and protect the needs of the most vulnerable members of society. In that regard, the Group was fully committed to the implementation and promotion of the Copenhagen Declaration on Social Development and Programme of Action of the World Summit for Social Development. Current global crises, a source of great concern, limited the international community's ability to eradicate poverty and threatened to reverse much of the development progress achieved in recent decades. The international community should work to ensure the realization of the right to self-determination wherever applicable, while respecting territorial integrity and political independence of States.

53. International cooperation was crucial to the realization of the Sustainable Development Goals and promotion of the Programme of Action of the World Summit for Social Development. The Group of 77 and China called for a more strengthened, coherent and integrated approach to development, including through the fulfilment of commitments with regard to development assistance and the timely implementation of all commitments under the Global Partnership for Development.

54. Member States, the United Nations system and relevant stakeholders were called upon to fully implement the recommendations contained in the outcome document of the 2011 United Nations high-level meeting on youth. With regard to the institution of the family, the Group noted the commemoration of the International Year of the Family, which had provided a useful opportunity to strengthen national family-centred policies and programmes and to share good practices.

55. Increased efforts should be made to respond to the issues of ageing populations. Implementation of the Madrid Plan of Action on Ageing would play a key role in that regard. The Group of 77 and China took note of regional developments with regard to the strengthening of the legal framework for the protection and promotion of the rights of older persons. As in previous years, they would submit three draft resolutions under the agenda item under discussion and looked forward to the support of all Member States and to working

collectively toward the achievement of their mutual goals in the field of social development.

56. **Mr. Fawundu** (Sierra Leone), speaking on behalf of the African Group, welcomed the adoption of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, as well as the endorsement by the General Assembly of the Addis Ababa Action Agenda of the Third International Conference on Financing for Development, the full implementation of which was critical to the realization of the Sustainable Development Goals.

57. The institution of the family was both central and indispensable to Africa's political, cultural and socioeconomic development. Despite the protection afforded by relevant legally binding instruments, the protection and support of the African family faced many challenges, including widespread poverty. Over 40 per cent of the African population was below 15 years of age, and economic growth had not produced the expected creation of productive employment and decent work. To address those issues, a number of African countries had developed national youth employment policies and action plans.

58. With regard to international migration involving youth, international cooperation was necessary to ensure safe, orderly and regular migration regardless of status. It was therefore necessary to invest in young people and ensure that they were mobilized and equipped to help drive Africa's integration, peace and development agenda. In that regard, the African Group would continue to support the Special Envoy of the Secretary-General for Youth Refugees and Sport.

59. Relevant data revealed that few of the continent's millions of persons with disabilities had access to care, rehabilitation and education services. The Group called for international cooperation with a view to promoting and protecting the rights of persons with disabilities. The rights, well-being and perspectives of persons with disabilities should be incorporated into global development frameworks. Although there were instruments obliging Group members to develop policies on ageing, advocacy was needed to improve the adaptation and enactment of policies at the national level and to encourage consultation with older people. The Group would continue to actively engage in all multilateral processes related to the promotion and protection of the rights of older persons.

60. Development had not had a significant impact on marginalized and other vulnerable groups in many

African countries. The international trade agenda should support measures that created equal opportunity for participation in global markets. Financial and technological assistance should be mobilized to strengthen the scientific, technological and innovative capabilities of developing countries to move towards more sustainable patterns of consumption and production. There was also a need to improve policy coordination across countries in the areas of migration and foreign direct investment. Lastly, Member States should intensify efforts to implement the Copenhagen Declaration on Social Development and the Programme of Action of the World Summit for Social Development in line with the Sustainable Development Goals.

61. **Mr. Tituaña Matango** (Ecuador), speaking on behalf of the Community of Latin American and Caribbean States (CELAC), said that the Community was committed to the attainment of social inclusion and integration, hunger and poverty eradication, the right to full and productive employment, and dignified and decent work for all. United Nations statistics revealed that 1.2 billion individuals continued to live in extreme poverty, 870 million of whom were malnourished, and 100 million of whom were children under the age of 5. The eradication of hunger and poverty, two of the worst forms of human rights violations, would require the collective efforts of the international community.

62. Governments and societies should renew their commitment to full social inclusion and integration. Additional measures were needed to promote strategies conducive to the equitable distribution of the benefits of economic growth and improved access to basic universal services. The Community would step up efforts to eradicate poverty and attain sustainable development. Although countries of the region were reaping the benefits of increased investment in a people-centred agenda, they would continue to address such issues as poverty, inequality and environmental degradation. The Copenhagen Declaration on Social Development and Programme of Action of the World Summit for Social Development was crucial in that regard. CELAC looked forward to participating in the commemoration of the anniversary of the Summit at the current session.

63. International cooperation, including official development assistance, and South-South and technical cooperation were essential to development. It was also critical to undertake necessary global financial and

economic system reform. Furthermore, it was necessary to explore and implement new forms of international cooperation to achieve better integrated societies and social inclusion.

64. Though much remained to be done, CELAC had experience in implementing programmes designed to promote social inclusion and empower vulnerable groups. Those programmes demonstrated what could be achieved in spite of limited resources. The Community continued to pursue policies that promoted comprehensive social development, encouraged economic growth and development, and spurred job creation.

65. The Community accorded the highest priority to strengthening the fundamental rights and general living conditions of the disadvantaged, and it actively promoted the full social, political, economic and cultural inclusion and integration of persons with disabilities. It also recognized that the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities was a fundamental human rights and development instrument.

66. CELAC welcomed the work of the first Special Rapporteur on the rights of persons with disabilities as well as the Special Envoy of the Secretary-General on Disability and Accessibility. Approximately 12 per cent of the region's population, or some 66 million people, lived with at least one disability, and the most socially and economically vulnerable groups had the highest rates of disability. Given the scope of the challenge, it was clear that the concerns of such groups should be integrated into all public policies and programmes. As such, disability should be considered within the context of the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

67. Young people should receive adequate educational opportunities and training to facilitate their inclusion within society and increase their chances of finding dignified and decent work. Efforts should be made to promote education programmes for young people at all levels. CELAC was concerned by statistics on the region's population of older persons, which was forecast to reach 188 million people by 2050, and urged the Open-ended Working Group on Ageing to consider launching negotiations for an international convention for the protection and promotion of the rights of older persons.

68. CELAC also recognized the key role that families played in social development. Addressing the specific needs and challenges faced by families would be crucial to the elimination of discrimination and exclusion, the achievement of social development, sustainable development and improved living conditions.

69. **Ms. Yparraguirre** (Philippines), speaking on behalf of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN), said that the Association would realize its vision of community integration by the end of the year, having implemented around 93 per cent of the measures and actions set out in its Socio-Cultural Community Blueprint, Economic Community Blueprint and Political-Security Community Blueprint. The aim of the ASEAN Socio-Cultural Community was to contribute to the realization of an inclusive, people-centred and socially responsible ASEAN Community with a shared identity, livelihood opportunities and a high level of welfare.

70. Recent efforts to implement the Copenhagen Declaration on Social Development and Programme of Action of the World Summit for Social Development included the development of a regional framework to strengthen cross-sectoral collaboration on social protection. The ASEAN Regional Conference of Senior Officials on Sharing of Good Practices in Social Protection for Women in Enterprise Development, organized by her country in December 2014, had issued policy recommendations concerning the social protection of women working in micro-, small- and medium-sized enterprises, while government officials and non-governmental organizations had discussed the social protection, quality of life and well-being of vulnerable groups at the ninth ASEAN GO-NGO Forum for Social Welfare and Development in the Lao People's Democratic Republic in November 2014.

71. ASEAN had also developed a framework action plan on rural development and poverty eradication for the period 2016-2020, building on the lessons learned from the implementation of its 2011-2015 framework. With regard to the issue of social security for workers, a workshop on good practices in the implementation of employment injury insurance and health insurance schemes had taken place in Cambodia in September 2014, and a dialogue on the theme of enhancing welfare by strengthening a decent work policy for women workers had been held in Myanmar in January 2015.

72. The report of the Secretary General on the implementation of the outcome of the World Summit for Social Development and of the twenty-fourth special session of the General Assembly (A/70/173) recommended that Governments should effectively address the interlinkages among the social, economic and environmental dimensions of sustainable development, including creating synergies among them. In that connection, ASEAN members recognized that closer regional and international cooperation would be required to overcome many sustainable development challenges, such as transboundary haze from forest and peatland fires in Southeast Asia.

73. As noted in the report of the Secretary General on integrating volunteering in the next decade (A/70/118), Brunei Darussalam had initiated the ASEAN Young Professionals Volunteer Corps, bringing together young professionals from member States as volunteers in various sectors as part of its efforts to promote effective, structured and sustainable youth participation in society. ASEAN had adopted a youth work plan for 2016-2020 with a view to strengthening and broadening youth cooperation with the Association and its partners.

74. With regard to cooperation to promote the rights of persons with disabilities, Thailand had hosted workshops on sustainable social protection and the establishment of self-help groups. That country had also hosted a regional workshop for sharing knowledge and experience in the advancement of social welfare services for older persons in an ageing society. The imminent establishment of the ASEAN Community would enable the Association to maximize the opportunities and benefits for all of its peoples in the post-2015 era.

75. **Mr. Vrailas** (Observer for the European Union), speaking also on behalf of the candidate countries Albania, Montenegro, Serbia, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia and Turkey; the stabilization and association process country Bosnia and Herzegovina; and, in addition, Armenia, Georgia, the Republic of Moldova and Ukraine, said that the founding treaty of the European Union noted the determination of its member States to promote economic and social progress for its peoples, taking into account the principle of sustainable development. Considerable progress had been made, but the Union still faced challenges similar to those in many other parts of the world. Long-term unemployment, poverty,

inequality and inadequate levels of social cohesion and social inclusion persisted, despite the improving economic situation.

76. The European Union aimed to ensure fair and balanced growth leading to the creation of quality jobs and protection for all persons, at every stage of their lives, and to foster upward social convergence to reduce inequality within and among its member States. The Union had a €300 billion investment plan to stimulate the real economy, which would lead to job creation. It would also intensify its efforts to combat segmentation of the labour market and undeclared work, shift the tax burden away from the labour force and modernize pension systems and other social protection systems. To improve the employment prospects of the 7.1 million European Union citizens between the ages of 15 and 24 not in employment, education or training, it had introduced an initiative to ensure that all young people received a quality job offer, traineeship or apprenticeship within four months of becoming unemployed or leaving formal education.

77. Bold structural reforms at the national level had led to improved public employment services, the introduction of incentives to stimulate job creation, and measures to improve vocational education and training. Great efforts were also being made to help the long-term unemployed return to work, including a plan to provide all those who had been unemployed for more than 12 months with a concrete and personalized strategy to ensure that they were not out of work for more than 18 months.

78. Governments should take steps to address age discrimination and ensure that older persons were able to access decent work, adequate pensions, health care, long-term care and protection against elder abuse. The European Union was committed to continuing to explore how the human rights of older persons could best be strengthened in ageing societies. Persons with disabilities continued to be disproportionately affected by unemployment and underrepresented in tertiary education within member States. The Union would continue to mainstream disability issues in its actions to combat unemployment and work towards their full and equal participation in society, including through the implementation of the recommendations of the Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities.

79. The European Union promoted gender equality in all of its policies and activities. Specifically, it was

working to increase the rate of female employment, address the gender gap in pay, ensure a better balance between work and family life, combat occupational segregation and ensure the availability of affordable and high-quality child care. It welcomed the pledges made by States and regional organizations to accelerate the implementation of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action expressed at the Global Leaders' Meeting on Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment, as well as the gender-related Sustainable Development Goals. Given the importance of family-related issues, the European Union was encouraging its member States to make particular efforts to tackle child poverty and social exclusion. In 2015, it had issued country-specific recommendations on child poverty, children's well-being and work-life balance.

80. Investment and structural reforms should be underpinned by the principles of sustainable development, including its social aspect. Decent work was the best protection against poverty and social exclusion. Investment in social protection systems was also important, as it would maximize participation in the labour market, protect those unable to work and prepare individuals for potential risks. Lastly, he pointed out that the European Union's yearly cycle of economic policy coordination, known as the European Semester, and the associated monitoring tools could provide inspiration for the implementation of the 2030 Agenda.

81. **Mr. Abdullah** (Netherlands), speaking as a youth delegate, said that when he was a young child his family, which was of Kurdish origin, had been forced to seek shelter in a refugee camp in the Middle East and had then travelled to the Netherlands in the hope of finding a future. He recalled queuing to receive water, sleeping in the open air and walking for days, but noted that many people were currently in a far more desperate situation. He had been accepted into the tolerant Dutch society and was now in a position to speak to the international community on behalf of Dutch youth.

82. The current mass migration was seen by some as a human right, by some as a natural process and by others as a threat. Refugees often became the primary targets of racist hatred, while political discourse in some countries had blurred the lines between asylum seekers, refugees, economic migrants, immigrants and seasonal workers. Many Governments had responded by protecting their borders and neglecting people in need, and the human face of the issue was often

forgotten in the midst of heated debate. However, the current crisis would not be solved by higher walls.

83. Over the past year, he had spoken to thousands of young people in the Netherlands, visited youth in refugee camps in conflict areas and worked with other youth representatives to consider ways to address the humanitarian crisis. The current situations highlighted the interdependence of members of the international community: problems in one State could have immediate consequences for other States. Refugees, more than half of whom were under the age of 18, were living in insecure situations and without access to food, water, sanitation or essential health services, including psychosocial care.

84. Furthermore, it would be impossible to implement the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development without the participation of young people, given that half of the world's population was under the age of 25 and that 90 per cent of young people lived in developing countries. The Secretary-General had recognized that the greatest shortfall in the implementation of the Millennium Development Goals had been the lack of strong accountability at the national and international levels. It would be essential to avoid making the same mistake with the Sustainable Development Goals and to take into account the ability of young people to act as powerful agents to hold global leaders to account.

85. As a child, he would never have imagined that one day he would have the opportunity to address the organization that had once given him shelter. Sixteen years previously he had asked the United Nations for safety, water and food. Now he asked the Organization to show solidarity with one of the largest refugee populations that the world had ever seen. Young people had the power to bring about change at the local level, whether through practical assistance or simply a welcoming attitude. He, therefore, urged the international community to take action, on behalf of young refugees, young Dutch volunteers who were welcoming new immigrants, and a whole generation of young people who deserved to grow up in a multicultural society, as he had.

86. **Mr. Abdel Khalek** (Egypt) said that, while his delegation took note of the recommendations in all of the reports of the Secretary-General included under the current agenda item, it wished to highlight that the criticisms of social protection schemes in the Middle

East and Northern Africa in the report on promoting social integration through social inclusion (A/70/179) were based on the responses of a mere ten States, of which only two were from the regions in question. Furthermore, the recommendations contained in the report completely disregarded the role that the private sector and civil society could play in the promotion of social integration.

87. In the context of strengthening social development through the implementation of the sustainable development goals, his delegation wished to emphasize the importance of the traditional family as the natural and fundamental core unit of society. Families bore the primary responsibility for the nurture and care of children and for the protection of women, older persons and disabled persons and must therefore be protected by Governments and societies.

88. Egypt had developed a strategy to address youth unemployment by building entrepreneurial capacities and facilitating access to labour market information and career counselling. Additionally, public employment services were now better able to provide career information and counselling as well as job placement for youth. His Government was also working to establish a national council for older persons. To ensure that disability issues were an integral part of national sustainable development strategies, the National Council for Disability Affairs was drafting a new disability law to reflect the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities and the Egyptian constitution.

89. Social development could not be achieved while terrorism was spreading across the world and, in particular, in the Middle East and the Sahel. The negative impact of foreign occupation and its illegal practices on the fulfilment of the social development aspirations of Palestinians and other Arabs living under foreign occupation continued to cause great concern. In conclusion, he said that the social dimension of the 2030 Agenda should be implemented in accordance with the national priorities of each Member State.

90. **Ms. Pérez Gómez** (Colombia) said that the 2030 Agenda provided a historic opportunity to end poverty and achieve inclusive economic growth, development and social equity, to the benefit of all members of society. As Pope Francis had said in his recent address to the General Assembly, to enable men and women to escape from extreme poverty, they must be allowed to be dignified agents of their own destiny. To that end,

the United Nations development system must be able to support the effective, coherent and integrated implementation of the 2030 Agenda, including through a quadrennial comprehensive review of operational activities policy.

91. It was important to establish roadmaps at the national, regional and global levels to ensure that more meaningful progress was made ensuring permanent improvements in the well-being of all persons. Her Government had four priority areas in that regard: the family, older persons, persons with disabilities, and youth. Her Government was committed to creating an environment that would enable all families — including families headed by single mothers, families in indigenous communities and families including same-sex partners — to thrive, without discrimination. The adoption of the Inter-American Convention on Protecting the Human Rights of Older Persons had been a significant achievement in 2015. At the international level, her delegation supported strengthening the Open-ended Working Group on Ageing and called for the adoption of a United Nations convention on the human rights of older persons.

92. Her Government was committed to ensuring the human rights of persons with disabilities and had, therefore, established a system to organize cooperation between public bodies and civil society organizations in policy development. Additionally, it had already implemented several of the recommendations made by the Special Rapporteur on the rights of persons with disabilities. Young people, who comprised around 25 per cent of the population, were benefitting from a range of new policies, programmes and initiatives, including a national mechanism to promote youth participation.

93. By having put an end to the last remaining and longest-running armed conflict in the Western hemisphere, her country would establish a fairer, more progressive and more equitable society that it hoped could serve as an example for all.

94. **Mr. Logar** (Slovenia) said that the global trend towards population ageing was one of the greatest social development challenges of the current time. There were currently 900 million people aged 60 or over worldwide, which was more than the number of children under the age of 5, and it was estimated that older persons would outnumber those under 15 by 2050. His delegation therefore welcomed the

recognition of that issue in the 2030 Agenda and commended multilateral efforts to protect older persons, such as the Inter-American Convention on Protecting the Human Rights of Older Persons and the draft African Union protocol on the rights of older persons in Africa.

95. His Government continued to draft policies and measures aimed at countering violence against and abuse of older persons and establishing an environment that would enable older persons to live out their full potential. Improving the national and international legal frameworks for the rights of older persons would continue to be a priority for his delegation. Discussions on ageing should be guided by the principles of active and healthy ageing and intergenerational solidarity.

96. **Ms. Cimermančič** (Slovenia), speaking as a youth delegate, said that young people had great capacity for innovation. However, if younger generations were to be the driving force of global progress, the international community would have to address major challenges faced by youth, including the gap between education systems and labour markets, the lack of active youth participation and inequality. Youth unemployment was a serious challenge that could only be addressed by enabling students to gain practical experience, recognizing non-formal education and involving businesses in the education system.

97. Slovenian youth had little confidence in the political system because they were not involved in decision-making processes. It was not acceptable that young people were currently only able to demand their rights through non-conventional means such as petitions and rallies; society would not be able to develop unless youth were able to participate at the national, regional and international levels. Lastly, inequalities based on factors such as gender, health, cultural identity, race or ethnic origin had no place in contemporary international society; decent living conditions, high-quality and inclusive education and employment opportunities must be accessible for all. Lastly, she urged delegations to bear in mind that youth were important not only for the future, but also for the contemporary world.

The meeting rose at 1 p.m.