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## Third Committee

### Summary record of the 5th meeting

Held at Headquarters, New York, on Tuesday, 8 October 2013, at 3 p.m.

*Chair:* Ms. Dagher (Vice-Chair) . . . . . (Lebanon)

## Contents

Agenda item 27: 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*)
- (d) United Nations Literacy Decade: Education for all (*continued*)

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*In the absence of Mr. Tafrov (Bulgaria), Ms. Dagher (Lebanon), Vice-Chair, took the Chair.*

*The meeting was called to order at 3.10 p.m.*

**Agenda item 27: 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/68/174 and A/68/215)
- (b) Social development, including questions relating to the world social situation and to youth, ageing, disabled persons and the family** *(continued)* (A/68/61-E/2013/3, A/68/95, A/68/168 and A/68/169)
- (c) Follow-up to the International Year of Older Persons: Second World Assembly on Ageing** *(continued)* (A/68/167)
- (d) United Nations Literacy Decade: Education for all** *(continued)* (A/68/201)

1. **Mr. Msosa** (Malawi) said that young people, the majority of whom lived in developing countries, comprised 43 per cent of the world's population and should be targeted through national development plans. His Government welcomed the appointment of the Secretary-General's Envoy on Youth as a step towards addressing their needs. During Malawi's current term as Chair of the Southern African Development Community (SADC), his Government would hold one regional conference on food security and another on youth.

2. The problems of youth in Malawi were severe: 50 per cent of girls married before the age of 18.6, while 13 per cent of children under 18 had lost parents or caregivers, often to HIV-related diseases. His country had therefore introduced a national policy to improve young people's lives and involve them in development. School registration, re-admission and retention were essential to meeting the challenges of gender inequality, teenage pregnancy, high school drop-out rates, HIV/AIDS, inadequate infrastructure, poverty and food insecurity. Education unlocked the potential of youth and vulnerable groups and thus helped alleviate poverty; keeping girls in school prevented child marriages and early pregnancies.

3. Lastly, his Government had enlisted traditional leaders in development programmes, resulting in a

decrease in the maternal death rate from 675 to 460 per 100,000 live births. It aimed to achieve the Millennium Development Goal target of reducing such deaths by 75 per cent by 2015.

4. **Mr. Çevik** (Turkey) said that persons with disabilities should be given access to education, health, employment and social and legal support, and involved in decision-making. Their rights should be taken into account in the development agenda beyond 2015. His Government therefore welcomed the high-level meeting of the General Assembly on the realization of the Millennium Development Goals and other internationally agreed development goals for persons with disabilities, held in New York in September 2013.

5. The international community should raise awareness regarding the rights of older persons and take their needs into account in social development agendas. His country was amending legislation and implementing policies to respond to the ageing of the population. It had honoured its commitments to women's reproductive rights under the Programme of Action of the International Conference on Population and Development, held in Cairo in September 1994, and the Millennium Development Goals, and had been the first country to ratify the Council of Europe Convention on preventing and combating violence against women and domestic violence, adopted in April 2011. Turkey would be the host country for the Europe and Central Asia Regional Office of the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN-Women). To assist young people, it had ensured their involvement in decision-making, abolished higher education fees and reduced the minimum age for candidates in general elections.

6. Equal opportunities in education contributed to development, democracy, combating discrimination, knowledge of human rights and social inclusion. The involvement of civil society, the media and the private sector in social development brought expertise and resources to the table and raised awareness. The social development of conflict-prone and developing countries should be supported to reduce their economic vulnerability.

7. **Ms. Ferej** (Ethiopia) said that her Government was implementing a growth and transformation plan to promote inclusive social development and enhance agricultural production, and had introduced strategies targeting low-income groups and rural communities.

Ethiopia had ratified the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities and established a committee to monitor the Convention's implementation. It had criminalized discrimination against such persons, provided tax exemptions for employers who recruited 60 per cent or more of their workforce from among them, and was supporting centres providing prosthetic devices and orthopaedic care to them.

8. Ethiopia's National Youth Policy and Youth Development Package were in line with both the World Programme of Action for Youth to the Year 2000 and Beyond and the African Youth Charter. A National Plan of Action for Older Persons based on the 2002 Madrid International Plan of Action on Ageing had been in place since 2006. Her Government had established forums and associations providing training to and organizing income-generating activities for older persons.

9. Through the Productive Safety Net Programme, her country provided childcare services and flexible working arrangements. Its family planning system addressed population control and maternal health, and it had deployed 34,000 reproductive health workers at the community level. It had reduced child deaths by two thirds in the preceding 20 years through its reproductive and child health programme. Despite progress in human resource development through the use of local languages and programmes for young people who were not attending school, income and gender inequalities persisted and vulnerable groups continued to face social exclusion.

10. **Mr. Ismail** (Brunei Darussalam) said that the family unit was essential to communities, national development and the moral fabric of society. Through the extended family structure typical of Brunei Darussalam, positive values were inculcated in children, and family members learned to assume their responsibilities. In 2008, his Government had established a special committee on the family and women, which had devised a national plan of action focused on the work-family balance, economic, legal and health matters affecting families, and family-related research. National Family Day was celebrated on the first Sunday of May each year.

11. His Government provided universal free education and health services, allowances for children attending private schools, and free vaccination and dental services in schools. It had established

programmes to help couples build strong families and improve their parenting, communication skills and financial management. It provided counselling and conducted awareness-raising campaigns in family values, reproductive health, chronic diseases, domestic violence and good parenting. Lastly, the fifth meeting of the East Asia Ministerial Forum on Families, held in Brunei Darussalam in October 2012, had adopted the Brunei Darussalam Statement, which highlighted the problems resulting from an imbalance between work and family life.

12. **Mr. Grima** (Malta) said that his Government was improving older persons' quality of life through an active ageing strategy focused on intergenerational solidarity, employability, social participation and health. It had established a National Commission for Active Ageing to draft a strategic policy in the area, an advisory committee on care homes, and a team of geriatricians to assess the needs of applicants for long-term care, a field in which it was fostering public-private partnerships. It had expanded the University of the Third Age and planned to open more active learning and day centres for older persons.

13. His country would change the law to protect such persons from abuse and introduce harsher punishments for those convicted of crimes against them. It would change public perceptions of ageing and harness technology to improve such persons' quality of life and enable them to participate in society. There was a shortage of personnel trained in the field of ageing in developing countries. Malta was proud to be the host country for the United Nations International Institute on Ageing, which supported State implementation of the Madrid International Plan of Action.

14. Although his Government was committed to the Cairo Programme of Action and subsequent international instruments, reproductive health services could not be considered in isolation from the right to life. Abortion should not, therefore, be imposed as a right under the development agenda beyond 2015.

15. **Mr. Chipaziwa** (Zimbabwe) said that the Envoy of the Secretary-General on Youth should represent the concerns of all youth, including young Africans. His Government sought to ensure social mobility and access to the means of production for all. Its land reform and Indigenisation and Economic Empowerment Act were the backbone of its strategy against poverty and food insecurity.

16. His Government gave a high priority to universal primary education and subsidized the school fees of orphans and vulnerable children; as a result, it would achieve Millennium Development Goal 2 by 2015. It would expand access to higher and tertiary education and create synergies between education and industry, ensuring that the skills provided to young people were relevant on the job market. It made cash payments to low-income households, particularly those comprising orphans or invalids and those led by children. Through the Older Persons Act, passed in October 2012, it provided income security, health assistance and other development services to such persons.

17. Since the adoption of the Disabled Persons Act in 1992, Zimbabwe had upheld the rights of such persons, and had intensified its efforts by ratifying the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities in September 2013. It gave a high priority to the family in its social protection system, providing monthly payments to poorer households through its Harmonized Social Cash Transfer Programme. Lastly, he stressed that the development agenda beyond 2015 should address the root causes of inequality and build people's capacity to lift themselves out of poverty, since social protection alone would not ensure national integration and cohesion.

18. **Ms. Perera** (Sri Lanka), speaking as a youth delegate, said that the issues central to the lives of Sri Lankan youth of various backgrounds were quality education, more opportunities for advancement, job security, gainful employment, social inclusion, and peace and stability. The reluctance of many young Sri Lankans, desirous of job security, to pursue careers in the private sector could be remedied by providing proper career counselling and training. To that end, her Government could establish a youth volunteer programme along the lines of the programme of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations, which served the young in rural and disadvantaged areas of the country.

19. In order to increase the employability and productivity of its youth, Sri Lanka had amalgamated its Ministry of Youth with the country's skills development institution, providing training and capacity building to meet the demands of the local, regional and global labour markets in cooperation with the private sector. Healthcare and education from primary to tertiary level remained free of charge.

20. **Mr. Bakeer Markar** (Sri Lanka), speaking as a youth delegate, said that his generation was overcoming the pain and the scars of a terrorist war that had lasted nearly three decades. While former child combatants had been rehabilitated and reintegrated into their communities, their social inclusion remained a challenge. The Sri Lankan Youth Parliament served as a platform for reconciliation, a sounding board for national lawmakers, and a structured forum to facilitate youth participation in decision-making, providing an avenue for Sri Lanka's youth to gain policy expertise, leadership qualities and civic values.

21. Political leaders and policy makers had recognized that engaging the young in decision-making processes resulted in better policy formulation and implementation. As a result, the national youth policy was being reformulated through an open, multi-stakeholder consultation process and was increasingly progressive, with a greater focus on the need for quality education, sexual health and education and reproductive rights. Sri Lanka had also volunteered to host a world conference on youth in 2014, the first in the region. In closing, Sri Lankan youth would continue to ask their leaders to enable them to cooperate to promote young people's interests and share best practices.

22. **Mr. Desta** (Eritrea) said that the World Summit for Social Development, the twenty-fourth special session of the General Assembly and the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) had put people at the centre of the development agenda, but many nations found it difficult to meet such goals given the global economic downturn. Governments should remain committed to social progress and be given space to develop strategies reflecting national priorities, particularly as the international community prepared to define the post-2015 development agenda. The aim of his Government's social policy, informed by social justice and cohesion, was to promote equal rights and equitable sharing of resources.

23. In line with United Nations resolutions, Eritrea's youth had been given the responsibility of being agents of change after years of war. Their participation had been instrumental in addressing the causes of underdevelopment. Cognizant of the challenges facing the young at home and abroad, Eritrea had begun to provide them with vocational training and to promote

their participation in all areas of society, including political leadership.

24. His Government and the Eritrean diaspora supported families affected by the war. Free education was provided from primary to tertiary levels. Investment in basic infrastructure and social services had raised living standards, particularly in rural areas where essential services had previously been either limited or non-existent. Since 1991, child and maternal mortality had decreased, while life expectancy had markedly increased, putting Eritrea on track to achieve several of the MDGs. The Government had set out a comprehensive development programme, to be supported by mineral exploitation and new investment opportunities. Better coordination was needed at all levels for the socio-economic agenda to move forward.

25. **Mr. Le Hoai Trung** (Viet Nam) said that, despite progress made towards reducing inequality in education, health care and other dimensions of human development, many social groups continued to suffer disproportionately from income poverty and inadequate access to health care and education. With the deadline for the achievement of the MDGs fast approaching and the international community working to define the post-2015 development agenda, prompt and effective action would be needed to address unemployment and social inequality and to ensure social protection. Empowerment of people was central to Viet Nam's poverty eradication and social development efforts. His Government had implemented various measures to ensure that its people were able to optimize their capacities, resources and opportunities, lead healthy and productive lives and exercise their rights and responsibilities as community members and development partners.

26. Supporting persons with disabilities had been high on the national agenda, as evinced by a range of activities aimed at expanding their involvement in all facets of society and the domestic procedures currently under way in order to ratify the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities. Viet Nam was one of the first countries in the region to develop and implement a long-term plan for persons with disabilities, in addition to its efforts to implement the Incheon Strategy and other relevant regional instruments.

27. His country attached great importance to providing care for the elderly, as it regarded its elders

as an invaluable force with an important role in traditional society and national development. In the two years since his Government had implemented a law and a national action plan on the elderly, three million older persons had free health insurance and over a million received monthly social assistance. Viet Nam's youth development strategy aimed to build an educated, professional generation of young people capable of meeting the needs of industrialization, modernization and international integration. Other preferential policies and programmes targeting youth created new jobs for over a million young workers each year.

28. **Mr. Mwinyi** (United Republic of Tanzania) said that his Government continued to implement the outcome of the World Summit for Social Development through its national strategic programme for poverty reduction. While progress had been made, some challenges remained, especially in respect of the country's high maternal and child mortality rates. Recognizing that rural development and agricultural productivity were essential to social development, poverty reduction and attaining the MDGs, the Government had introduced a programme to modernize and improve agricultural productivity.

29. Policies devoted to vulnerable groups, including older persons, and to poverty reduction had been embraced. Older persons accounted for over 5 per cent of his country's population, and 80 per cent of them lived in rural areas. His Government was committed to granting older persons — whom it recognized as a resource in the development of any nation — the opportunity to lead better lives. To that end, free health services were provided to older persons, whose care was coordinated by a specialized Governmental unit. Moreover, pilot programmes had been put in place to test cash transfer as a means of empowering older persons economically.

30. His country recognized the strong links between poverty and disability and hoped that the recently concluded High-level Meeting on Disability and Development would contribute to ensuring the inclusion of disability issues in the post-2015 development agenda. That agenda must also address the root causes of poverty, inequality and social exclusion, giving priority to inclusion, empowerment and participation.

31. **Mr. Bamba** (Côte d'Ivoire) said that the world had reaffirmed the need to face social challenges in the wider context of eradicating poverty, notably through the empowerment of vulnerable groups, social integration and full employment and decent work for all. His Government was focused on inclusive and sustainable growth to reduce poverty rates from the current 50 per cent to 16 per cent by 2015. Progress had been made in education, particularly with gender parity in primary education and a net school enrolment rate of approximately 56 per cent from 2002 to 2008. The aim was to lower illiteracy rates to 35 per cent by 2020 as literacy was a right and a tool for empowerment and socio-economic development. To that end, the Government was working to improve access to and retention in schools and to develop alternative education for out-of-school young people and other vulnerable groups.

32. In the area of health, emphasis was placed on enhancing the integrated management of childhood and neonatal illnesses. Consequently, mortality rates for children under 5 years of age had declined, while maternal health had improved with the introduction of a humanitarian approach focusing on reproductive health. Increased prevention and care services and improved coordination and monitoring at the national level had also brought encouraging results in vaccination coverage and in slowing the spread of HIV/AIDS.

33. The Government was committed to tackling unemployment, which was caused by, inter alia, socio-political instability, population growth and job market issues on both the demand and supply sides. With help from international partners, it therefore aimed to create some 200,000 jobs per year until 2015 to reduce unemployment rates significantly. Another priority was the introduction of a genuine social protection policy that guaranteed access to basic health care and social services to all citizens and to protect against all forms of violence. Social inclusion was a vital part of the Government's development programmes, particularly in the current post-crisis situation, and all vulnerable groups were taken into account in the National Development Programme 2012-2015.

34. To reduce the number of stateless persons in the country, Côte d'Ivoire had also acceded to international instruments on statelessness and had recently adopted legislation on the right to land ownership. Furthermore, his delegation supported the outcome documents of the

recent High-level Meeting on Disability and Development and of the High-level Dialogue on International Migration and Development. In 2012, Côte d'Ivoire had adopted a law recognizing gender equality in the family, which clearly stated that marriage was the union of a man and a woman in which the place of children was sacred, ensuring the continuation of humanity. His country would continue to ensure respect for human rights and the rule of law as it strove for social development, building strong and inclusive institutions.

35. **Ms. Peña** (Peru) said that social inclusion was at the centre of her Government's public policy, hence its establishment in 2011 of the Ministry of Development and Social Inclusion to guide relevant policies on the basis of a number of instruments. To implement the national system for development and social inclusion, the Ministry had devised a national strategy that focused primarily on infant nutrition, early childhood development, integral development of children and adolescents and economic inclusion and protection for older persons.

36. The country's sustained economic growth in recent years had allowed the Government to place greater emphasis on inclusion and equality as growth was not an end in itself, but a means to an end. Peru had therefore implemented a number of measures and policies aimed at the poor and marginalized, particularly in terms of access to education and quality public services, gender equality and the empowerment of women. She joined other delegations in supporting the outcome of the High-level Meeting on Disability Development and endorsed the initiative proposed by Ecuador. Peru also supported the negotiation of a single international instrument on the rights of older persons and welcomed the decision of the Human Rights Council to appoint an independent expert on the enjoyment of all human rights by older persons.

37. **Mr. Elbahi** (Sudan) said that the global financial crisis, fluctuations in food prices, increased energy costs and climate change were putting social development at risk and impeding fulfilment of the commitments made in Copenhagen. In his country, peace was a prerequisite for social development. His Government had signed a number of cooperation accords with South Sudan, and direct talks between the two countries' Heads of State had been held in September 2013. Domestically, the situation in Darfur,

the Blue Nile and South Kordofan states had improved considerably, with violence abating to a great extent.

38. His country had enacted a comprehensive anti-poverty programme that focused on creating jobs, expanding education, eradicating illiteracy, providing medical care, supplying potable water, protecting the environment and ensuring food security. The Diwan al-Zakat social care agency, alongside the Department of Waqfs and civil society organizations, was strengthening social insurance by supporting sanitation projects, religious education and higher education and had become a powerful tool for eradicating poverty and achieving social justice.

39. Measures adopted to address the needs of persons with disabilities and older persons included facilitating their access to health care and putting in place social programmes aimed at creating a family environment for them. The Sudan had established a National Council for Persons with Disabilities and laid out a five-year plan for persons with disabilities for the period 2012-2016 that stressed health, education, awareness-raising, economic empowerment, legal support and social, cultural and political inclusion. His Government had also established the internationally recognized National Authority for Prosthetics and Orthotics, which met domestic and regional demand for prosthetic limbs. Lastly, he stressed that donor countries should fulfil their assistance commitments and act to cancel the debts of developing countries.

40. **Mr. Fiallo** (Ecuador) said that, in the struggle to reduce poverty, inequity should be reduced. Goals should not be based on market consumption but should take into consideration the full enjoyment of life with dignity. That would lead to better social welfare and the end of economic and social inequality. To that end, his Government had turned to collective action and the public sector to guarantee justice, economic, social and cultural rights, employment, recreation and artistic creation. Unprecedented health and education investments had been made to eliminate the intergenerational poverty trap and to achieve the goal of "living well".

41. Ecuador was concerned, however, that social affairs were not of central importance for the international community, as evidenced by the lack of progress on the MDGs, the failure to meet the commitments made at the 1995 World Summit for Social Development, and the persistence of the

traditional financial doctrine under which social investment was seen as an expense. His country, in contrast, had tripled social investment in the preceding four years and had also improved investment quality by valuing human beings above capital. Poverty had been reduced through health, education and housing programmes.

42. Since 2007, his country's policy had been to uphold the rights of persons with disabilities, but much remained to be done. It therefore supported the outcome of the ground-breaking recent High-level Meeting on Disability and Development as persons with disabilities played a fundamental role in diverse societies and contributed to development. The post-2015 development agenda must include quantitative objectives with measurable goals with regard to persons with disabilities, and international cooperation and concrete measures were needed to include them at national, regional and international levels. Social development was impossible if the rights of persons with disabilities were ignored. Consequently, Ecuador supported the initiative to appoint a special envoy of the Secretary-General for persons with disabilities.

43. **Ms. Kasese-Bota** (Zambia) said that her Government, committed to the social development of its people through policy and structural transformation and cognizant of the centrality of humanity in sustainable development, had refocused its national development plans to an all inclusive and people-centred approach to achieve desired growth outcomes with social integration elements. It was unfortunate that many countries might not yet achieve Millennium Development Goals 1, 4 and 5 as there remained many challenges to sustainable development.

44. Zambia was no different, with widespread poverty, high unemployment, especially among young people and women, and widening gaps in equality and social inclusiveness. Like many other success stories, the country's key indicators for Goal 2 showed 94 per cent net enrolment in primary schools and gender parity in primary school enrolment. Nevertheless, much remained to be done to improve the quality of education and focus more on high school completion rates, tertiary education and skills development. National and international commitments to significantly improve literacy levels for all should be prioritized as education remained key to inclusive social development and empowerment.

45. There could be no meaningful social development without an emphasis on youth empowerment within a comprehensive framework of family values, supportive mechanisms and infrastructure. The Government recognized that empowerment was the fastest way to reduce poverty and had consequently focused on a framework to accelerate achievement of the MDGs, with special attention given to employment generation, and to enhance efforts to reduce inequality by pursuing inclusive growth strategies. Learning from the development goals of past provided an opportunity for leverage on the post-2015 development agenda, which should aim to expedite the elimination of all forms of poverty and achieve productive and decent work for all.

46. With its partners, Zambia was resolutely working to advance national labour policy reforms by amending existing laws to update and harmonize them with international labour instruments and other national policies and legislation. Social transformation and integration depended on the full enjoyment of women's rights and their complete involvement in decision-making in all spheres of life. As current imbalances in society subjected women to social exclusion, the Government had implemented a gender policy to address inequality and had made deliberate efforts to appoint women to influential positions in government.

47. **Ms. Cid Carreño** (Chile) said that social inequalities had been exacerbated by the weak recovery of the global economy and that financial and food crises had disproportionately affected the poor and young people in developing countries. Recognizing the high level of unemployment among young people, Chile had taken steps to improve their employability and to promote access to employment. Youth unemployment was a global problem and indigenous young men and women and persons with disabilities were particularly disadvantaged.

48. Chile had recently extended the scope of its social protection programmes and adopted social policies that contributed to women's empowerment, gender equality and family support. Financial allowances had been awarded to families living in extreme poverty and to working women and female heads of the most vulnerable households. The extension of maternity leave from three to six months benefited all working women; and further measures had been introduced to promote female employability and entrepreneurship. A food solidarity bond had been

issued in 2012 to reduce the impact of rising food prices on the most vulnerable families.

49. Chile had adopted a comprehensive policy on positive ageing for 2012-2025 to promote the rights of the elderly and regarded the Open-ended Working Group on Ageing as an opportunity to identify the measures needed to address deficiencies in the international framework for protecting the human rights of older persons. To that end, Chile supported the appointment of a special rapporteur and the possible drafting of an international convention that would raise awareness of the importance of the interests of the elderly. Her delegation also endorsed the decision by the Human Rights Council to appoint an independent expert on the enjoyment of all human rights by older persons.

50. As a signatory to the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, Chile was of the view that discussing disability and development would imply changes in the development of public policy. Having gradually moved from a welfare approach that focused on benefits and health care to a rights-based approach that focused on the person, in particular the empowerment and independence of persons with disabilities, Chile attached great importance to the outcome document of the recent High-level Meeting on Disability and Development and similar efforts by the United Nations.

51. Particular emphasis had been placed on the health of young people in Chile, where steps had been taken to combat smoking, alcohol consumption and obesity, and the school curriculum had been modified to promote physical exercise and healthy eating. Scholarships and grants were provided for the poorest pupils and for those from indigenous populations and laws passed in 2012 promoted quality in education and harmonized the funding of higher education.

52. Through its current membership in the Commission for Social Development, Chile would contribute to the target of achieving the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) by 2015 and hoped that those issues would continue to be considered in the post-2015 development agenda.

53. **Mr. Cassidy** (Observer for the International Labour Organization (ILO)) said that since work was the most effective and sustainable way to overcome poverty and that the expansion of productive and decent employment allowed economies to grow and



diversify, regardless of the level of development, high global unemployment and the need to create more than 470 million new jobs by 2030 meant that the urgency and difficulty of the task at hand could not be understated. The global economic crisis and its corollary effects continued to impact labour markets and social security systems, creating new challenges and compounding longer-term structural problems.

54. The international community was at a crossroads with regard to policy decisions. The steps being taken reflected the broad acknowledgement that full employment and decent work should be at the centre of poverty eradication and social integration frameworks and that universal access to basic social protection and services was vital for empowerment. ILO was developing evidenced-based comparative policy analysis of short- and medium-term measures to address the acute youth employment shortage. It also continued to work with other multilateral bodies, including the World Bank, the Group of 20 and the International Monetary Fund in a number of relevant areas.

55. The ILO agenda for the 2014 International Labour Conference would include two standard-setting processes, the first of which would supplement ILO Convention No. 29 concerning Forced or Compulsory Labour to address implementation gaps with regard to prevention, protection and compensation and provide additional guidance to Member States. The second issue was the transition from the informal to the formal economy, in particular in light of high unemployment, underemployment, gender inequalities and the precariousness of the informal economy.

56. The ILO 2012 Call for Action on the youth employment crisis, involving tried and tested measures in macroeconomic policies, employability, labour market policies, youth entrepreneurship and rights, underscored the need for balance and coherence across policy measures and addressed the urgency for immediate and targeted action. ILO had the expertise and experience to support efforts to translate sound policy into concrete action at the country level and to improve coordination at the international level.

57. **Mr. Rakovskiy** (Russian Federation), speaking in exercise of the right of reply, said that his delegation wished to draw attention to the fact that South Ossetia and Abkhazia were independent republics over which the Russian Federation had no effective control. The

sovereign authorities there had all power to determine autonomously their approach to ensuring social protection and respect for human rights, actions for which, once again, the Russian Federation had no responsibility.

58. It was clear that the politically motivated statement made by Georgia was not about the fate of the thousands who had suffered as a result of the hostilities of 2008. Georgia was not, in fact, seeking to reach a legally binding agreement with South Ossetia and Abkhazia on the non-use of force, although such agreement could lead to a normalization of the situation, trust between the parties and practical steps that could solve the many problems that they faced, including in the area of social development. Instead, the statement reflected a demagogic attempt by Georgia to prove that a foreign party was responsible for the situation and to draw attention away from its own reluctance to take steps to address the prevailing issues in the region.

*The meeting rose at 5.20 p.m.*