



# General Assembly

Seventy-third session

Official Records

Distr.: General  
5 November 2018

Original: English

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## Third Committee

### Summary record of the 3rd meeting

Held at Headquarters, New York, on Wednesday, 3 October 2018, at 10 a.m.

*Chair:* Mr. Saikal ..... (Afghanistan)

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*The meeting was called to order at 10.05 a.m.*

**Agenda item 28: Social development (continued)**

**(a) Implementation of the outcome of the World Summit for Social Development and of the twenty-fourth special session of the General Assembly (continued) (A/73/214)**

**(b) Social development, including questions relating to the world social situation and to youth, ageing, disabled persons and the family (continued) (A/73/254, A/73/220, A/72/211, A/73/61-E/2018/4 and A/73/213)**

**(c) Literacy for life: shaping future agendas (continued) (A/73/292)**

1. **Ms. Kempinsky** (Israel), speaking as a youth delegate, said that whereas her parents had been denied many opportunities in their country of origin, the Soviet Union, because they were Jewish, she, herself, had grown up in Israel, a democratic country, where she could express her opinions freely and attend the university of her dreams. As a participant in a project entitled Young Women Politicians, which was designed to strengthen the role of women in decision-making processes, she had met women politicians who were engaged at the national and local levels, as well as economists, researchers, diplomats and women founders of non-governmental organizations. That exposure convinced her that her parents' experiences as Jews were part of a bigger story relating to questions of gender, gender equality, the rights of young people and those of lesbians, gays, bisexuals and transgender persons (LGBT). Inclusion should not be a privilege, but a given. Having grown up in the twenty-first century, her generation had the freedom to view gender, sexual orientation and race as irrelevant and was able to put aside the prejudice of past centuries and to treat people with respect, thereby ensuring for themselves and the generations to come the opportunities they deserved. Women's rights and LGBT rights should be already established as the natural way of the world.

2. **Mr. Dragos** (Romania), speaking as a youth delegate, said that education, civic engagement, and employment were the main concerns of Romanian young people, who sought specific training and opportunities in order to engage in problem-solving at the local and national levels. Educational curricula should be adapted to labour market requirements and leaders should put youth at the centre of public policy and foster an environment conducive to the development of that group. Youth advisory councils were being set up to promote political representation. Youth delegates also strove to promote the

implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and to establish a nation-wide framework for enhancing early childhood education, reducing the number of drop-outs from school and nurturing well-balanced human beings. Another facet of their mission was to eradicate stereotypes, stigmas, and myths based on ethnicity, race, gender, religion, sexual orientation and disability.

3. **Ms. Baba** (Romania), speaking as a youth delegate, said that faced with an ever-changing social and economic environment, new generations would need skills such as critical and creative thinking, adaptability, time management, decision-making and conflict resolution. The education system must be brought up-to-date and the goal should be to ensure equal opportunities for all.

4. **Ms. Garcia Lozano** (Mexico), speaking as a youth delegate, said that more than 37 million young people lived in Mexico. Along with the rest of the population, they recognized the 2030 Agenda as a watershed in the work of the Organization and national development planning. Young people, families, older persons and persons with disabilities were not only stakeholders with cross-cutting interests in Agenda 2030 but also the very groups targeted.

5. For purposes of coherence, issues must be discussed in the appropriate forums. Clearly, there was significant overlap among the topics addressed by the Third Committee and those dealt with by the Second Committee, the Economic and Social Council, the High-Level Political Forum on Sustainable Development and the Commission for Social Development. She wondered what purpose could be served by repeating the same discourse in five different forums. Under Agenda 2030, development was recognized as the fundamental pillar and pivotal element of the Organization's operations, hence the need for coherence.

6. Mexico sought to provide equal opportunities in the areas of health, security, education, housing, basic services and labour. Building a more prosperous society depended on the extent to which groups such as migrants, indigenous peoples and persons with disabilities were empowered to exercise their rights as human beings. Sometimes, the best way of leaving no one behind was to bring such people to the fore. The National Strategy for Inclusion had helped to alleviate poverty and to ensure fulfilment of the rights enshrined in the Constitution and in the international treaties to which Mexico was a party.

7. Other institutions, in close alignment with Agenda 2030, were designed to protect older persons and enable

them to enjoy an active, healthy and dignified old age; to assert the role of young people as rights-holders and stakeholders in development; and to promote participation in political and social forums. Based on the recognition of the multiple forms of family, the National Programme for Equality and Non-Discrimination had mounted campaigns to promote respect for sexual and gender diversity and to reject all forms of discrimination against different types of family. Genuinely sustainable development was predicated on mainstreaming the human rights perspective in the various issues before the Committee. Mexico would consistently support any stance that sought to promote the wellbeing of the most vulnerable groups.

8. **Mr. De Souza Monteiro** (Brazil) said that vulnerable groups were more seriously impacted by income inequality and the unequal availability of social services. Exclusion was manifest among older persons, women, migrants and persons of African descent. Combating socioeconomic inequality would promote human rights, and equal access to education and health care, pensions, safe drinking water, sanitation, transportation, housing and digital technology and services would provide incentives for inclusive growth.

9. The forthcoming sessions of the Commission on Social Development and the Commission on the Status of Women would be unique opportunities for tackling the challenges posed by rising levels of inequality. The world was living through a delicate economic and political context and inequality might be contributing to social unease. The United Nations and its agencies, the World Bank and the regional economic commissions had a pool of the very best specialists and the most current data. The problem had been identified and a range of technical measures were available. The international community must therefore engage politically with the issue with the urgency and detail it deserved. It must come together to guarantee that it was working towards a more inclusive national, international socioeconomic environment.

10. **Ms. Quiza** (Colombia) said that her country understood that the international development frameworks such as the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development were interrelated, mutually reinforcing instruments for guaranteeing the human rights of vulnerable groups and for achieving a form of sustainable development that would leave no one behind. However, other international agendas, in particular the Copenhagen Declaration on Social Development and Programme of Action of the World Summit for Social Development, contained equally ambitious and transformative commitments that were irreplaceable in efforts to achieve sustainable

development worldwide. Thus, the United Nations system should continue to identify synergies and step up efforts to ensure convergence of the multiple development agendas and to deliver concrete results. It was vital that discussions on poverty in the context of social development should go beyond a monetarist vision and encompass a host of other elements such as inequality, lack of education and lack of access to dignified housing.

11. **Ms. Gran** (Norway), speaking as a youth delegate, said that the number of conflicts driven by climate-related shocks was on the rise, causing pressure on food security. Multiple forms of malnutrition coexisted, affecting children and young people the most. Addressing food insecurity called for a holistic and conflict-sensitive approach to efforts to sustain peace. Girls living in conflict areas and in some refugee communities faced the danger of early or forced marriages. Through healthcare, education and equal opportunity, all States could empower young girls to become champions of change in their own communities. In conflict areas, young people were unable to attend school and were more vulnerable to violence and recruitment by armed groups. Member States must protect schools from being used as a strategic target in conflict. The extent and depth of trauma suffered by young people at the hands of armed groups threatened to create a lost generation in some parts of the world. Yet young people had never been more dynamic and engaged, showcasing their potential as much more than victims of conflict.

12. **Mr. Svendsrud** (Norway), speaking as a youth delegate, said that, notwithstanding Security Council resolutions [2250 \(2015\)](#) and [2419 \(2018\)](#), which recognized children and youth as positive and important change-makers in conflict resolution and peacebuilding processes, that narrative was not acknowledged in all processes and many young people's lives were disrupted by conflict.

13. Of all the children born each year, 1.7 per cent were born with sex traits that did not fit typical definitions of male and female. Intersex people were often subject to irreversible surgery without the opportunity to make an informed decision. He called on Member States to put an end to that practice, to realize their rights to physical integrity, health, privacy and autonomy. Lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, intersex and queer persons must be entitled to enjoy the protections provided by law, including the right to life, security of person and privacy, and freedom from discrimination. Member States should invest in youth, enabling them to participate and make their voice heard in politics and decision-making. It was time to make

young people part of the solution, allowing them to shape a better future for all.

14. **Ms. Kuhn** (Germany), speaking as a youth delegate, asked whether the delegations attending the current meeting could affirm that decision makers in their country consulted with youth regularly and whether participation was open to the latter, irrespective of their ethnic, educational and financial background and of whether they lived in cities or rural areas; good solutions often required only creativity and passion for change, attributes that did not depend on age. While youth were disproportionately affected by problems relating to education and unemployment, their priorities ranged far beyond those issues to include reducing the gender pay gap, ensuring access to water for all and creating more inclusive societies. Their perspective was unique and must be taken into account in the search for solutions.

15. **Mr. Schlapp** (Germany), speaking as a youth delegate, said that wide geographical representation of the world's youth within the framework of the United Nations Youth Delegate Programme was essential. Young people were not a homogenous group, and meaningful youth participation must reflect their diversity.

16. **Ms. Korac** (United States of America) said that her Government championed social development and the empowerment of social groups through policies and programmes at the domestic and international levels. Since the establishment of the Commission for Social Development in 1946, however, other high-profile bodies and processes, in particular the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, had been instituted and, in the interests of eliminating duplication, she wondered whether the Commission was still able to provide added value to the debate on those subjects. As long as it continued in its current role and as Member States continued their efforts to strengthen it, her delegation recommended that annual sessions of the Commission be cut back to two to four days, bearing in mind that Member States started negotiating draft resolutions before a session began; that multiple or recurring resolutions be eliminated and that a single, action-oriented, negotiated document be adopted to effect meaningful improvements in peoples' lives. That approach had been successfully used by other commissions to consider a topic comprehensively and examine emerging issues; the Commission should produce fewer resource-intensive reports that duplicated work done elsewhere.

17. The proposed reforms were consistent with the recommendations her Government had put forward for

making the work of the General Assembly and the Economic and Social Council more efficient and effective, including seeking to reduce the number of reports, conferences and negotiations by 50 per cent. She urged Member States to reflect on whether there was still a need for a stand-alone commission for social development, for which the overall cost would be \$515,000, or whether other United Nations bodies and processes could handle the issues covered by the Commission more effectively and with better results.

18. **Mr. Ibrahim** (Sweden), speaking as a youth delegate, said that the maintenance of international peace and security must encompass a variety of stakeholders. Young people under the age of 30 accounted for as much as one third of the world's population but were often not able to contribute to the discourse on that subject. Given their tremendous potential as positive agents of change and in building sustainable peace in their societies, they must be allowed to engage and take part in decision-making at all levels. Peace was crucial for development and mechanisms must be put in place to protect youth from violent conflict.

19. In addition to the traditional drivers of forced displacement, such as persecution and armed conflict, people were obliged to leave their homes for a variety of complex reasons including poverty, lack of access to health services, education, water, food and housing, environmental degradation and climate change. Migrants in an irregular situation should not be treated as criminals. In the absence of safe pathways for migration, many migrants were compelled to enter and stay in countries of destination irregularly, and were exposed to abuse, exploitation, and even torture and death by a range of perpetrators, including corrupt state officials and traffickers. The detention of children because of their parents' migration status was a clear violation of the rights of the child and tantamount to torture. With the rise in anti-immigration sentiment and racism in many countries, advocacy on behalf of the voiceless was increasingly important. The forthcoming Intergovernmental Conference to Adopt the Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration, would be an opportunity for world leaders and the young people he represented to ensure that the voices of migrant children and youth would be heard by world leaders and decision makers.

20. **Mr. Cortorreal** (Dominican Republic) said that his Government was implementing programmes and policies to eradicate poverty and inequality through investment in education, health and youth employment. National instruments were being brought in line with the different international conventions that his country had

ratified with a view to inclusion of the most vulnerable population groups and the well-being of its people as a whole. Open discussions were held on issues affecting the young population, including bullying, drug consumption, gender and sexuality, sexually transmitted diseases, gender violence and teenage pregnancies. His Government advocated greater participation by young people in decision-making processes on issues that concerned them. It was also committed to upgrading teacher training and well-being as a means of improving the education system and to increase the use of information and communications technologies in production, education and government services. Comprehensive care for young children, primary and secondary education for all and institution-building were other areas conducive to the training of democratic citizens capable of transforming the material, social and cultural reality in their country.

21. Public policies had been launched to enhance the activity, productivity, participation and protection of older persons and to provide care for those living in extreme poverty, with special provision for intervening during emergencies. Further progress should be made towards the adoption of a legally binding international instrument for the promotion and protection of the human rights of older persons.

22. Some advances had been made in improving accessibility for persons with disabilities. Public-private partnerships were being forged in the education, tourism and financial sectors to improve public policies designed for that population. In that regard, the National Council on Disabilities was cooperating with the statistical body to include the questions designed by the Washington Group in national household surveys.

23. **Ms. Sorto Rosales** (El Salvador) said that the Government of El Salvador was firmly committed to achieving social inclusion as one of the basic and interrelated dimensions of social development. In 2017, it had adopted a national strategy for eradicating extreme poverty, which sought to improve the quality of life of the poorest families by strengthening the social fabric and generating livelihoods from a rights perspective. Specific population groups were prioritized, namely, young children, adolescents and young people, older persons, indigenous people and persons with disabilities. Vulnerable or marginalized situations could occur at different periods in a person's life cycle. Thus, combating poverty, inequality and exclusion under the 2030 Agenda should be approached holistically, bearing in mind specific needs as they arose. Public policy initiatives targeting youth were designed to endow them with skills for life through training, the provision of seed capital, scholarships or

grants, and by making it easier for dropouts to re-enter the school system. Education was also provided on health matters, such as sexual and reproductive health and in reducing pregnancy among girls and adolescents.

24. The Inter-American Convention on Protecting the Human Rights of Older Persons, ratified by El Salvador in December 2017, served as a guide in public policies, which were designed to uphold the dignity and independence of older persons. A national policy for older persons had been launched in 2017, in consultation with persons of that age group. Member States must ensure that persons 60 years and over participated actively in efforts to fulfil the Sustainable Development Goals and targets and should pursue their discussions on the possible adoption of an international legal instrument to promote, protect and safeguard for older persons the full enjoyment of their human rights and fundamental freedoms. Her Government was also committed to promoting the full inclusion, integration and civil, social political, economic and cultural participation of persons with disabilities and recognized the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities as the fundamental instrument in that regard.

25. **Mr. Issetov** (Kazakhstan) said that the ambitious but necessary goals of Agenda 2030 would require enormous resources, hence the importance of implementing the recommendations of the Addis Ababa Action Agenda of the Third International Conference on Financing for Development. In spite of the downward spiral in global economic trends, Kazakhstan had increased social support and protection by annually augmenting its financing for children, youth, women, older persons and persons with disabilities. Its national strategy and economic policy would guarantee higher quality education, health care, affordable social housing and enhanced social security. Under a special government programme and quota system, employers would receive funding to subsidize the creation of jobs for persons with disabilities.

26. Kazakhstan promoted the concept of active ageing, ensuring that older persons enjoyed full rights without distinction or discrimination and allowing them to live safely and with dignity. His Government had offered Almaty as the site for a United Nations regional hub for promoting sustainable development, humanitarian assistance and building resilience in Central Asia. It aspired to achieve the objectives of the United Nations by conscientiously translating them into national policies and programmes and leading other countries in the region in the same direction. In partnership with African countries and the United Nations Development Programme, Kazakhstan

had provided capacity-building to 45 ministries of foreign affairs in the region. With the help of the Economic and Social Council for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP), it had developed biogas projects for small island developing States to assist them in their transition to a green economy.

27. As the largest landlocked country in the world, Kazakhstan had promoted the advancement of landlocked least developed countries, especially in Eurasia, to help them to overcome their geographical disadvantages. Energy being the driver for all the Sustainable Development Goals, his country had organized Astana EXPO 2017 to showcase renewable sources of energy for the twenty-first century.

28. **Mr. Arriola Ramírez** (Paraguay) said that his country had brought its 2030 National Development Plan in line with the Sustainable Development Goals and the three branches of government had pledged their commitment to the 2030 Agenda, establishing an innovative, participatory institutional architecture. Convinced that all persons deserved to live with dignity, his Government promoted programmes for inclusive development, progressively increasing social investment in order to integrate persons living in poverty, especially women, children, indigenous people, older persons and the rural population. The newly-elected Government would continue to implement the emblematic social protection programmes including conditional cash transfers; school food programme; food allowances for older persons living in poverty; and the poverty reduction programme.

29. In order to step up national efforts to improve social conditions, the Department for Social Action had been upgraded to the ministerial level and assigned the mission of leading and coordinating State social protection and promotion initiatives targeting the population living in poverty and extreme poverty. The Ministry for Social Development would place emphasis on coordinating the activities of public service entities operating at the different levels of government while ensuring the active participation of civil society. Its aim would be to promote the effective and efficient implementation of the new social protection system.

30. Reaffirming its commitment to the 2030 Agenda, particularly the goal of poverty eradication, Paraguay would continue its efforts to ensure that all persons would enjoy a life of dignity and the fulfilment of their economic, social and cultural rights.

31. **Mr. Isnomo** (Indonesia) said that development was meant to benefit all peoples of all backgrounds regardless of gender, ethnicity, age or ability. It was not

merely the sum of building roads, bridges and skyscrapers. Indeed, the essence of social development was about illuminating the hearts and minds of people, enabling shared growth so that all could prosper together and live as healthy, productive members of society. Indonesia reaffirmed its commitment to the Copenhagen Declaration on Social Development and the Programme of Action of the World Summit for Social Development. Partnership and international coordination were part of the solution for solving those social challenges that could not be overcome by domestic efforts alone. Indonesia was committed to eradicating poverty, realizing the potential of all citizens and empowering the people. Its poverty alleviation strategy focused on three areas: comprehensive social protection; the provision of improved access to basic services; and sustainable livelihood. As a result, the proportion of the population living below the national poverty line had declined from 11.75 per cent in 2006 to 10.12 per cent in 2017. The aim was to further reduce that proportion to 7 per cent by 2019. The number of beneficiaries of health services provided under the national social security system had risen to 195.2 million in 2018.

32. Social protection had also been extended to the education, welfare and employment sectors. Poverty reduction had been achieved through job creation and infrastructure development. In addition, under the Smart Indonesia Programme, poor students between the ages of 6 and 21 received cash to enable them to complete their schooling. The Government had also revitalized vocational training, and industry contributed to curriculum development for vocational and technical schools. Training and internship opportunities would be provided to students as well as teachers by private companies. That reform was designed to develop skill sets that would reflect market demand, thus further strengthening the workforce in Indonesia.

33. Indonesia was a party to the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities since 2011. The law relating to persons with disability adopted in 2016 marked a significant shift from the social approach to a human-rights approach. His country was also in the process of ratifying the Marrakesh Treaty to Facilitate Access to Published Works for Persons Who are Blind, Visually Impaired, or Otherwise Print Disabled.

34. **Ms. Ruminowicz** (Poland) said that her country attached great importance to the protection and promotion of the family and family policies. In line with the Follow-up to the twentieth anniversary of the International Year of the Family and beyond, the Government of Poland had introduced a number of

family-oriented policies. The programme Family 500+, launched in 2016, sought to provide financial support for families bringing up children. All families, irrespective of their income, received a monthly benefit for their second and each subsequent child. Families with a child with a disability were entitled to a higher benefit. The programme had led to a decline in poverty and a rise in the number of births. Another initiative, the Good-Start Programme, provided a one-time benefit for each child attending school to assist the family with expenses at the start of the school year. Introduced for the first time in 2018, it covered 4.6 million children and catered also for the special needs of children with disabilities.

35. The fight against poverty and social exclusion and the promotion of social integration were among the main goals of social policy in Poland. Social assistance played an important role in that context, providing support to persons and families in difficulty, mainly at the local level, through cash benefits and benefits in kind. Other programmes were being implemented to address homelessness and strengthen participation in the economy of people at risk of exclusion. Her country remained fully committed to the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and would continue to place the contribution of the family to social development high on its agenda.

36. **Ms. Klonowska** (Poland), speaking as a youth delegate, said that she and her colleague had registered the needs of their peers and wished to communicate them. In most cases, they had detected frustration relating to unemployment but that was just one of the issues of concern to young Polish adults. The difficulties encountered by young people as they made the critical transition from school to labour market could not be overestimated. They included restrictive labour laws, discrimination and unpaid internships that offered few if any guarantees of employment. Moreover, the market was changing faster than ever before, generating a demand for digital competence, soft skills and highly specialized knowledge. Youth unemployment was a major adverse factor for all parties, hindering personal development, heightening economic risks and weakening political stability.

37. **Ms. Krzastek** (Poland), speaking as a youth delegate, said that, as stated in the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the United Nations Youth Strategy, it was vital to achieve inclusive economic growth and provide decent jobs for all. Structural reforms should remove entry barriers, create effective connections between education and jobs and ensure that education was relevant to the job market. Indeed,

education should be updated to enable students to adapt quickly to changing labour market conditions.

38. The youth unemployment rate in Poland had fallen significantly faster than the average world rate. However, more must be done to tap into young people's potential as agents of change and as a source of ideas and solutions. She urged Member States to work closely together to respond to the challenges faced by youth as they sought to enter the job market. The new United Nations Youth Strategy, which was designed to engage and empower people, could serve as an effective instrument for sustainable change.

39. **Mr. Zambrano Ortiz** (Ecuador) said that his delegation believed that poverty eradication strategies should be defined covering all its dimensions in order to secure sustainable development for all and ensure that no one was left behind. Ecuador espoused an alternative multidimensional conception of development. "Sumak Kawsay", or "good living", meant living with dignity, in harmony with nature, with oneself and with other human beings, while satisfying one's basic needs. It signified living life to the full without the excesses of the consumer society.

40. Under the 2017–2021 National Development Plan, a road map had been drawn up to coordinate the activities to be conducted by the State for the benefit of all citizens throughout their lives. Using an integrated, intersectoral approach, the road map was designed to protect the rights of priority groups, with reference to the wide range of needs that would arise over the course of their lives.

41. Ecuador reaffirmed the need to build more equitable societies with emphasis on guaranteeing the well-being of all members. A programme had been launched to ensure that vulnerable older persons could enjoy a dignified and healthy life. Programmes, policies and appropriate legal frameworks should be established to empower older persons and enable them to participate fully in social, economic, cultural and political life, to treat them with dignity, and guarantee for them the full enjoyment of their human rights and fundamental freedoms.

42. Ecuador was currently serving as Chair of the Bureau of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities. It had adopted a national agenda for the equality of persons with disabilities, based on the Sustainable Development Goals.

43. Ecuador viewed the protection of human rights as fundamentally a matter of shared responsibility that depended on all stakeholders in the society. Strengthening inclusiveness, solidarity and equality was

a national priority for his country and indispensable for building a universal culture of peace. Public policies with a strong social content would foster equal opportunities. His country would continue to strive to achieve a more inclusive society through its comprehensive, unifying rights-based vision, which would encourage social integration and access to services and benefits for all persons, especially those that had traditionally been excluded. That approach was vital in view of the commitment to leave no one behind on the path towards sustainable development and the 2030 Agenda.

44. **Ms. Turner** (Jamaica) said that bearing in mind that greater investment in human capital yielded exponential returns for national development, the Jamaica Social Investment Fund sought to foster economic growth geared to poverty alleviation; to develop a productive youth work force; to boost job creation; and to stimulate increased earnings at the micro, small and medium-sized enterprise levels. Approximately, 1.4 million Jamaicans had benefited from projects targeting rural and agricultural development; health; education; and family development. The 2014 National Social Protection Strategy was designed to promote inclusion in all aspects of national development by combating inequality, poverty and vulnerability. Inspired by the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, the Vision 2030 Jamaica programme aimed to give each person the opportunity, capability and support needed to enjoy a sustainable and good quality of life. Jamaica had set a target date of 2022 for eradicating extreme poverty and one of 2030 for reducing the prevalence of poverty to under 10 per cent.

45. The Disabilities Act had been adopted in 2014 and a campaign, spearheaded by the Jamaica Council for Persons with Disabilities, had been launched in November 2017 to raise awareness of its provisions. The Act placed emphasis on affording equal opportunities to persons with disabilities and on enhancing their inclusion within families and the society in general. In line with global trends and the wider Caribbean, the number of older persons had been increasing steadily in Jamaica and the national policy for senior citizens, currently under revision, would seek to strengthen protection for older persons, while recognizing the valuable contribution they made to national development efforts. A national registry of senior citizens would be developed to facilitate the provision of social assistance and services and ensure that they remained a visible and valuable segment of the Jamaican society in the context of intergenerational solidarity.

46. Jamaica viewed the family as the main vehicle for building a cohesive society. Strategic investments were being made in health and education in an effort to break the intergenerational cycle of poverty for poor households. Under the Programme of Advancement Through Health and Education (PATH), direct benefits were provided to an estimated 70 per cent of families living below the national poverty line. However, her country was unable to provide optimal budgetary support for social protection owing to its constrained fiscal space and high debt burden. Special attention should be given to highly indebted middle-income countries which lacked the fiscal space to preserve their hard-won development gains. Jamaica remained hopeful, however, that collective will at the global level, coupled with determined national action, would result in the eradication of poverty and the attainment of sustainable development for all its citizens.

47. **Mr. García Moritán** (Argentina) said that development was inconceivable without the social dimension. No far-reaching, lasting changes could be achieved without recognizing inclusion as an essential component. Effective strategies for eradicating poverty in all its forms and dimensions called for innovation and policies that combined the social, economic and environmental dimensions of sustainable development.

48. In accordance with the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, Argentina understood that social policies must address poverty in all its complexity from a human as well as a material perspective, bearing in mind the emergence of a whole host of new vulnerabilities. The overarching challenge of achieving zero poverty was a cross-cutting objective for the different government ministries in Argentina in all programme areas. The State must play a proactive role in the design, implementation and strengthening of a comprehensive, integrated social protection system to guarantee respect for the rights of persons throughout their lives.

49. Older persons, young people, children and adolescents should all be empowered to act as central players in development and to exercise their human rights fully. The specific needs of vulnerable groups required an ongoing commitment by States. The same applied to persons with disabilities who must be enabled to participate fully in society and enjoy their human rights on an equal basis with the rest of society.

50. Ensuring genuine gender equity was of vital importance. A multisectoral approach encompassing institution-building and cultural change was necessary, in particular to empower women in situations of violence.



51. Argentina had assumed the presidency of the Group of 20 in December 2017 under the theme “Building Consensus for Fair and Sustainable Development between G20 and Africa”. During his country’s presidency, the G20 Development Working Group had focused on promoting inclusive economic growth with emphasis on strengthening peoples’ skills. Three further areas of focus were investment in early childhood to generate opportunities and enhance the quality of life; inclusive business as a means of incorporating persons currently excluded from the system; and, lastly, sustainable habitat in order to improve living conditions and guarantee access to housing.

52. His delegation wished to emphasize the importance of continuing to move towards full respect for the human rights of older persons through the adoption of a binding international legal instrument which would serve as a guide for the international community in guaranteeing the full participation of older persons in the development of society, and in a life free from violence, discrimination, indifference, abuse and ill-treatment.

53. **Ms. Torikashvili** (Georgia), speaking as a youth delegate, said that Earth was the only planet that humans could call home and it was their responsibility to take care of it using the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. Anyone who wished to make a positive impact on the world must start immediately, without hesitation. She, along with other Georgians, had established a youth organization, called Paint the World, that provided psychological support to people in crisis through art therapy projects in hospitals, orphanages, hospices, elderly shelters and centres for persons with disabilities. The movement had spread internationally and demonstrated that, by pooling resources and following their dreams, people could make a positive difference. As a global citizen who had travelled widely, she had witnessed poverty, crime, racism, child abuse and most of all, hopelessness. She realized that human beings were doing something wrong.

54. Love for one’s country required a willingness to speak out for what was right and to shake up the status quo. Governments must be held responsible for their actions. Globally, education should be treated as the top priority and youth policies should be implemented with a view to reshaping educational systems. Education must be transformed to enable children to pursue their true passion and use their education to bring about change, innovation and progress. Leaders that lacked the right intentions abused their power outrageously. Achieving the Sustainable Development Goals called for a generation of bold people who would be kind to

one another, solve all international and regional conflicts and build a civilization that would live in harmony and lasting peace.

55. The Youth Movement for Reconciliation, established under the mandate of her country’s youth delegate to the United Nations, supported Government efforts for reconciliation with their Abkhaz and Ossetian brothers and sisters. Human beings needed to unite to paint the world with the bright colours of unity and peace.

56. **Mr. Wu Haitao** (China) said that the international community needed to address imbalances in development and must, above all, preserve multilateralism. All countries must observe the rules-based system with the United Nations at its core and the multilateral system centred on the World Trade Organization in order to promote economic globalization that was open, inclusive and capable of delivering benefits for all. Each country’s chosen path towards development should be respected along with its right to pursue a better life for its people and enhance its development opportunities.

57. In integrating the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development into their national development strategies, countries must take into account their specific conditions and stage of development. International development partnerships must be enhanced in order to promote international development cooperation with the United Nations at its core, North-South cooperation as the main channel, and South-South cooperation as a supplementary feature.

58. Inclusive social development called for a people-centred approach. Greater fiscal investment was required to protect the legitimate rights and interests of vulnerable groups enabling all to share in the fruits of development.

59. The reform and opening up of China forty years earlier which had charted a path of socialism with Chinese characteristics, had led to historic achievements: 700 million people had been lifted out of extreme poverty and, by 2020, the income of poor people in rural areas was expected to be above the poverty line. Primary health care had been instituted along with a pension system that benefited 900 million people. Thus, Chinese people had gained a stronger sense of achievement, happiness and security.

60. China was the largest developing country in the world and had been actively assisting other developing countries. The Belt and Road Initiative was a public good that China offered to the world. To date, over 130 countries and international organizations had signed

cooperation agreements under that initiative. China was forging close partnership with African countries to promote common development and mutual prosperity. China stood ready to work with all countries to promote development cooperation and benefits for all and jointly build a community with a shared future for all humanity.

61. **Ms. O'Boyle** (Ireland), speaking as a youth delegate, said that the seventieth anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, together with the Nelson Mandela Peace Summit and the twentieth anniversary of the Good Friday Agreement in Ireland, gave the international community the chance to pause and reflect on how it could ensure that the human rights of all would be met in the future. Young people were the experts on their own needs and realities. Governments should, therefore, invest in initiatives to support them in exercising their agency, leadership and voice. Involving young people was not a photo opportunity. It required a commitment to engaging them at all levels of policy development, decision-making and implementation. All generations must join forces with the millions of young people across the globe who were striving to mitigate climate change. Patriarchal practices and norms continued to jeopardize the safety of girls and women and to hinder their access to quality health care and education, decent work and equal pay.

62. Her country's role as Chair of the Commission on the Status of Women was a source of pride. Gender equality was not a gift to be granted but a fundamental right. Achieving full gender equality by 2030 would require comprehensive legislative and societal changes that recognized the specific needs of girls and young women. If it was truly committed to leaving no one behind, the international community must engage with young people and work together as the generations for change that would achieve the Sustainable Development Goals.

63. **Mr. Moore** (Ireland), speaking as a youth delegate, said that the right to an adequate standard of living, health, housing and social security, enshrined in Article 25.1 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, had yet to be fully realized for many of the world's people. Unacceptable numbers of young people were not in education, employment or training. Governments must improve their efforts in planning, supporting and delivering targeted education and labour activation programmes. Education should not be dictated by the circumstances of one's birth but should reflect a young person's boundless potential and cater to his or her unique needs.

64. Some children and young people in developed countries had to endure poverty, inadequate

accommodation or homelessness. The life chances of those young people were being lost. Governments must provide the necessary infrastructure and services to lift young people out of poverty and empower them to become agents of change in their own lives and in their families and communities. Rural communities were losing generations of young people who had no choice but to leave for education, employment and social services. Regional and rural development policies should seek to build more inclusive, resilient and sustainable communities for all.

65. Governments must use the fruits of their prosperity for the betterment of humanity and the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals. In the current globalized world, human beings should live in each other's shelter, not in each other's shadow. He called on Member States and civil society to take radical steps to deliver on the objectives of the United Nations Youth Strategy, Youth 2030, enabling young people to enjoy their human rights, achieve their full potential and act as positive agents for change.

66. **Mr. Bakhtiar** (Afghanistan), speaking as a youth delegate, said that the agenda item under discussion was extremely relevant to his country not only as a social development priority for the Government but also for the young generation. Notwithstanding the devastation and losses caused by four decades of conflict and terrorism, his generation was committed to playing a constructive role in building a democratic society in a country that stood up for human dignity and the rights of its most marginalized groups. More than 1 million people in Afghanistan, including youth, had disabilities. Their need for education, employment and health-care services must be addressed without delay. For his part, born and raised in a remote rural village far from any centre of education, he wished to continue to live and work in his country. The Afghan people were fighting persistently to free the country from the shackles of war. They had shared pain, visions and ambitions. They dreamed of building a prosperous country and were working to be the creators of that bright future. Having served in the past in sectors ranging from the media and civil society to the private sector, young people had recently taken up leadership positions in the Government.

67. In 2002, women and girls were almost completely barred from entering educational institutions. But, currently, 9.2 million children, of whom 39 per cent were girls, were enrolled in schools. The investment in education had led to profound social development. An emboldened generation of activists, teachers, journalists, lawyers, political leaders and artists was seeking to improve the country. That development

process must be sustained. More than 70 per cent of Afghans were under the age of 30. Young people were in the majority and their voices needed to be amplified. If neglected, they might be driven towards extremism and radicalization. Youth participation in social and political processes was therefore a precondition for social development and sustainable peace. Thousands of candidates, including youth and women, were running for the forthcoming parliamentary elections. Among them was a 30-year-old Sikh, whose father, previously a candidate, had been killed by a suicide bomb in July 2018. Nevertheless, his candidacy was a clear manifestation of the emergence of a tolerant Afghanistan, committed to democracy, diversity and equality. The inclusion of youth in decision-making at all levels was not a choice but a must for securing a future of prosperity.

68. **Ms. Spizzuoco** (Italy), speaking as a youth delegate, said that greater inclusiveness of young people must start immediately. Young people should tackle not just youth-related issues but any obstacles to the construction of a more sustainable and equal world. While Italy had an ageing population, it was committed to the inclusion and empowerment of youth under the Youth Delegate Programme. Governments recognized the value of young people and were eager to promote their involvement in national and international institutions. The Programme should be promoted in all countries, given that it was a unique opportunity to participate directly in the United Nations decision-making process. Youth delegates epitomized inclusion, serving as a direct link between a nation's youth and other sectors of the population and as a bridge between young men and women from different cultural and social backgrounds. The first concern of her youth delegation was to determine ways of helping Italian and international youth to combat discrimination based on ethnicity, gender and religious belief, even among young people. In that connection, the first source of inspiration should be the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, which was a driver of social development and designed to leave no one behind.

69. **Mr. Fochi** (Italy), speaking as a youth delegate, said that the Sustainable Development Goals were indeed the core pillars of the Italian Development Cooperation Agency. A key part of his country's commitment to social development was the protection and promotion of the human rights and fundamental freedoms of persons with disabilities, including mental and intellectual ones. Inclusion meant fighting all forms of discrimination and must start with education. In countries where schools and universities promoted cooperation, integration and teamwork, cultural and

social differences were likely to be recognized as a source of enrichment and a factor in development. It was in that spirit that Italy had submitted its candidacy to the Human Rights Council for the term 2019–2021.

70. Italy had been supporting the Office of the Secretary-General's Envoy on Youth and had recently allocated \$500,000 for the development of a new project for promoting sustainable peace through national youth policies in the framework of the 2030 Agenda. Encouraging youth entrepreneurship would greatly foster such a link, helping young people to guarantee a more stable and sustainable future for the benefit of the society as a whole.

71. **Ms. Lim** (Singapore) said that with the rapid ageing of the population in Singapore, concerted national efforts were required to meet the needs of older persons. At the global level, fulfilment of the 2030 Agenda would depend on international action to address similar trends. Her country's Action Plan for Successful Ageing, launched in 2016, sought to maximize the opportunities that arose from longevity and to channel the experience and skills of its older adults towards economic and social development. The Plan covered all aspects of the needs of older persons. Support, including respite services, was provided to family caregivers to boost their own emotional health and well-being and help them to provide better care for the older persons under their charge.

72. As the number of older persons living alone increased, Singapore was facilitating ageing within communities as a preferred option over institutionalized care. The Community Networks for Seniors coordinated the efforts of volunteers, care service organizations, government agencies and other stakeholders to make sure that the physical and socio-emotional needs of seniors were addressed holistically. Other options such as community nursing and active ageing hubs in residential neighbourhoods were used to empower older persons to remain active contributors within their communities. The Vulnerable Adults Act allowed the State to intervene as a last resort in cases where an adult was suffering or at risk of abuse or self-neglect. Older persons had dedicated some of their best years to building up their societies and countries and deserved assistance as they aged to enable them to remain engaged in society or to age with dignity in their communities.

73. **Mr. Sahraoui** (Algeria) said that the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals was still remote. His country therefore called for a true global partnership for development to achieve well-being, solidarity and genuine sharing of responsibility. National development

plans implemented since 2000 had enabled his country to reach a high level of human development. A two-pillar education strategy provided for full and free access to primary and higher education and for combating illiteracy. The net enrolment rate for children aged six was 98.5 per cent and the illiteracy rate currently stood at 10.16 per cent, down from 22.3 per cent in 2008.

74. In the area of employment, several mechanisms established to facilitate access to loans and strengthen investment in agriculture, industry and tourism had helped to stabilize the unemployment rate at around 10 per cent. Algeria was committed to providing health coverage for all its citizens, in particular vulnerable populations, and had set aside 18 per cent of its public spending for that budget item. Guaranteeing the rights of person with disabilities to education, work and access to health care was another concern, and his Government had submitted a report to the Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities earlier in 2018. With respect to the protection and preservation of the dignity of older persons, his country had adopted a set of policies and actions to improve the status of older persons and integrate them economically and socially.

75. **Ms. Altemimi** (Qatar) said that the 2030 Qatar National Vision aimed to build an effective system for social protection that would promote the civil rights of all citizens, guarantee their effective participation in the development of society and provide dignity and health to all. Under the 2018–2022 national development strategy, social protection was again one of the main priorities. Systems and programmes had been put in place to guarantee a decent life for all citizens without discrimination. The role of the State went beyond cash assistance to the most vulnerable categories; the Qatar Foundation for Social Work provided social protection services in conjunction with seven civil society institutions.

76. In the preceding year and a half, Qatar had worked to overcome obstacles designed to prevent it from moving forward with its ambitious development plans. Nevertheless, its institutions had succeeded in providing services to its citizens and other residents adversely affected by the inhumane unilateral measures taken against it, providing family, social and rehabilitation services, reflecting its commitment to human rights and international humanitarian law.

77. Promoting and protecting the rights of persons with disabilities was a top priority for the Government of Qatar. In May 2018, it had hosted the Third International Doha Conference entitled “Blind women are partners in building society and development.” Youth, as leaders and the hope for the future, had also

been the focus of State policies. In addition to receiving social services and health, they were encouraged to practise sports and offered job opportunities.

78. Challenges that impacted the structure of the family were being addressed. The National Committee of Human Rights had recorded 646 cases of inhumane, unilateral measures, most of which involved the separation of family members. The State of Qatar would continue its efforts to enhance social development through partnership agreements with the United Nations and international institutions, to pursue international cooperation and implement the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

79. **Monsignor Grysa** (Observer for the Holy See) said that global poverty and inequality were a provocation that must be tackled with a firmer sense of collective responsibility and solidarity. A more holistic response was needed aimed at the integral development of the human person as well as the common good of all persons regardless of their geographical location or cultural identity.

80. The family was the bedrock of society, bringing up its children and providing the surest foundation for social stability and security. Governments must therefore increase their efforts to guarantee the right of the family to support and care. Social benefits must be accessible especially to low-income households. Without such benefits, many parents could not survive in the global economy, let alone give their children the time and care they needed to develop into mature and healthy adults. Families struggling to cope with older persons or persons with disabilities also needed support to enable those members to enjoy healthy, happy and fulfilling lives. When the family was vulnerable, all of society became vulnerable.

81. Investment in every young person was an investment in the society as a whole. Governments must invest in early childhood as well as higher education. Young people needed not just jobs but also opportunities to take on leadership roles and responsibilities if they were to become leaders in their own lives and in society. The synod of bishops dedicated to young people, which had just opened in the Vatican, was an expression of the pastoral care provided by the Catholic Church for youth.

82. Older persons and persons with disabilities were particularly prone to feelings of alienation and exclusion. Living together in a globalized world required a commitment to build bridges, maintain open dialogue and continue to encounter one another.

83. **Mr. Manolov** (Bulgaria), speaking as a youth delegate, said that young people had a crucial role to

play in attaining sustainable development and in shaping lasting peace and security through meaningful participation in development policies. The main priorities identified by 700 young Bulgarians who had participated in a recent nationwide survey were quality education and decent jobs. The skills gap was viewed as a major barrier to their transition from education to employment. Entrepreneurship could be a powerful tool for addressing those challenges and tackling the high levels of youth unemployment.

84. **Mr. Gochev** (Bulgaria), speaking as a youth delegate, said that entrepreneurship could equip young people with valuable skills such as critical thinking, decision-making, leadership, teamwork and problem-solving. It could be used to turn social challenges into solutions powered by innovation, to launch new careers that departed from the typical economic model and to foster positive community development. The international community and all interested parties could actively support the development of entrepreneurial competences in formal education systems and empower young people to be creators of quality jobs.

85. Bulgarian youth also highlighted other topics such as global environmental issues, improvement of health care and illegal substance abuse. Young people wished to engage in all policy areas that concerned them; they could do so with the support of Governments and financial and educational institutions.

86. **Mr. Washington** (Australia), speaking as a youth delegate, said that he wished to reflect on a few key ideas that had emerged during his nationwide listening tour across Australia. He had asked young Australians from diverse backgrounds for their views on what the country would look like if they had had a greater say. Young people must be viewed as participating members of society and it was a misconception to consider that they were waiting in the wings, yet to experience the real world. However, the issues young people had raised with him were relevant to all ages and among the many issues that the 2030 Agenda on Sustainable Development sought to address. He had spoken to culturally diverse young people, including Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders, members of the oldest continuing culture in the world and subject to enduring racial prejudice; young people who had experienced discrimination based on sexual orientation or gender identity; persons living with disabilities, and those who wanted safe and affordable housing, secure employment, a fair and equitable justice system, a healthy environment; an education system that encouraged young people to thrive; and better support for those suffering from substance abuse. The young

people he met advocated for a kinder society, free from bullying and harassment.

87. Young people were clearly concerned about the well-being of their generation. Young Australians in educational institutions, community groups and juvenile detention centres considered mental health to be at a crisis point. They saw the interconnections between mental health and other community issues. The education system should emphasize the importance of mental health and support services should bear in mind the diversity of young people. Young people needed to feel valued. Their well-being impacted on the rest of the community and when they succeeded, everyone benefited.

88. As visionaries with nuanced solutions to offer, young people must be included in policymaking. Their potential must be embraced to help shape a better future for all. In short, if young people had a greater say in decision-making and setting the policy agenda, the world would be kinder, safer, healthier and more united.

89. **Mr. Mohamed** (Maldives) said that his country sought to ensure that populations in all 188 inhabited islands had access to social protection and services at affordable rates. It spent more than 9 per cent of GDP on the education sector, providing free primary and secondary schooling to all. The Maldives had achieved close to universal literacy rates, universal immunization and low infant-mortality and maternal-mortality rates. Diseases such as polio, measles, malaria and lymphatic filariasis had been eliminated, although various non-communicable diseases were emerging.

90. The Government had been providing free universal medical care for seven years. Mechanisms had been established to provide persons with disabilities with equal employment opportunities; a disability allowance had also been introduced. Older persons were receiving financial support through well-targeted policies. The Government remained committed to empowering young people to be active citizens and had adopted policies to support employment for women. The Employment Act of 2008 and the Gender Equality Act of 2016 provided for non-discrimination in employment and encouraged the economic empowerment of women.

91. The small size of the population and its dispersal over hundreds of small islands in a vast area of sea made the delivery of social protection services extremely expensive in the Maldives. Facilitating easier access to financing for small island developing States to enable them to implement social and economic development projects would help to reduce the international inequality identified by the Secretary-General.

92. **Ms. Choi** (Republic of Korea), speaking as a youth delegate, said that many young persons and marginalized people were unaware of the rights and freedoms they were entitled to under the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. They must be given full access to the relevant information to ensure that, in the spirit of the 2030 Agenda, they would not be left behind. The inclusion of young people through empowerment, education and participation in decision-making processes was crucial. She took pride in her country's commitment to building a more caring and inclusive society and in the existence of the Youth Participation Committee which enabled youth to propose policies and participate in decision-making in central government agencies and local authorities.

93. States and Governments should prioritize gender equality and gender-responsive policies, while non-governmental organizations should also play a role in addressing the gender gap in employment, work-life balance and the eradication of violence. A robust civil society was essential for sustainable development and social inclusion. In the Republic of Korea, civil society activism had played a central role in promoting human rights and democracy over the decades and had been instrumental in attaining the free, fair and egalitarian life that her country currently enjoyed.

94. The reaffirmation in September 2018 by the leaders of the Republic of Korea and the Democratic People's Republic of Korea of their commitment to end 70 years of hostilities and move towards peace was a historic event that resonated with the 9 million young people in her country who yearned for peace. Given the history of the Korean peninsula, peace could not be taken for granted. Yet, peace, freedom and prosperity were fundamental to the achievement of a socially, economically and environmentally sustainable future.

95. **Mr. Al Habib** (Islamic Republic of Iran) said that the common development goals of ending poverty in all its forms everywhere and ensuring healthy lives for all at all ages were universal, interlinked and needed to be addressed in unison. While States must adopt an appropriate mix of policies, the international community and development partners had the responsibility to support their efforts or at the very least to avoid imposing harmful measures that hindered achievement of those goals. The imposition of illegal and inhumane unilateral sanctions was a clear instance of such destructive and harmful practices. Those sanctions openly and indiscriminately targeted the daily life of ordinary citizens and were designed to undermine achievements in social development.

96. Iran was committed to the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities. The new Comprehensive Law for the Protection and Promotion of the Rights of Persons with Disabilities had been enacted in Iran in April 2018. Besides creating job opportunities for people with disabilities, the Government was providing health insurance and a monthly allowance to people with disabilities, while also allocating them 3 percent of job openings in the public sector.

97. Steps had been taken to ensure a work-family balance to enable parents to spend more quality time with their children. Women employees were entitled to 90 days of paid maternity leave while men employed in the government or public sector were also entitled to paternity leave. Iran would be hosting the 2018 Biennial Regional Conference on Ageing, at which participants would assess trends in population ageing and dynamics and review the response of communities and Governments across Asia. It recognized that a substantial number of young people and adults, especially women, had poor literacy skills and was taking steps to achieve universal literacy through lifelong learning.

98. In 2017, the Ministry of Education, in conjunction with the local offices of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization and the United Nations Children's Fund, had organized an event aimed at achieving a breakthrough in reducing the number of out-of-school children in order to advance national education goals as stated in the Fundamental Reform Document of Education and the sixth Five-Year National Development Plan. Iran shared the view that education was vital for nurturing responsible and active stakeholders, capable of contributing effectively to peace and prosperity in their respective societies and beyond. However, unilateral coercive sanctions contributed to a significant erosion of human rights, particularly the right to education, in the countries on which such measures were imposed.

99. **Mr. Wattanayakorn** (Thailand), speaking as a youth delegate, said that his statement echoed the thoughts of young Thais who had shared their concerns and ideas on social development via an online platform. They emphasized three of the five "Ps" from the People's Agenda: people; planet and partnership. People, as the foundation of the society, should be empowered through quality education, which would enhance their lives and enable them to contribute to the society in a positive way. Education should not be just for the young. Governments should foster lifelong learning for the development of digital, health and legal literacy as well as skills development and training for

the labour market for people of all ages and without discrimination. With respect to the planet, environmental protection of natural resources on land, under water and in the air was crucial for future generations. Unbalanced development in the past had triggered a vicious cycle of degradation, climate change, hunger and poverty, and inequality and conflicts.

100. **Ms. Tawinboom** (Thailand), speaking as a youth delegate, said that a prime example of partnership was the successful rescue operation of the youth football team from Chiang Rai province in Thailand thanks to the incredible efforts of government and private sector experts as well as the media and individual volunteers from Thailand and around the world. That effort epitomized the spirit of humanity and dedication and was a source of inspiration to people all over the world.

101. Young people in Thailand hoped to build a culture of partnership and volunteerism at home and abroad. They believed that volunteerism could be a powerful and cross-cutting way of implementing the 2030 Agenda on Sustainable Development, enhancing interaction between Governments and people for concrete and scalable actions and facilitating networking and broad partnerships.

102. **Mr. Porvaznik** (Slovakia), speaking as a youth delegate, said that without intergenerational trust, it would be impossible to move forward. Since his arrival at the United Nations, he had been disappointed to note that disposable plastic bags, food containers and cutlery were still being used at the Headquarters building at a time when the United Nations was the most prominent advocate of the Sustainable Development Goals and when ample proof existed of the harm that disposable plastic was causing to the environment. He had begun to question whether those Goals were really taken seriously. Trust and idealism were essential. The very existence of the United Nations, which brought together leaders from all around the world, was surely proof of idealism, as was the goal of achieving equal opportunities for every human being. Experienced leaders needed young people just as enthusiastic, energetic young people needed the experience and guidance of their elders and moral role models they could follow and believe in. Mutual trust and intergenerational dialogue were vital for making the world a better place for everyone. It was also necessary for combating extremism, apathy and all the inequalities and challenges faced by society.

103. He urged people, as they moved through the corridors of the United Nations Headquarters on their way from one event to another, to pause and contemplate the beauty of the pieces of art exhibited in the building

and to reflect on their deeper meaning. Moreover, they should devote five minutes of their daily routine to visit the Meditation Room, where people could withdraw into themselves regardless of their faith or creed. The Room was also dedicated to all those who had died on United Nations missions, who had lived according to the ideals of the Organization and taken them seriously.

104. **Ms. Antonovičová** and **Mr. Plavec** (Czechia), speaking as youth delegates, said that Czech and Slovak youth had always been at the forefront of resistance and independence movements, advocating ideals of democracy and respect for human rights in 1939, 1968 and 1989. For those young people, self-determination, human rights and political participation were not just hollow terms but essential values for a stable, democratic society. The rigorous engagement of young people in public affairs and an inclusive high-quality education were prerequisites for a continually evolving, sustainable society. Young people in the Czech Republic were demanding a significant change in the educational system in favour of critical thinking and honest debate and the opportunity to learn relevant skills for their life and employment. They aspired to an inclusive educational system that did not unfairly discriminate.

105. The horizontal exchange of knowledge and of diverse experiences between young people from different social or other backgrounds was a precondition for an inclusive sustainable society where each individual could reach his or her potential. Young people should have the opportunity to take part in peer-to-peer mentoring, non-formal education or interactive youth-focused events. By openly discussing their projects and ideas with a peer who had experience in their field of interest, they could make sure that such ideas were not lost. Well-rounded education and intergenerational dialogue would reduce inequalities in social capital.

106. Young Czechs were worried about lack of interest in local and national affairs. The opportunity to express their opinions in school parliaments, municipal boards and youth groups and councils would enable young people to become active citizens in public forums. Such efforts were crucial for the establishment of just democratic institutions and for addressing the adverse effects of globalization on peripheral areas.

107. **Ms. Elmarmuri** (Libya) said that social development in her country still fell short of aspirations because of the difficult transition, lack of political security and stability, and resulting economic and financial difficulties. Nevertheless, within existing resources, the Government of the National Transitional Council had put in place economic programmes for

raising living standards and improving health and education services. Special attention was paid to persons with special needs and the vulnerable, mainly widows, children, the elderly and persons with disabilities. Libya had ratified the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities.

108. In coordination with the relevant United Nations agencies, it sought to lay the foundation of good governance based on security and the rule of law; develop a strategy for post-conflict involving the advancement of different sectors of the society; diversify the economy and promote human development without exclusion; and provide humanitarian assistance to those affected by the crisis.

109. The 2017–2020 strategy, which was being implemented in consultation with the United Nations Support Mission in Libya, comprised three priority areas: promoting accountable institutions; providing basic services and fostering social cohesion, conflict prevention and sustainable peace; and enhancing democratic governance, the rule of law and human-rights-based development for all. Income disparities between developed and developing countries negatively impacted economic development and efforts by the latter to end poverty. Hence those countries needed support in pursuing social development, mobilizing local resources and investing in infrastructure and service sectors.

110. National sovereignty must be respected along with human rights, including the right to development and good governance, in the context of the ethical, religious and cultural value system of the relevant country. Each country had the sovereign right to shoulder its responsibilities in its efforts to promote social and economic development.

111. **Mr. Kapambwe** (Zambia) said that poverty levels had remained high in Zambia owing to the steady decline in copper prices on the international market, the high birth rate and the heavy burden of HIV/AIDS, which continued to affect the economically productive segment of the population. His Government remained committed to improving the well-being of all Zambians, especially the most vulnerable members of the society, with a view to promoting human development and dignity for all. The Social Cash Transfer Scheme, Food Security Pack and Farmer Inputs Support Programme were among the specific social protection programmes targeting older persons, poor rural populations and other vulnerable groups.

112. The Government of Zambia remained committed to the promotion of workers' rights in the workplace, including the right to organize; to take part in collective

bargaining; and to receive equal pay for work of equal value. The protection of workers' rights was critical to securing decent work. Every effort was made to ensure that laws governing rights in the workplace were fully enforced.

113. In a bid to address gender inequality at the secondary school level, financial support was being provided to girls under the Girls' Education and Women's Empowerment and Livelihood project and through the home-grown school feeding programme.

114. **Mr. Gréant** (Belgium), speaking as a youth delegate, said that the worldwide web, facetimeing and high-speed trains seemed to be the height of connectedness. Yet many young people felt insecure, vulnerable and lonely. As one of the most important tools for empowering them, education could offer them safe spaces for exchanging and learning about each other's differences, promoting peace and opening their minds to the outside world. Quality education must help young people to find a place in society and prevent them becoming easy targets in conflict situations. Young people must be key actors in achieving change and sustainable peace. They were involved in armed conflicts as victims, instigators, in most cases against their will. In his country, although there was no armed conflict, young people witnessed other types of violence such as hate speech, intolerance, discrimination, psychological violence and extremism.

115. **Ms. Coghe** (Belgium), speaking as a youth delegate, said that in addition to receiving quality education, health care and other basic services, young people should be empowered through youth councils and mentor programmes and by alerting them to issues in their community. Regular consultations with youth should be held to better understand their needs and priorities. Moreover, they must stand up for their rights and assume their responsibilities. She and her colleague had the privilege of speaking before the Third Committee, but it was time for new decision-making practices in which children and young people had their fair share. Young people did not want to be represented; they wanted to be present. Lasting peace could only be envisaged when young people became equal partners in the prevention of conflict and the delivery of relief and recovery efforts. Resolutions should not be allowed to gather dust on the desks of decision makers. They should be handed out, passed on and disseminated.

*The meeting rose at 1 p.m.*