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Chair: Mr. Braun (Luxembourg)

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

Agenda item 5: Election of the officers of the Main Committees

1. **The Chair** said that the Group of African States had endorsed the candidacy of Ms. Farnvalo (Liberia) for Vice-Chair of the Third Committee at its seventy-fourth session.

2. *Ms. Farnvalo (Liberia) was elected Vice-Chair of the Committee for its seventy-fourth session by acclamation.*

Organization of work ([A/74/250](#), [A/C.3/74/1](#), [A/C.3/74/L.1](#) and [A/C.3/74/L.1/Add.1](#))

3. **The Chair** said that the organization of the work of the Committee was contained in document [A/C.3/74/L.1](#) and the note by the Secretariat concerning the allocation of agenda items was contained in document [A/C.3/74/1](#).

4. Recalling the guidelines concerning the conduct of the Committee's work in chapter II of the report of the General Committee ([A/74/250](#)), the Chair stressed the importance of punctuality and adherence to time limits for statements and rights of reply and to deadlines for submission of proposals and inscription on the list of speakers. He highlighted two additional guidelines in the report: first, on the consideration of further biennialization, triennialization, clustering and elimination of items on the agenda of the Assembly; and second, on the need to enhance synergies and coherence and reduce overlap in the agendas of the General Assembly, especially of its Second and Third Committees, the Economic and Social Council and its subsidiary bodies, and the work of the high-level political forum on sustainable development, as well as other related forums, in accordance with the relevant rules of procedure and in the light of the adoption of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. He also wished to draw the attention of the Committee to paragraphs 70 to 86 of the report of the General Committee on questions relating to the programme budget. Concerning the introduction of draft resolutions, he hoped that main sponsors would continue to make only one statement at the time of action, as that would significantly improve the efficiency of the Committee's work.

5. He took it that the Committee agreed to the guidelines.

6. *It was so decided.*

7. **Mr. Mahmassani** (Secretary of the Committee) read out a list of the special procedure mandate holders

and other experts scheduled to make presentations to the Committee at its current session.

8. **The Chair** said that he took it that, following past practice, the Committee wished to extend invitations to the special procedure mandate holders of the Human Rights Council and other experts to submit their reports to and interact with the Committee.

9. *It was so decided.*

10. **The Chair** said that that he took it that the Committee wished to approve the organization of work as contained in document [A/C.3/74/L.1](#), subject to amendment.

11. *It was so decided.*

12. **The Chair** invited the Committee to turn its attention to the status of documentation for the Committee, contained in document [A/C.3/74/L.1/Add.1](#).

13. **Mr. Mahmassani** (Secretary of the Committee), introducing a revision to document [A/C.3/74/L.1/Add.1](#), said that the report on countering the use of information and communications technologies for criminal purposes ([A/74/130](#)) should be added under agenda item 107.

14. **The Chair** said that he took it that the Committee wished to take note of document [A/C.3/74/L.1/Add.1](#), as orally revised.

15. *It was so decided.*

Agenda item 136: Programme planning

16. **The Chair** said that pursuant to General Assembly resolution [73/269](#), in which the General Assembly re-emphasized the role of the plenary and the Main Committees in reviewing and taking action on the appropriate recommendations of the Committee for Programme and Coordination relevant to their work, in accordance with regulation 4.10 of the Regulations and Rules Governing Programme Planning, the Programme Aspects of the Budget, the Monitoring of Implementation and the Methods of Evaluation, the Assembly had decided to allocate that item to all the Main Committees and to its plenary to enhance discussion of evaluation, planning, budgeting and monitoring reports. No action was expected under agenda item 136.

Agenda item 25: Social development (A/74/184)

- (a) **Implementation of the outcome of the World Summit for Social Development and of the twenty-fourth special session of the General Assembly (A/74/135 and A/74/205)**
- (b) **Social development, including questions relating to the world social situation and to youth, ageing, persons with disabilities and the family (A/74/61-E/2019/4, A/74/133, A/74/170, A/74/175 and A/74/206)**

17. **Mr. Liu Zhenmin** (Under-Secretary-General for Economic and Social Affairs) said that, at the Sustainable Development Goals Summit, world leaders had committed themselves to a decade of action and delivery for sustainable development for all from 2020 to 2030. The Summit had followed the high-level political forum on sustainable development, at which 47 countries had presented their voluntary national reviews.

18. Progress towards the implementation of the 2030 Agenda continued to be seen. Global extreme poverty was declining. However, the global poverty rate was projected to remain at 6 per cent unless accelerated efforts were made. Significant improvements had been made in the world of work since the recession in 2008. According to the International Labour Organization, the global unemployment rate had stood at 5 per cent in 2018, the lowest since 2008. Advances had been made in promoting gender equality, reducing child and maternal mortality, and providing basic infrastructure and services.

19. Nevertheless, progress was too slow and uneven. The 2030 Agenda was being implemented amid major trends that were presenting risks and challenges to the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals. In sub-Saharan Africa, the number of extremely poor people continued to rise. According to the World Economic Situation and Prospects 2019 report, the global growth outlook was bleak owing to rising trade tensions, conflicts and the adverse social and employment impact of rapid technological change. The unabated effects of climate change were shattering communities, posing enormous risks to economic growth, food security, health, livelihoods, water supply and social stability. Hunger was also on the rise.

20. Inequalities in income, wealth and opportunities were increasing in many countries, presenting challenges to global stability and prosperity, social cohesion and trust in public institutions. Nearly 90 per cent of workers in low-income countries and close to 84 per cent of those in lower-middle-income countries were

trapped in informal work, while low-quality non-standard forms of work were rapidly expanding in advanced economies. Women, young people, persons with disabilities and older persons faced elevated risks of unemployment and underemployment, and they were more likely to be engaged in hazardous work and lack social protection. Gender inequality persisted, robbing women and girls of education, income and skills development opportunities.

21. In 2018, for the first time in history, persons over 65 years of age had outnumbered children under 5 years of age. By the middle of the century, the number of persons over 65 years of age globally would also surpass the number of adolescents and young people from 15 to 24 years of age. Policies were therefore needed to leverage ageing as an opportunity and to recognize older persons as active agents in development efforts.

22. He hoped that Member States would take advantage of the twenty-fifth anniversary of the World Summit for Social Development in 2020 to continue to promote social development for the benefit of implementing the 2030 Agenda. Fulfilling the promise to leave no one behind would require strengthening of multilateralism and the commitment to build a safer, more just world for future generations.

23. **Ms. Bas** (Director of the Division for Inclusive Social Development, Department of Economic and Social Affairs) introduced six reports of the Secretary-General and one note by the Secretariat under agenda item 25 (a) and (b). Education and health care were common themes across the reports that required special attention.

24. The report of the Secretary-General on the implementation of the outcome of the World Summit for Social Development and of the twenty-fourth special session of the General Assembly (A/74/205) underscored the need to strengthen international cooperation for social development, with particular attention to universal and equitable access to education and health care. Existing gaps and challenges were identified, and strategies were outlined to align international cooperation to support national policies and strategies to accelerate progress. The report concluded with recommendations to accelerate progress towards universal health coverage, to scale up the provision of social protection, including social protection floors, to address the specific challenges facing disadvantaged groups and to mobilize additional resources to invest in water and sanitation infrastructure.

25. The note by the Secretariat on the world social situation 2019: shaping the future of inequality

(A/74/135) examined the impact of four megatrends – technological innovation, climate change, urbanization and international migration – on inequality. The future effects of those trends on the reduction of inequalities and on the achievement of all other Sustainable Development Goals were not predetermined. Reducing inequality required policies and regulations that leveraged the potential of new technologies to reduce poverty and create jobs and that focused on building resilience to climate change.

26. The report of the Secretary-General on promoting social integration through social inclusion (A/74/133) provided an overview of recent national and international social integration strategies. The report offered a gender perspective on social integration and social inclusion efforts, underlining the need for increased focus on equal access to employment for women, equal pay for equal work and better policies to promote work-family balance. Strong legal and institutional frameworks were also needed to ensure the sustainability of social protection provision. Investing in inclusive and lifelong learning, especially for children with disabilities, ethnic minorities and immigrants, and ensuring access to education for groups in vulnerable situations were key to achieving social inclusion.

27. Given the renewed attention to Goal 3 of the Sustainable Development Goals, the report of the Secretary-General on cooperatives in social development (A/74/206) gave special attention to the role of cooperatives in providing and expanding access to health care. The report also examined the contribution of cooperatives to promoting financial inclusion and included an analysis of emerging issues, namely, the rise of the platform economy, climate change and the refugee crisis. Cooperatives contributed to all aspects of inclusive social development and to the acceleration of the implementation of the 2030 Agenda.

28. The report of the Secretary-General on policies and programmes involving youth (A/74/175) provided an overview of the progress achieved in the implementation of General Assembly resolution 72/146, with a focus on the issues of employment and entrepreneurship, health and well-being, and inequalities and marginalization. It was recommended that evidence-informed policies and programmes for young people should be strengthened by supporting the generation, collection and use of data disaggregated by age, gender and disability.

29. The report of the Secretary-General on the implementation of the objectives of the International Year of the Family and its follow-up processes

(A/74/61-E/2019/4) provided an analysis of recent family trends with a focus on poverty and social protection, work-family balance, unpaid work and the role of families in inclusive societies. The report demonstrated that many Sustainable Development Goals could not be achieved through stand-alone approaches focusing on individuals without the recognition of families, communities and the societies in which they functioned.

30. The report of the Secretary-General on the follow-up to the International Year of Older Persons: Second World Assembly on Ageing (A/74/170) provided an analysis of ageing-related policies and priorities in the implementation of the 2030 Agenda, as reported in the voluntary national reviews presented over the period 2016–2018 at the high-level political forum on sustainable development. A key message of the report was the need for concerted leadership to operationalize the inclusion of older persons in disaster risk reduction and national and local emergency planning and response frameworks.

31. **Ms. Kornfeld-Matte** (Independent Expert on the Enjoyment of All Human Rights by Older Persons) said that she had witnessed the difficulties faced by older persons in emergency situations during her mission to Mozambique from 24 April to 2 May 2019. Given the challenges faced in the country, in particular by older persons and youth, she called on the international community to provide ongoing support.

32. Special attention should be paid to the elderly population during emergency situations, given that they were disproportionately affected and their needs were often overlooked. Ageing was a social construct that varied according to circumstances, conditions and cultures. In emergency situations, the various factors affecting ageing had a bearing on data collection and therefore on the support provided. A total of 335 natural disasters had been recorded in 2017 and had affected 100 million persons throughout the world, 3 per cent of whom were over 60 years of age.

33. Mental health in emergency situations was another important issue. It was essential to identify the biopsychosocial needs of older persons and to take into account their right to free and informed consent to treatment. There was a risk of mistreatment of older persons in emergency contexts, when there was additional pressure on medical services. In view of systemic violence in such contexts, it would be a mistake to assume that older persons were not victims of sexual violence or that they all received the support of their families. Indeed, there was a tendency for older persons not to report cases of abuse and violence in

emergency situations as a result of reporting barriers linked to mobility problems, isolation, fear of reprisals and communication issues.

34. Digital technologies could have a significant impact on the rights of older persons. For instance, biometric identification, which was increasingly used in emergency situations and in the administration of support for refugees, could contribute to strengthening efficiency. However, such ready-to-use solutions had not been for humanitarian workers and were not necessarily designed for a human rights-based approach.

35. During a mission to Uruguay in November 2018, she had observed that the country was in an advanced stage of demographic transition, and around 20 per cent of its population was over the age of 60 years. The Government had made significant progress in protecting the rights of older persons, and the country had been the first to ratify the Inter-American Convention on Protecting the Human Rights of Older Persons. However, it was necessary to allocate more financial resources to strengthen the protection of older persons and ensure the effective implementation of policies to support them.

36. Reiterating the importance of the International Day of Older Persons, which was commemorated on 1 October, she emphasized the importance of promoting autonomy through the adoption of regulations and investing in the field of robotics, assistive technology and artificial intelligence, which were essential for older people to enjoy their rights on an equal footing with people of other age groups.

37. **Ms. Simpson** (United States of America) said that, while her delegation agreed that pensions could boost the resilience of older persons, not all member States supported or implemented the concept of universal non-contributory pensions. Her delegation disagreed with the view that a new United Nations convention on older persons was necessary in order to advance the rights of older persons or assist them in humanitarian crisis situations, since existing human rights instruments promoted the human rights of all individuals, including older persons. Rather than embarking on multilateral negotiations on a new instrument, the international community should allocate resources to support short-term, results-driven actions that addressed the immediate needs of older persons, including protection from violence and abuse and enhancing economic security, health and nutrition. She would welcome additional information on whether efforts were under way within the United Nations system to improve emergency planning and response through the collection

of data on the needs of older persons during emergency situations.

38. **Mr. de Souza Monteiro** (Brazil) said that his Government had paid special attention to the rapid ageing of the population and its links to employability, lifelong learning requirements, technological advances and the economic vulnerability of older persons. In that context, his Government was undertaking a timely reform of the Brazilian pension system. The national secretariat for the promotion and defence of the rights of older persons within the Ministry of Women, Family and Human Rights was responsible for measures to address the needs of older persons and was working to close the gap between existing policies and their implementation. His delegation would appreciate more information on the importance of disaggregated data for addressing the needs of older persons, as well as examples of how States could improve their data collection.

39. **Ms. Košir** (Slovenia) said that her country was committed to raising awareness of the challenges faced by older persons and participating in discussions on a possible normative framework that would adequately protect their human rights. In that context, her delegation welcomed the recent extension by the Human Rights Council of the mandate of the Independent Expert.

40. The recent report of the Independent Expert (A/HRC/42/43) had shed a light on the fact that older persons lacked adequate protection and experienced particular vulnerability in crisis situations. Given the need to apply the principle of non-discrimination in humanitarian assistance, her delegation supported the call of the Independent Expert to ensure that humanitarian actors were required to report on how humanitarian programmes were responding to the rights and needs of older persons. Her delegation wondered whether the Independent Expert could share good practices for addressing the situation of older persons in emergency situations and explain how a comprehensive normative framework might better protect the rights and dignity of older persons in such situations.

41. **Mr. Verdier** (Argentina) said that the increase in humanitarian crisis situations in recent years had had a strong impact on populations and devastating consequences for the most vulnerable groups. His delegation welcomed the analysis by the Independent Expert of the implications of the lack of a specific international legal instrument to promote and protect the rights and dignity of older persons, especially in emergency situations. In that regard, his delegation would welcome further details of effective measures to

ensure that older persons who were refugees or internally displaced persons had access to national systems in order to foster their inclusion and resilience. He asked which specific issues should be included in a clear normative framework in order to increase the visibility of older persons in emergency situations, remove barriers that prevented them from accessing assistance and ensure the protection and full enjoyment of their rights.

42. **Ms. Castan** (United Kingdom) said that ageing of the global population had substantive policy implications and was one of the greatest social and economic challenges of the century. Her Government recognized the serious situations that older persons faced and the importance of holding discussions to assist in finding solutions. Her delegation believed that States should promote equality for older persons and their full participation in all aspects of society. States should have due regard for the differential impact of age-based policies on older persons. They should adopt specific measures based on strong data and regular needs assessments to support the requirements of older persons in emergency situations. In that regard, it would be useful to learn how data could be better used to support older persons in emergency situations.

43. **Ms. Hermann** (Observer for the European Union) said that the situation of older persons and the protection of their human rights was a priority for the European Union and its member States, as reflected in the European Union Action Plan on Human Rights and Democracy. The everyday challenges that older persons already faced were exacerbated in emergency situations. According to the report of the Independent Expert, the lack of disaggregated data and failure to assess needs correctly were among the systemic factors that increased the vulnerability of older persons in emergency contexts. In that context, her delegation would appreciate more information on how such challenges could be overcome, as well as examples of best practices. She asked how responses to emergency situations could better recognize the positive role played by older persons in terms of disaster risk reduction, post-disaster management, climate change mitigation and adaptation strategies.

44. **Ms. Moutchou** (Morocco) said that Member States agreed on the importance of protecting and promoting the rights of older persons. With regard to the divergent views on the adoption of an international legal instrument to promote the rights of older persons, her delegation believed that there was a way to move forward and find a middle ground. She asked how data should best be gathered during conflict situations.

45. **Ms. Kornfeld-Matte** (Independent Expert on the Enjoyment of All Human Rights by Older Persons) said that the adoption of international instruments had proven to be a powerful means for supporting specific groups of people, such as persons with disabilities, women and children. Member States would have to agree on the best solution to meet the needs of older persons, who constituted one of the most vulnerable sectors of the population but lacked an instrument to support them.

46. In response to the questions on data compilation, she said the concept of age was particularly relevant as it differed depending on the context. However, such intrinsic differences were ignored in data compilation, which meant that a significant proportion of the population was being excluded. In emergency situations, social ties provided emotional and practical support to help protect the health and well-being of older persons. However, the manner in which information was collected, social ties and issues related to mobility, health and the caregiving roles of older persons had a bearing on their access to humanitarian support. The lack of disaggregated data on older persons also added to the complexity of the humanitarian evaluation and planning process. Specific tools were therefore needed to identify the risk factors of the affected communities and to ensure that communication channels were maintained and tailored to their needs. As health-related databases could be lost during emergency situations, it was important to ensure that backup copies were available. In response to the question about recognition of the positive role of older persons in relation to emergency situations, she said that older persons had historical and geographical knowledge that others might lack.

47. The results achieved during her mandate, which would soon come to an end, had been largely positive, despite the fact that more efforts were needed to protect older persons, including through the adoption of an instrument specifically addressing their rights. The Human Rights Council had reaffirmed conceptual changes that she had implemented towards a human rights-based approach that considered older persons not only as beneficiaries but also as subjects with specific human rights that must be guaranteed by Member States. She welcomed the international conferences that had been held during her mandate and expressed appreciation to Member States for their exemplary initiatives and support, as well as to the Group of Friends of Older Persons. She was also grateful to the civil society organizations that had a central role in ensuring the rights and dignity of older persons.

48. **Ms. Barghouti** (Observer for the State of Palestine), speaking on behalf of the Group of 77 and China, said that discussions should focus on action-oriented strategies and inventive approaches to address inequality and fully implement the goals of the World Summit for Social Development and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. As stated in the report of the Secretary-General, social progress since the World Summit for Social Development had been slow and uneven and income inequality had increased, undermining efforts to eradicate poverty.

49. The Group welcomed the convening of the United Nations summit on the Sustainable Development Goals in the previous week, during which Governments had called for a decade of ambitious measures to deliver the Goals by 2030 and had pledged to take action to advance the agenda in important areas of social development. During the same week, the international community had issued a political declaration on universal health coverage. The Group hoped that its adoption would accelerate progress towards ensuring access to high-quality essential health-care services and safe, effective, quality and affordable essential medicines and vaccines for all.

50. The year 1994 had been proclaimed the International Year of the Family. The Group took note with appreciation that the Secretary-General in his report on the implementation of the objectives of the International Year of the Family and its follow-up processes had provided some examples of the efforts made by Member States to strengthen existing institutional frameworks responsible for implementing family policies. In that regard, the Group invited Member States to further invest in family-centred policies and programmes as important tools for fighting poverty, social exclusion and inequality.

51. The Group recognized the valuable contribution of older persons to the development of societies and expressed deep concern regarding the many challenges that they continued to face. The international community must work to eliminate structural and institutional prejudices, ageism and stereotypes to protect the human rights, dignity and well-being of older persons. In addition, disability should be a priority issue in international cooperation for inclusive development. The Group welcomed the progress achieved in recent years by Governments and other stakeholders, including civil society organizations and the private sector, in mainstreaming disability in the implementation of their national development efforts.

52. The Group reaffirmed the critical role of the Commission for Social Development in advancing

action for social progress and the eradication of poverty through the promotion of the Programme of Action of the World Summit for Social Development. It commended the commitment of the Commission to placing the fight against inequality and exclusion at the forefront of its work and appreciated its contribution towards implementation of the 2030 Agenda.

53. International development cooperation, especially North-South cooperation, remained a fundamental catalyst to sustainable development. The international community and development partners played a pivotal role in collaborating with and supporting developing countries in implementing their social development agenda. South-South cooperation, however, should be seen as a complement, rather than a substitute. It was a collective endeavour of developing countries and its agenda should be driven by the countries of the South.

54. **Mr. Kapambwe** (Zambia), speaking on behalf of the Group of African States, said that poverty and extreme poverty remained the greatest global challenge. The Group emphasized the need to combat inequalities within and among countries, build just and inclusive societies, ensure the protection of the planet and its natural resources and create conditions for sustainable, inclusive and sustained economic growth, taking into account different levels of national development and capacities. In that regard, the Group called for the full and effective implementation of the Addis Ababa Action Agenda of the Third International Conference on Financing for Development, by which States had made a commitment to strengthen policies and regulatory frameworks, incentivize changes in consumption, production and investment patterns and fulfil official development assistance commitments. The Group welcomed the increased contribution of South-South cooperation to sustainable development.

55. In the previous decade, Africa had made significant progress in certain areas of social and economic development. Some African countries provided social protection for the elderly, persons with disabilities and children orphaned by HIV/AIDS. Many countries provided school feeding programmes and free primary education. Despite such progress, the income inequality gap between individuals and among African countries was widening, and African countries remained at the bottom of lists measuring social development and economic activity. The least developed countries, many of which were in sub-Saharan Africa, faced challenges to achieving social development objectives, and prospects for job growth remained weak.

56. African leaders were convinced that industrialization was one of the most viable paths to

growth and development that would generate employment, and it was a core prerequisite for the structural transformation of the African economy. In the Common African Position on the post-2015 Development Agenda, the African Union had pledged to develop the private sector and strengthen the productive capacity of the informal sector. However, Africa continued to face challenges in industrialization, as it relied predominately on natural resources and agriculture. The lack of infrastructure, the impact of climate change on agriculture, and the lack of market access and technology transfer remained critical for the growth of the sector.

57. The continent was prone to natural disasters and was vulnerable to the effects of climate change. Cyclone Idai, for instance, had resulted in property loss, flooding, food shortages and a lack of potable water. A large majority of the population relied heavily on climate-sensitive sectors, such as agriculture, fisheries and tourism, for their livelihoods, which meant that they received no income in the event of natural disasters.

58. Poverty and inequality were closely intertwined. Poverty reduction strategies should include the provision of tertiary education to all children. Despite an increase in school enrolment rates in Africa, the poor learning outcomes remained of critical concern. There was also a lack of educational materials and appropriate infrastructure to meet the needs of persons with disabilities.

59. The international community should intensify its efforts for implementation of the Copenhagen Declaration on Social Development within the context of the 2030 Agenda. It should address the interlinkages between the social, economic and environmental dimensions of sustainable development and strengthen institutions and capacities to foster policy integration at all levels. The Group appealed to its partners to join it in addressing the climate change adaptation, mitigation and resilience needs of Africa and in implementing the Paris Agreement under the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change.

60. **Mr. Richardson** (Saint Lucia), speaking on behalf of the Caribbean Community (CARICOM), said that almost 25 years after the convening of the World Summit for Social Development, inequalities still persisted. However, the Community remained fully committed to improving the well-being of its people and enabling them to attain their highest potential.

61. The CARICOM region was highly susceptible to the effects of climate change and environmental degradation, and the ravages of natural disasters had continued to thwart its development. That reality was an

added challenge in States' efforts to deliver on their international commitments and had widened the inequality gap. Addressing inequality in all its dimensions was essential to eradicating poverty, advancing social progress and achieving sustainable development for all. While some progress had been achieved in the education and health sectors, more needed to be done. Better health was central to happiness and prosperity. In that regard, CARICOM welcomed the recent convening of a high-level meeting on universal health coverage and the adoption of its political declaration. It also welcomed the improved access to early childhood, secondary and adult education worldwide, as well as the rapid expansion in school enrolment.

62. Advancing human capital development had been a central pillar of the region's social development framework and the CARICOM strategic plan for the period 2015–2019. CARICOM continued to increase access to quality education and lifelong learning so that people could acquire the necessary skills and competencies and be prepared for current societal and workplace demands. To that end, it worked assiduously to implement its human resource development strategy for 2030.

63. Recognizing the need to take on board the contributions of youth to social development, CARICOM acknowledged the active participation of young people in climate change discussions and applauded their engagement. It also welcomed the opportunities for their participation in discussions within the United Nations, such as at the recent Youth Climate Summit.

64. Youth unemployment continued to be a challenge within the region, contributing to a widening poverty gap and increasing levels of disenchantment, crime and insecurity. Innovation, change and the will to succeed were essential to reducing poverty and inequality. CARICOM would therefore continue its efforts to ensure decent work and entrepreneurship opportunities for its youth, for example by unlocking the potential of the green economy. CARICOM was committed to ensuring that youth issues were addressed in the implementation of the 2030 Agenda and related frameworks, including the Addis Ababa Action Agenda and the SIDS Accelerated Modalities of Action (SAMOA) Pathway.

65. In order to ensure that no one was left behind, CARICOM remained committed to the provision of effective social protection systems and policies that catered to the specific needs of all, including children, youth, women, persons with disabilities, older persons

and people in vulnerable situations. The fight to reduce inequality and poverty required an integrated, cross-cutting and collaborative approach. CARICOM would continue to engage constructively with local, regional and international development partners in the quest for social development and the eradication of poverty in all its forms.

66. **Mr. Aidid** (Malaysia), speaking on behalf of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN), said that multiple global crises were having an unprecedented impact on social development. Greater emphasis must be placed on meeting basic needs and improving the livelihoods of the poorest and most vulnerable.

67. The ASEAN social development agenda was central to achieving peace and prosperity and it had long been embedded in numerous ASEAN documents. The ASEAN Sociocultural Community 2025 had identified measures to reduce the barriers faced by vulnerable groups, promote and protect their rights, and ensure inclusivity. Cooperation on social welfare and development was guided by international instruments such as the Convention on the Rights of the Child and the Madrid International Plan of Action on Ageing.

68. Investment in well-being was essential for inclusive progress and peace. In September 2019, ASEAN had established a centre for active ageing and innovation and a training centre for social work and social welfare, which was a proactive step towards recognizing the potential contributions of the ageing population to socioeconomic development. Gender equality and youth empowerment were priorities because they would unlock human potential on a transformational scale. In addition, ASEAN would continue to address the social challenges faced by children and persons with disabilities.

69. ASEAN would participate proactively in the deliberations on social development in the Third Committee. Its ultimate aim was to establish communities within the region to support the needs of vulnerable groups and enable people to thrive and reach their full potential. ASEAN looked forward to exploring all means of collaboration with the United Nations and other partners.

70. **Mr. Jaime Calderón** (El Salvador), speaking on behalf of the Central American Integration System, said that social integration was one of the five pillars of the integration system. Its member States were committed to promoting inclusive economic growth, social progress and sustainable development through the design and implementation of national plans, policies and programmes. The members recognized the

importance of supporting countries in their efforts to address inequality and achieve social inclusion through policymaking and empowering people in vulnerable situations. The integration system had been conceived as a multidimensional process, and the five pillars covered a wide range of aspects including gender, migration, security and education. Nationally appropriate social protection systems and universal access to social services could make a critical contribution to the realization of human rights for all, in particular for those trapped in poverty and for vulnerable groups.

71. States must promote the well-being of persons of all ages and address the feminization of poverty. The members of the integration system were committed to providing greater opportunities for young people and equipping them with skills and knowledge and facilitating their full participation in decision-making processes. The members were also actively promoting the full inclusion and integration of persons with disabilities. Population ageing presented both an opportunity and a challenge. Older persons were able to make many contributions to society, but policies must be implemented that promoted social inclusion, intergenerational solidarity and the human rights and dignity of older persons. Families also played a key role in social development. Their specific needs must be addressed in order to eliminate discrimination and exclusion, achieve social and sustainable development, and improve living conditions.

72. The members were strongly committed to the achievement of all internationally agreed development goals, including the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, with the eradication of poverty being the highest priority. Social development issues must be considered in an integral manner, and the United Nations was the most comprehensive forum in which to address it.

73. **Mr. Forax** (Observer for the European Union), speaking also on behalf of the candidate countries Albania, Montenegro, North Macedonia and Serbia; the stabilization and association process country Bosnia and Herzegovina; and, in addition, the Republic of Moldova, said that universal access to inclusive quality education was a fundamental human right and a prerequisite for breaking cycles of intergenerational poverty. The European Union contributed to implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development by helping partner countries internationalize and modernize their education, training and youth sectors.

74. The European Union and its member States had participated actively in the United Nations high-level

meeting on universal health coverage in September 2019. They were committed to protecting and promoting the right of everyone to enjoy the highest attainable standard of physical and mental health and would continue to support partner countries in their efforts to build strong health systems.

75. Inequalities were more moderate in Europe than in other regions of the world, which was not a matter of chance but instead the result of a set of public policies. Nevertheless, some groups, such as persons with disabilities, remained at a particular disadvantage in terms of their access to health care, employment and education. Income inequality in the European Union would have been much higher without the redistributive effects of taxes and transfers. Social protection systems had helped contain rising inequality, but the biggest challenge for the European Union in the decade to come would be maintaining and updating its social protection model. As part of a social fairness package, the European Commission had proposed guidance on adapting social protection systems to the changing world of work. The European Union supported the Global Partnership for Universal Social Protection to Achieve the Sustainable Development Goals.

76. While income inequality was relatively stable at the aggregate level, it was significant between generations. The youth guarantee programme had been introduced to ensure that all young people under the age of 25 received an offer of employment, training or education. Youth unemployment was at its lowest level since 2000, but greater efforts were needed to help those who were hardest to reach. The European Union youth strategy for 2019–2027 aimed to give young people a stronger voice in policymaking. However, the member States were also committed to addressing inequalities at later stages of life, including through inclusive learning systems for older persons.

77. Inequality also had a gender dimension. The European Union had adopted a work-life balance directive in 2019, which established new or higher minimum standards for parental, paternity and care leave. Measures to address violence against women included the expected adoption of a European gender equality strategy.

78. It was regrettable that 30.2 per cent of persons with disabilities aged 16 years and over in the region lived in households at risk of poverty or social exclusion. The European Union continued to mainstream disabilities issues in its action to combat unemployment and was working towards their full participation in society. It was hoped that the proposed European accessibility Act would significantly reduce accessibility barriers.

79. The social, economic and environmental dimensions of sustainable development must be addressed holistically. The transition to a low-carbon economy depended on the support of citizens, and therefore policies addressing environmental sustainability and climate stability should also be inclusive and fair. Each European Commissioner was responsible for delivering the Sustainable Development Goals in their policy area and the European Commission as a whole was responsible for their overall implementation.

80. The European Union hoped that the European Consensus on Development would be a key instrument to support social development around the world. Its main objective was poverty eradication, but it sought to support the achievement of all 17 Goals in an integrated manner.

81. **Mr. Skoknic Tapia** (Chile), speaking on behalf of the Group of Friends of Older Persons, said that population ageing presented new challenges for development as well as opportunities. Ageism must be tackled effectively; older persons must be regarded as active contributors to society rather than passive receivers of care and assistance and an impending burden on welfare systems and economies. Their human rights must be promoted and protected.

82. Poverty was one of the most pressing challenges for older persons. Other critical human rights issues they faced included neglect, abuse, malnutrition and unaffordable medicines. Despite their own poverty, older persons were often called upon to provide for households and care for grandchildren and other family members. Programmes, intersectoral policies and adequate legal frameworks must be implemented that ensured the full social inclusion of older persons and their participation in all areas of life without restriction, and free from all forms of discrimination and violence. Such was the key to successful implementation of the 2030 Agenda and to promoting the development of a society for all ages. With the right measures in place, older persons could make a significant contribution to the social, economic and sustainable development of their societies.

83. A rights-based perspective on ageing must be incorporated into the design and implementation of programmes and policies relating to the social dimension of sustainable development. All relevant actors must make decisive progress towards including and promoting that perspective at different levels. Moreover, although the Madrid International Plan of Action on Ageing could have positive implications for the enjoyment of some human rights by older persons, it

was a non-binding instrument that principally addressed ageing issues from a development perspective and had not been designed to comprehensively address existing protection gaps. It was therefore inadequate to ensure that older persons could fully exercise their human rights. In addition, progress in its implementation had been uneven and gaps between policy and practice remained.

84. The international community must work together to ensure the well-being of older persons, while addressing issues relating to social integration, and fostering inter-generational partnerships and solidarity in order to achieve their full and effective social development with dignity and rights.

85. **Ms. Al Abtan** (Iraq) said that her country had created a sovereign fund that would finance, in cooperation with the Central Bank of Iraq and local banks, small and medium enterprises, with a view to supporting comprehensive development for youth. Iraq had also adopted a national development plan for 2018–2019, one of the aims of which was to strengthen the role of the private sector and develop entrepreneurship programmes and business incubators, thereby creating job opportunities for youth.

86. The Ministry of Youth and Sport had launched a programme for the period 2018–2030, the slogan of which was “Iraqi youth, development, participation and peace”. The aim of the programme was to adopt policies and develop projects and programmes that would promote fairness and equality between young men and women in education, learning and access to technology. The programme would also facilitate access to basic services and protect youth from violence, extremist ideology, exploitation and maltreatment.

87. Persons with disabilities must be given due attention in order to establish a society that was characterized by justice and equality of opportunities. Iraq had been working with various specialized agencies of the United Nations to provide persons with disabilities with medical support and to build the capacities of Iraqi institutions and their staff, so that they were capable of developing programmes on the prevention of violence, in general, and domestic violence, in particular, with a view to reducing the number of incidents that typically led to disability.

88. **Ms. Miyazaki** (Japan) said that her country attached great importance to the holistic empowerment of all individuals and had taken measures to realize social development both nationally and internationally. International efforts would be essential to ensure that no one was left behind, and Japan had been contributing in various ways.

89. Japan promoted the empowerment and the rights of persons with disabilities with the aim of creating an inclusive society in which diversity was respected. The momentum created by the forthcoming Paralympic Games to be held in Tokyo in 2020 would serve to promote the active participation of persons with disabilities in various sectors, including sports. An action plan on universal design had been adopted in 2017 to promote a barrier-free mental attitude and boost accessibility in preparation for the Games.

90. Her Government was committed to universal health coverage and promoted it actively at international meetings. Since 1993, Japan had been one of the organizers of the Tokyo International Conference on African Development, which was intended to support quality growth by promoting robust health systems, including universal health coverage, supporting education and vocational training for youth, promoting the rule of law and accelerating women’s social advancement, among other goals. At the seventh conference in August 2019, Japan had expressed its commitment to increasing private investment in Africa.

91. Lastly, the Government of Japan had hosted the World Assembly for Women since 2014. The participants at the most recent session in March 2019 had included men and young people in a discussion of gender equality. Japan would continue to address social development issues in the spirit of leaving no one behind.

92. **Ms. Wagner** (Switzerland) said that all Member States of the United Nations had undertaken to fight inequality, and that goal deserved the utmost dedication, given that inequality had been rising both within and among countries. However, a full range of statistical tools to measure outcomes was not yet available, either nationally or internationally. It was regrettable that the approaches proposed by the World Bank, International Monetary Fund and the Department of Economic and Social Affairs had not yet gained traction among Member States. Accurate statistical data was essential to ensuring social justice and well-being around the world. Switzerland supported all efforts to make comparable statistics available and would be hosting the third United Nations World Data Forum in 2020. Governments already had sufficient information to start addressing inequality. Gaps in data should not be an excuse to turn a blind eye to the issue; the international community already knew what contributed to inequality and what could be done to reduce it. Real change depended on the ability of public authorities to involve people in solving the problems that affected them.

93. **Ms. Joho** (Switzerland), speaking as a youth delegate, said that young people around the world had been particularly affected by high unemployment; according to statistics from the International Labour Organization, more than one in five young people were not in education, employment or training. Without access to education, young people ended up financially dependent, excluded from the labour market and socially isolated. All Governments should make universal access to high-quality education and training a priority and help young people make a successful transition from education to the labour market.

94. The Swiss vocational education and training system, which combined theoretical training with work experience, had proven effective in tackling youth unemployment. It also took account of non-formal and informal learning gained through extracurricular activities or youth work. The approach strengthened social cohesion and met the needs of labour markets undergoing rapid technological change.

95. Education must be not only of a high quality, but also inclusive. Discrimination of any kind reduced opportunities, resulted in lost human capital and led to greater injustice and social tension. Investment in education and training and in young people's participation helped to reduce political instability, violence and poverty, and was also essential to achieving sustainable development.

96. **Ms. Renevier** (Luxembourg) said that, with a view to achieving Sustainable Development Goal 10 on reducing inequality and Sustainable Development Goal 8 on ensuring decent work, her Government had replaced its guaranteed minimum wage with a social inclusion wage, which consisted of two separate benefits. The first provided a subsistence-level income and the second a financial incentive to participate in training.

97. Combating social exclusion was a priority for Luxembourg. The Government was seeking to implement an "active ageing" strategy, which would promote well-being and quality of life for older persons and ensure that they were able to live independently and participate in all areas of society for as many years as possible. Her Government had developed a route to integration for asylum seekers, which provided them with support as soon as they arrived in the form of information and training sessions and language courses. To help persons with disabilities enter the labour market, the Government had created an exemption from social security contributions for companies that exceeded the minimum threshold established for the proportion of employees with disabilities. Luxembourg

had also made legislative changes to increase paternity leave and give families greater flexibility in the way that parental leave was taken, with the aim of enabling parents to reconcile their family and professional lives.

98. Through a new development cooperation strategy, Luxembourg promoted social development at the international level. Its priorities included improving access to social services for all, and the socioeconomic inclusion of women and young people, in particular by strengthening professional training systems. Luxembourg was one of the few countries to devote at least 1 per cent of its gross domestic product to development cooperation

99. **Ms. Hussain** (Maldives) said that the new Government in her country attached considerable importance to integrating climate change action into social development programming, which was vital for maintaining social development gains. The mandate of the Ministry of Gender, Family and Social Services had been broadened to emphasize the importance of access to universal health care for all citizens, especially women and children and other vulnerable groups. The Government also aimed to mainstream gender in policy planning and budgeting.

100. Maldives had striven to improve public health services over the years and had significantly increased life expectancy at birth as a result. The country had eliminated a number of communicable diseases, but there had been a rise in non-communicable diseases owing mainly to changing lifestyles. Providing treatment for those diseases was therefore a priority.

101. Inclusive education policies and equal opportunities for girls and boys had resulted in 98 per cent school enrolment. Maldives remained committed to inclusive, equitable and quality education for all, in line with Sustainable Development Goal 4. The Government also placed an increasing emphasis on higher education and vocational development. The role of the Youth Ministry had been expanded to include community empowerment in addition to sports and recreational programmes. Maldives was working closely with the World Bank and other partners to provide market-relevant skills and increase employment opportunities for young people.

102. Her Government attached great importance to the protection and support of older persons and persons with special needs and disabilities. Social protection schemes were aimed at promoting inclusion and providing older persons and persons with disabilities with the same rights and opportunities as other citizens.

103. Maldives had established a number of independent institutions to promote and protect the rights of its citizens. In addition, the judicial system was being reformed to strengthen the rule of law and judicial impartiality. To ensure inclusive and progressive social development, the Government of Maldives was committed to undertaking all the reforms needed to strengthen institutions to promote good governance, human rights and the rule of law.

104. **Mr. Karanikolas** (Germany), speaking as a youth delegate, said that the great value of youth lay in its diversity. However, the United Nations was at a crossroads regarding youth participation; Member States were allowing migrants to drown in the sea, and people were being persecuted for their religion, belief, ethnic background or sexual orientation. Over the years, youth delegates from Germany had made many demands, all of which had gone unfulfilled. The generations present in the room were the first that could end extreme poverty, and they were perhaps the last that could stop climate change, but rather than doing those things, Member States were losing themselves in egoism and nationalism. He feared that young people would lose their trust in the United Nations. He called on Member States to show solidarity by stopping the fighting and ending all forms of neo- and post-colonialism. They must help one another and take immediate steps to end extreme poverty and create real gender equality. He also called for solidarity between generations, so that individuals could use their potential to change the world and include members of society in all their diversity.

105. **Ms. Hebling** (Germany), youth delegate, said that many of the young people she had consulted in workshops had never heard of the United Nations and had been overwhelmed by the opportunity to contribute at the international level. Collecting ideas from young people had given her a new perspective. Rather than describing young people's demands as unrealistic, a more critical, creative and challenging view on the goals should be taken. Solutions were more successful when young people were involved; she encouraged everyone to act more like young people and leave room for new perspectives.

106. Protection of the environment had been mentioned in every single workshop with young people. The main demands of young people in that regard were protection of life on land and under water, the exclusive use of renewable energy resources, a ban on plastics and the taxation of greenhouse gas emissions. The drastic impact of human activity on the environment was mobilizing the younger generation and inducing feelings of anxiety and anger. They were losing their trust in decision-makers, especially when they were not included in the process, even though they would be most affected by the decisions taken. Education played a key role in climate action. It was the key to change and brought everyone to the table, ensuring inclusion and equality. Young people were key contributors to the drive to create a future worth living in, and action had to be taken soon to bring about the change needed.

The meeting rose at 1 p.m.