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## Second Committee

### Summary record of the 12th meeting

Held at Headquarters, New York, on Monday, 15 October 2018, at 10 a.m.

*Chair:* Mr. Skinner-Klée Arenales ..... (Guatemala)

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*The meeting was called to order at 10 a.m.*

### **Statement by the President of the General Assembly**

1. **Ms. Espinosa Garcés** (Ecuador), President of the General Assembly, said that new agreements reached by the Committee during the current session should be consistent with the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and aim to accelerate the implementation of its 17 Sustainable Development Goals. An alarming 783 million of the world's people were living in extreme poverty, which should move the international community to redouble its efforts to eradicate extreme poverty by 2030.

2. The Committee's work would be decisive in reaching the first stage of implementation, which entailed achieving 21 specific targets by 2020, more than half of which required collective action to mitigate climate change, preserve ecosystems and ensure more sustainable consumption and use of natural resources.

3. The high-level political forum on sustainable development, which, in 2019, would be held for the first time ever under the auspices of the General Assembly as well as the Economic and Social Council, would be an occasion to assess progress made since the World Summit on Sustainable Development, and what measures were still needed to meet objectives.

4. Since the success of the 2030 Agenda depended on the strengthening of financing for development, it was imperative to engage in constructive discussion on how to scale up mobilization of adequate, predictable, and stable financial and non-financial resources in line with the Addis Ababa Action Agenda of the Third International Conference on Financing for Development. She hoped that the Committee's deliberations would reflect a strong political commitment towards strengthening the structure of the international financial system and addressing the systemic imbalances that undermined the functioning of the world economy with a view to creating an enabling environment for sustainable development in a spirit of cooperation and solidarity.

5. During her presidency of the General Assembly, she would be focusing on seven priorities, including several that were directly related to the Second Committee's work, such as the promotion of decent work, which was key to eradicating poverty and reducing inequalities, and environmental action. All countries faced structural gaps in labour, which hindered the comprehensive fulfilment of the Goals under the 2030 Agenda. In its deliberations, the Committee should address innovative approaches to the future of work, in order to provide opportunities for young people, and

ensure access to decent work for people with disabilities. She called for the Committee's support for the high-level meeting on decent work that she would be convening in the context of the centenary of the International Labour Organization in April 2019.

6. She encouraged the Committee to include a cross-cutting gender perspective as a strategic approach in its work, and to continue to heed the specific challenges faced by countries in special situations, such as the least developed countries, small island developing States, landlocked developing countries and middle-income countries.

7. The current session of the General Assembly would address a number of processes and events that were relevant to the Committee's work, such as financing for development, combating illicit financial flows, reviewing programmes for small island developing States and landlocked developing countries, as well as addressing deficiencies and difficulties faced by middle-income countries, commodity markets and the contribution of culture to sustainable development. Among those processes and events were the preparatory process of the Second High-level United Nations Conference on South-South Cooperation, to be held in Buenos Aires, Argentina, in March 2019, which would be key to promoting and strengthening that modality of cooperation, and a high-level meeting on the protection of global climate for present and future generations in the context of the economic, social and environmental dimensions of sustainable development set out in the 2030 Agenda. The Climate Summit would be convened in September 2019. It would focus on promoting means of implementation such as low-carbon technologies, capacity development, and climate finance. She called for the Committee's valuable collaboration in ensuring the success of those events.

8. She hoped that the Committee's deliberations and negotiations would be marked by a spirit of respect, openness and empathy, viewing others as allies and partners along the same path towards the achievement of sustainable development in all countries and regions, with shared prosperity, and a decent life for all. She called on the Committee to build consensus, consider alternatives and seek innovative and creative solutions. That would not be easy, but it would be vital to strengthening multilateral action and send a clear and forceful message to the world's people, showing that developed and developing countries alike were working together in the quest for a better world, where all persons had their place, and extreme poverty was a scourge of the past. That would significantly contribute towards the goal of making the United Nations more relevant to all.

**Agenda item 20: Sustainable development (A/73/81–E/2018/59, A/73/166, A/73/258, A/73/283, A/73/302, A/73/417 and A/73/455)**

- (a) Implementation of Agenda 21, the Programme for the Further Implementation of Agenda 21 and the outcomes of the World Summit on Sustainable Development and of the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development (A/73/204)**
- (b) Follow-up to and implementation of the SIDS Accelerated Modalities of Action (SAMOA) Pathway and the Mauritius Strategy for the Further Implementation of the Programme of Action for the Sustainable Development of Small Island Developing States (A/73/225, A/73/226, A/73/345 and A/73/382)**
- (c) Disaster risk reduction (A/73/268)**
- (d) Protection of global climate for present and future generations of humankind (A/73/255)**
- (e) Implementation of the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification in Those Countries Experiencing Serious Drought and/or Desertification, Particularly in Africa (A/73/255)**
- (f) Convention on Biological Diversity (A/73/255)**
- (g) Report of the United Nations Environment Assembly of the United Nations Environment Programme (A/73/25)**
- (h) Harmony with Nature (A/73/221)**
- (i) Ensuring access to affordable, reliable, sustainable and modern energy for all (A/73/267)**
- (j) Combating sand and dust storms (A/73/306)**
- (k) The role of the international community in the prevention of the radiation threat in Central Asia**

9. **Mr. Zhu** Juwang (Director, Division for Sustainable Development, Department of Economic and Social Affairs), speaking on behalf of Mr. Liu Zhenmin, Under-Secretary-General for Economic and Social Affairs, introduced several reports on sustainable development. The first, the report of the Secretary-General on mainstreaming of the three dimensions of sustainable development throughout the United Nations system (A/73/81–E/2018/59), contained a survey conducted by his Department with updates from some 40 United Nations entities on their efforts to advance implementation of the 2030 Agenda and mainstream the

three dimensions of sustainable development into their work. According to the report, the United Nations system was responding to the vision of the 2030 Agenda by aligning its work programmes with the Sustainable Development Goals, initiating changes and linking results-based management to the Goals.

10. Turning to the report of the Secretary-General on implementation of Agenda 21, the Programme for the Further Implementation of Agenda 21 and the outcomes of the World Summit on Sustainable Development and of the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development (A/73/204), he said that progress made towards Agenda 21 had been mixed and uneven, with encouraging headway in several areas and ongoing challenges in others. Overall, the journey towards global sustainability had not progressed as far as had been envisioned in 1992 when Agenda 21 was adopted, as the interrelated challenges identified then continued. The report provided a snapshot of trends and lessons learned with regard to, inter alia, land resources, toxic chemicals, groundwater contamination and promotion of sustainable patterns of production and consumption, and foresaw a likely perpetuation of disparities between and within nations in implementing Agenda 21, a worsening of poverty, hunger, health, and literacy, and a continuing deterioration of ecosystems. The international community thus needed to take concerted actions towards the unfinished business of Agenda 21 and should look to the 2030 Agenda and its 17 Sustainable Development Goals for guidance.

11. Introducing three reports of the Secretary-General in the context of follow-up to and implementation of the SIDS Accelerated Modalities of Action (SAMOA) Pathway (Samoa Pathway) and the Mauritius Strategy for the Further Implementation of the Programme of Action for the Sustainable Development of Small Island Developing States (A/73/225, A/73/226 and A/73/345), he noted that according to the report on the assessment resulting from the evolving mandates of the small island developing States units of the Secretariat (A/73/345), the significant increase in the scope and complexity of the mandates of the Small Island Developing States Units in the Department of Economic and Social Affairs and the Office of the High Representative for the Least Developed Countries, Landlocked Developing Countries and Small Island Developing States had not been met with an increase in resources. He reviewed the resource gaps and needs of the Small Island Developing States Units in both, outlined in paragraphs 63 and 64 of the report, including in relation to research, policy development and technical analysis, as well as in the capacity of small island developing States to monitor

mainstreaming of the Samoa Pathway into their national development plans.

12. The General Assembly might wish to address expanding mandates of those two units in the context of the repositioning of the United Nations development system, the reform of the Department of Economic and Social Affairs, the midterm review of the Samoa Pathway and the formulation of the programme budget for 2021 (para. 67 of the report).

13. The report of the Secretary-General addressing follow-up to and implementation of the Samoa Pathway and the Mauritius Strategy (A/73/226), for its part, contained a broad overview of the status of implementation of the Samoa Pathway, and a summary of actions taken by Member States, the United Nations system and other international development partners to support small island developing States in their implementation efforts for the period 2017–2018. In it, the Secretary-General also examined strategies and frameworks in place to deliver development programmes, and highlighted gaps, challenges and key results.

14. Activities that had been carried out at the national and regional levels by Member States, international development partners and other stakeholders were highlighted in the report of the Secretary-General on sustainable development of the Caribbean Sea for present and future generations (A/73/225), followed by a progress report on implementation of General Assembly resolution 71/224. In the report of the Secretary-General on harmony with nature (A/73/221), contributions to the eighth interactive dialogue of the General Assembly on Harmony with Nature, held on 23 April 2018 in commemoration of International Mother Earth Day, were reflected. In addition, Earth jurisprudence in the implementation of sustainable production and consumption patterns in harmony with nature, and trends in the implementation of Earth jurisprudence in law, policy, education and public engagement were addressed.

15. Lastly, the report of the Secretary-General on ensuring access to affordable, reliable, sustainable and modern energy for all (A/73/267) provided an overview of progress made. In it, the Secretary-General highlighted actions undertaken by Member States and multi-stakeholders to accelerate the achievement of that objective and presented key messages from the first review of Goal 7 on energy at the high-level political forum held in July 2018, along with ways to further strengthen actions and partnerships in support of that Goal, midway into the United Nations Decade of Sustainable Energy for All 2014–2024.

16. **Ms. Mizutori** (Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Disaster Risk Reduction), introducing the report of the Secretary-General on the implementation of the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015–2030 (A/73/268), said that disasters and climate change were clearly taking an increasingly heavy human and economic toll, undermining progress towards sustainable and inclusive development. The range of environmental disasters that had struck various parts of the world had included earthquakes in Indonesia, Haiti and Japan, a typhoon in the Philippines and China, torrential rains and flooding in Nigeria, a trail of destruction left by the Atlantic hurricane season, and persistent drought in Australia, the Sahel and elsewhere.

17. Direct economic losses from climate-related disasters had risen by a dramatic 151 per cent; 1.3 million lives, had been lost and 4.4 billion people had been injured, displaced or in need of emergency assistance due to disasters. Earthquakes and tsunamis had accounted for more than half of total deaths.

18. The implementation of the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction was gathering pace. The report contained examples of multi-stakeholder efforts to ensure that investments in sustainable development were risk-informed and resilient. Nevertheless, progress often lagged behind changing climate, with the poorest and most vulnerable, especially women and youth, continuing to bear the brunt of exposure to disasters.

19. It was important not only to prepare for risk response, but also to “build back better” and enhance resilience, consistent with Priority 4 of the Sendai Framework. The paradigm shift from managing disasters to managing disaster risk needs must become a reality, as only two years remained to achieve the Framework’s global target (e) on developing national and local disaster risk reduction strategies by 2020.

20. Disaster risk reduction and sustainable development must be aligned. Unless sustainable development policies and investment decisions were based on disaster loss data, disaster risk assessments, and the disclosure of disaster risk, efforts to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals could expose more people and economies to disasters and the impacts of climate change. In addition, inclusivity of women and youth, whose participation was lagging behind, was fundamental to disaster risk reduction. In many parts of the world, slow-onset disasters and climate change were already compromising the opportunities available to young people.

21. Financing disaster risk reduction must be a top priority. Ministries of finance had a vital role to play in

ensuring full and transparent accounting of disaster losses across all sectors, and risk reduction measures should be adopted accordingly. Ministries of finance should also include disaster risk reduction in budgeting and financial planning across all sectors and align sustainable development financing frameworks to disaster risk reduction strategies. Pipeline projects, particularly in infrastructure, that did not take disaster risk into account should not be considered “bankable” or “investable”.

22. While some progress had been made in mainstreaming disaster risk reduction in official development assistance (ODA), tailored financing instruments to incentivize risk-informed and resilient investments by the public and private sectors were needed. Indeed, short term investment at the expense of resilience must end; even if emission targets in the Paris Agreement were met, the situation was expected to get worse before it got better. Implementing the Sendai Framework would be a crucial contribution to reducing climate risks and adapting to the impacts of climate change. The 2020 deadline for climate change adaption and disaster risk reduction strategies would provide an opportunity for increased coherence.

23. She reiterated the Secretary-General’s call for all countries to input their data into the Sendai Framework Monitor without further delay, and for the United Nations Office for Disaster Risk Reduction to provide capacity support and technical guidance to Member States in that endeavour.

24. The Global Platform for Disaster Risk Reduction to be hosted by Switzerland in May 2019 would contribute to the work of the 2019 high-level political forum and the Secretary-General’s climate summit to be held in September 2019. Those processes, along with disaster risk reduction, could also be integrated into the reviews of other commitments made in 2015, as well as the reform of the United Nations development system, including within the new generation of country teams and the revamped United Nations Development Assistance Frameworks.

25. In conclusion, she said that the challenges posed by persistent poverty, changing climate and the increasing economic and social impact of disasters required interlinked solutions and an integrated and holistic approach to building resilience which took into account the 2030 Agenda, the Paris Agreement, the Addis Ababa Action Agenda, the New Urban Agenda and the Sendai Framework.

26. **Ms. Barbut** (Executive Secretary of the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification), speaking in a recorded message to introduce her report

on the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification in Those Countries Experiencing Serious Drought and/or Desertification, Particularly in Africa, (A/73/255, section II), said that the theme of land was important towards achieving inclusive and sustainable development. The General Assembly, in its resolutions 71/229 and 72/220, had affirmed that achieving land degradation neutrality would in turn help to achieve various Sustainable Development Goals. In that regard, she recalled that those who lived on degraded land and faced drought experienced the highest rates of poverty and malnutrition and were at the bottom of the scale of sustainable development, particularly women and children. More than 120 countries had already established their national targets towards achieving land degradation neutrality (target 3 of Sustainable Development Goal 15), and some had even begun to develop transformative projects which explored the blending of public and private financing under the Land Degradation Neutrality Fund operationalized in 2017.

27. Section II of the report provided an overview of the outcomes of the thirteenth session of the Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification in those Countries Experiencing Serious Drought and/or Desertification, Particularly in Africa, preparations for the 2018 high-level political forum for sustainable development and a review of progress made towards defining land degradation targets. The World Day to Combat Desertification and Drought, held in Quito, Ecuador, activities conducted in the context of the United Nations Decade for Deserts and the Fight Against Desertification, and collaboration with the Global Environment Fund were also highlighted in it. She reviewed the recommendations to the General Assembly contained in the report (para. 20), adding that the Assembly might also wish to reaffirm the importance of land degradation neutrality in achieving other Sustainable Development Goals, request that land degradation neutrality be integrated in United Nations programmes where appropriate, and urge Member States to mobilize resources towards achieving it and redouble their efforts to implement the strategic objective on drought pursuant to decision 29/COP.13 of the thirteenth session of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention.

28. Expressing gratitude to the Group of Friends of Desertification, Land Degradation and Drought for organizing a panel discussion on land degradation during the 2018 high-level political forum, she concluded by saying that failure to address land degradation, desertification and recurring drought would affect all countries, as those phenomena were



often drivers of forced migration, food insecurity, poverty, instability caused by water- and land-related conflicts and the loss of biodiversity.

29. **Ms. Palmer** (Executive Secretary of the Convention on Biological Diversity), introducing her report on implementation of the Convention on Biological Diversity ([A/73/255](#), section III), said that there was a vital need to reconnect nature and humanity. In the light of the complex interdependencies between human, social and economic systems and the Earth systems, the current biodiversity crisis could not be halted through isolated efforts in specialized modes but required interconnected measures and solutions.

30. The Nagoya-Kuala Lumpur Supplementary Protocol on Liability and Redress to the Cartagena Protocol on Biosafety had entered into force on 5 March 2018 with the deposit of the fortieth instrument of acceptance by Japan. There were 196 ratifications of the Convention on Biological Diversity, including one by a regional economic integration organization; of those ratifying parties, 171 had also ratified that Convention's Cartagena Protocol on Biosafety, and 107 had ratified its Nagoya Protocol on Access to Genetic Resources and the Fair and Equitable Sharing of Benefits Arising from Their Utilization.

31. The report covered the preparations for the fourteenth meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity, which would be held in Sharm el-Sheikh, Egypt, from 17 to 29 November 2018, with concurrent meetings of the Conference of the Parties serving as the meetings of the Parties to the Cartagena and Nagoya Protocols. The ministerial segment of those meetings would address the critical subject of investing in people and the planet to build a strong sustainable transition track to 2020 and beyond. Preparations had been addressed in meetings of the subsidiary bodies of the Conference of the Parties: the twenty-second meeting of the Subsidiary Body on Scientific, Technical and Technological Advice and the second meeting of the Subsidiary Body on Implementation, held from 2 to 7 July and 9 to 13 July 2018, respectively, in Montreal, Canada.

32. The subsidiary bodies had made recommendations on bolstering actions to achieve global biodiversity targets by 2020, and a proposal for negotiations on a global biodiversity framework beyond that date. The deliberations had been informed by a desire to bring about transformational change and to build a future of life in harmony with nature. In that context, she had introduced an innovative "deep dive" reflection exercise on possible sustainability transition pathways for systemic change, involving participation of

representatives from the subsidiary bodies, the World Economic Forum, Governments, social scientists and other stakeholders. The insights from that initiative would be further promoted in the work of the secretariat of the Convention moving forward to 2020 and beyond.

33. Another major issue was the mainstreaming of biodiversity into sectors that depended on it but whose actions could potentially have an adverse impact on ecosystems and species. Having addressed the mainstreaming of biodiversity into agriculture, fisheries, forestry and tourism at its thirteenth meeting, the Conference of the Parties would now examine actions that Governments, businesses and other stakeholders could take to mainstream it into the energy, mining, infrastructure, manufacturing and health sectors.

34. The subsidiary bodies had also discussed a mechanism for the conservation of biodiversity that extended beyond existing notions of protected areas, and recommended that the definition of "other effective area-based conservation measures" be considered by the Conference of the Parties, along with technical advice on guiding principles. Equally of interest was the recognition of the potential need to modify existing ecologically or biologically significant marine areas to keep pace with the ongoing emergence of new scientific information.

35. A major recommendation made to the Conference of the Parties was to call for the adoption of a global action plan for 2018–2030 for the conservation and sustainable use of pollinators, and to call for the engagement of businesses, indigenous peoples, local communities and others involved in production landscapes to address the drivers of loss of wild and managed pollinators in all ecosystems. She highlighted the need to effectively assess the role and contribution of indigenous peoples and local communities in the overall implementation of the Convention; the need to leverage new scientific research, including the work of the Intergovernmental Science-Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services; and to enhance collaboration between the Intergovernmental Science-Policy Platform and the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC).

36. She noted recommendations made on measures to ensure the full operationalization of the Nagoya Protocol and to advance a global multilateral benefit-sharing mechanism. With regard to new and emerging issues, she noted the recognition of the positive contribution of digital sequence information on genetic resources for the conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity; nonetheless, there were significant

divergences in views on its implications for fair and equitable benefit-sharing. She underscored the call for broad international cooperation to assess the possible impacts that synthetic biology could have on biodiversity. As for the risk assessment of living modified organisms, including organisms containing engineered gene drives, she said that a process for identifying topics for the possible development of international guidelines had been agreed upon.

37. Since at the fifteenth meeting of the Conference of the Parties, to be held in Beijing, China, in 2020, agreement would have to be reached on the biodiversity framework to adopt for the period beyond 2020, there was a moral imperative for all parties to join together in crafting an ambitious agenda for nature post-2020. Otherwise, human beings would be the only species left to witness its demise.

38. **Mr. Ahmad** (Director ad interim of the New York Office of the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP)), introducing the report of the United Nations Environment Assembly of UNEP on its third session (A/73/25) and the report of the Secretary-General on combating sand and dust storms (A/73/306), said that the third session of the Assembly, which had been held in Nairobi from 4 to 6 December 2017 on the theme “Towards a pollution-free planet”, had garnered the participation of 157 Member States and a number of entities, bodies, United Nations specialized agencies, the secretariats of various environmental conventions, international organizations, civil society, major groups, academia and the scientific community. At that session, it had been announced that more than 2.3 million pledges had been signed by individuals across the world as part of a UNEP campaign to take action to reduce pollution. Member States had unanimously welcomed that major public commitment. The global campaign to beat plastic pollution continued to advance at an impressive pace, as evidenced by actions in almost every country and daily news of unprecedented commitments by Governments, businesses and ordinary people everywhere.

39. Four leadership dialogues had been held at the ministerial level, including on science, evidence and citizen-awareness for change and on financing and innovation to combat pollution. A multi-stakeholder dialogue on pollution and people had also been held. Among the main outcomes of the session was a ministerial declaration entitled “Towards a pollution-free planet”, in which Member States had expressed their determination to prevent, mitigate and manage the pollution of air, land and soil, fresh water and the oceans through such actions as increasing scientific evidence and improving data capacity, improving public

information, promoting science based decision making in the public and private sectors, and promoting sustainable lifestyles and sustainable production and consumption patterns by providing information to consumers, increasing education, and making it easier to rethink, reuse, recycle, recover, remake and reduce waste generation. He pointed to the need for sound management of chemicals and waste.

40. The Environment Assembly had adopted eight draft resolutions, including on marine litter and microplastics, exposure to lead paint, environment and health, pollution mitigation by mainstreaming biodiversity into key sectors, and pollution mitigation and control in areas affected by armed conflict or terrorism. Especially noteworthy was the new resolution focusing on contributions by the United Nations Environment Assembly to the high-level political forum on sustainable development, in which it was decided that the Assembly would provide inputs to the forum from an environmental perspective and would establish a standing agenda item with a view to considering the Sustainable Development Goals under review at the annual meetings of the forum. It was also recommended that the President of the Environment Assembly carry its main messages to the high-level political forum. As a result, the President of the Economic and Social Council had allocated a space in the formal programme of the 2018 forum for that purpose.

41. He noted the importance of fully utilizing existing institutional links between the Environment Assembly and other bodies (para. 30 of the report). Member States might wish to consider measures to encourage pollution-free policies in the context of other items on the Second Committee’s agenda. Enhanced synergies were needed between the General Assembly, the Economic and Social Council and the follow-up and review of the environmental dimension of sustainable development by the Environment Assembly. A gap in the regular funding of the sessions of the United Nations Environment Assembly was causing concern.

42. Turning to the report on combating sand and dust storms, he said that, during the reporting period, achievements had been made in the areas of monitoring, prediction and early warning; impact mitigation; vulnerability and resilience; and source mitigation. Overall, the report reflected the growing awareness around sand and dust storms and the associated human, economic, social and environmental costs, and also identified gaps that remained in understanding those storm processes and impacts, as well as in the context of climate change. Nevertheless, a number of critical uncertainties were being addressed in ongoing and new initiatives by a number of entities within the United

Nations system and other stakeholders. The global community must develop scenarios based on alternative land uses and the scaling up of sustainable land management policies, practices and mitigation measures. Such a comprehensive approach should also aim to establish regional strategies and agreements aimed at reducing the impact of sand and dust storms on livelihoods, food security and the health of people living in vulnerable areas (A/73/306, para. 34).

43. He drew attention to the UNEP proposal for the establishment of an inter-agency network on sand and dust storms, which would further energize gathering momentum to address relevant issues as part of efforts towards achieving the 2030 Agenda and the Sustainable Development Goals.

44. **Ms. Carpentier** (Chief of the New York Office of the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD)), introducing the report of the Secretary General on entrepreneurship for sustainable development (A/73/258), prepared by UNCTAD in collaboration with the Department of Economic and Social Affairs, said that the report focused on four different aspects of implementing General Assembly resolution 71/221 on entrepreneurship for sustainable development: good practices in formulating and implementing national entrepreneurship policies in line with the six pillars of the UNCTAD Entrepreneurship Policy Framework; the emergence of initiatives for promoting regional cooperation and enhancing the effectiveness of entrepreneurial ecosystems at the city level; initiatives and best practices on policy measures for promoting social entrepreneurship; and the importance of tools to monitor progress on policy implementation and of indicators to measure the impact of entrepreneurship policies on economic growth and achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals.

45. With regard to the first of those four aspects, UNCTAD had continued to provide support to Member States in the formulation and implementation of national entrepreneurship policies and the promotion of micro-, small, and medium-sized enterprises. The adoption of formal industrial policies in at least 84 countries since 2013 was yet another indication of the growing role of entrepreneurship policies. In that connection, UNCTAD was cooperating with the United Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO) on the UNIDO Youth and Women Entrepreneurship Promotion in Ethiopia.

46. Under that same rubric, achievements in optimizing the regulatory framework included support for women entrepreneurs and progress on the UNCTAD e-regulations system to increase transparency and

efficiency in administrative procedures and governance of businesses across 30 countries. Among the achievements in enhancing education and skills development were programmes to promote women in entrepreneurship, such as the virtual skills school of the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN-Women).

47. The chapter on implementation and formulation of entrepreneurship policies also covered initiatives by various countries to tap new forms of financing, such as blended finance and crowdfunding, as well as through tax incentives; to facilitate technology innovation and exchange; and to promote awareness and networking through activities to highlight the contribution of entrepreneurs to economic growth and the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals.

48. Turning to the chapter on regional cooperation and entrepreneurial ecosystems at the city level, she noted that migrants and refugees had become an important emerging target group for the development and implementation of entrepreneurship policies.

49. With regard to the chapter on social entrepreneurship promotion, she said that social enterprises were providing creative solutions to address the needs of disadvantaged groups and drew attention to the emerging role of the social and solidarity economy, with a focus on cooperatives. In several countries, the social economy was even becoming a priority for public authorities. Social enterprises had also gained recognition at the international level. In North America and in most European countries, laws recognizing social enterprises had facilitated their institutionalization, and resources were being channelled to social enterprises through de-risking and insurance mechanisms as well as social impact investments.

50. Key lessons on the development and strengthening of coherent and comprehensive policy regulatory frameworks; the development of action plans, assigning responsibilities and ensuring coordination; the stimulation of partnerships at all levels and a multi-stakeholder dialogue; and the development and implementation of regular review mechanisms to assess the contribution of entrepreneurship toward achievement of the Goals had been derived from experiences in the implementation of entrepreneurship strategies and policies.

51. **Mr. Venancio** (Regional Advisor at the Regional Bureau for Arab States of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP)), introducing the report of the Secretary-General on the oil slick on Lebanese shores (A/73/302), said that it provided an update on progress in implementing successive General



Assembly resolutions concerning the environmental disaster that had occurred on 15 July 2006 with the destruction by the Israeli Air Force of oil storage tanks near the Jiyeh electric power plant in Lebanon, causing an oil slick that covered two thirds of the Lebanese coastline and extended beyond to that of the Syrian Arab Republic. Referring to paragraph 5 of General Assembly resolution [72/209](#), he said that, according to the report, the Government of Israel had not assumed responsibility for relevant compensation to the Government of Lebanon.

52. Referring to paragraphs 7 and 8 of the resolution, he said that the Secretary-General regretted that no voluntary contributions had been made to the Eastern Mediterranean Oil Spill Restoration Trust Fund in response to his appeal. He commended the ongoing efforts made by the Government of Lebanon to address the impacts of the spill, while expressing grave concern over the failure to implement the relevant provisions of the resolutions with regard to compensation by the Government of Israel to the Government and people of Lebanon. Damage had been assessed at \$856.4 million in 2014.

53. **Mr. Rahman** (Deputy Special Representative, World Tourism Organization Liaison Office to the United Nations), introducing the report of the Secretary-General on the International Year of Sustainable Tourism for Development, 2017 ([A/73/283](#)), said that a number of activities and initiatives had been undertaken as a result of declaring 2017 the International Year of Sustainable Tourism for Development. As the tourism sector was cross-cutting in nature, those efforts would have a far-reaching impact across all 17 Sustainable Development Goals. The collaborative approach adopted by Member States, the private sector and civil society institutions in developing a road map and guiding its implementation had been a particularly notable feature of observances of the Year.

54. Activities and initiatives had included the convening of 14 official meetings and events around the world to discuss such issues as the role of tourism in promoting inclusive growth and employment, tourism measurement, tourism and culture, and urban tourism. Governments had carried out 850 of the 1,800 activities and initiatives registered, some of which had been uploaded to a collaborative web platform for access by all stakeholders. The International Year had been entirely financed by extrabudgetary resources with contributions from all regions, more than 50 per cent of them from the private sector.

55. Among the meetings or events carried out during the International Year, numerous United Nations

specialized agencies, programmes and related organizations, individually or in cooperation with the World Tourism Organization, had issued publications or hosted meetings or events, including a conference on sustainable tourism in small island developing States, held in Seychelles; a sixth conference on sustainable tourism statistics, held in Manila; a world conference on tourism and future energy, held in Kazakhstan; and a conference on promoting sustainable tourism in Africa, held in Zambia. Thirteen countries had issued commemorative stamps or coins, and sustainability awareness and responsible traveller campaigns had also been launched. The International Year had led to commitments to action beyond 2017, including through an online platform for the global community, “Tourism for SDGs”, developed by the World Tourism Organization with support from Switzerland.

56. **Ms. Elgarf** (Egypt), speaking on behalf of the Group of 77 and China, said that the Group reaffirmed all the principles of the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development, held in 1992, particularly that of common but differentiated responsibilities, and the principles in paragraph 74 of the 2030 Agenda. In tackling the major global challenge of poverty eradication, which was vital to sustainable development, the Group was of the view that, although the 2030 Agenda should be the primary focus, ongoing efforts to implement other sustainable development commitments, for example, those set out in Agenda 21, the Plan of Implementation of the World Summit on Sustainable Development and the “The future we want”, should be adequately supported and recognized as contributing to the overall achievement of sustainable development.

57. Regarding the need for a continued level of support to implement pledges made by the international community in respect of the Samoa Pathway, she said that recognition of the extreme economic and ecological vulnerabilities of small island developing States should be matched with resources to help achieve the Pathway’s goals.

58. In the context of the Sendai Framework, particular attention should also be paid to disaster-prone developing countries, in particular, least developed countries, small island developing States, landlocked developing countries, African countries and middle-income countries, in order to help them tackle the specific challenges they faced owing to their vulnerability and risk levels. As the El Niño phenomenon was recurring and significantly threatened the hard-fought development gains of developing countries, it was critical to prepare for, build resilience to and reduce the risks of a subsequent El Niño event

during neutral periods. She stressed the importance of developing multi hazard strategies by 2020 to tackle that phenomenon.

59. International support for the initiative to recognize the Caribbean Sea as a special area in need of protection and preservation within the context of sustainable development must be urgently provided. In addition, joint efforts must be made to raise awareness of, and mobilize support for, innovative solutions to address the far reaching impacts of climate change, with a view to fulfilling the Paris Agreement objectives.

60. She welcomed the establishment of the Land Degradation Neutrality Fund, which should be supported by other stakeholders; assistance from the Fund should be easily accessible and the allocation of funds must be guided by the principles of transparency and accountability. The Group attached importance to addressing sustainable production and consumption patterns at the forthcoming session of the United Nations Environment Assembly, and called for the strengthening of Nairobi as the environmental headquarters of the United Nations in line with the relevant provision under “The future we want”. International cooperation should be strengthened with a view to helping developing countries achieve universal access to affordable, reliable and renewable energy in accordance with national plans and policies, as well as expanding infrastructure and upgrading technology for supplying such energy for all in those countries.

61. Turning to the matter of the oil slick on Lebanese shores, she urged financial institutions and relevant stakeholders to continue their technical and financial support to help Lebanon with the clean-up and rehabilitation efforts, with a view to preserving the ecosystem of that country and the Eastern Mediterranean Basin. In addition, the Group welcomed the recent convening and outcome of a high-level interactive dialogue on the pressing issue of sand and dust storms, which required further cooperation among United Nations entities.

62. Climate change and natural disasters were merely some of the manifestations of the crises and emergencies facing the world. Accordingly, humankind must transform the way it perceived its relationship with the Earth and its ecosystems, through a holistic approach to achieving sustainable development in harmony with nature.

63. **Mr. Srivihok** (Thailand), speaking on behalf of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN), said that ASEAN Community Vision 2025 aimed to achieve a genuinely people-centred and rules-based Association that was politically cohesive, economically

integrated and socially responsible. Under that programme, ASEAN member States were also committed to the implementation of the 2030 Agenda, notably on poverty reduction, reducing inequalities, protecting the environment, ensuring access to clean water and air and minimizing the adverse impacts of climate change.

64. There was a fear, however, that some factors could roll back progress towards sustainable development and community-building. For example, natural hazards continually hindered ASEAN countries’ development progress, as demonstrated by the devastating earthquake and tsunami that had recently struck Indonesia in Palu, Central Sulawesi, claiming over 2,000 lives and damaging thousands of homes and buildings. ASEAN accorded priority to enhancing cooperation in reducing disaster risks and losses and strengthening its disaster management and response capacity through its Agreement on Disaster Management and Emergency Response. ASEAN also engaged actively with its partners, the private sector, civil society and international organizations, including the United Nations, through its centre for coordination of humanitarian assistance and by ensuring a collective response among ASEAN countries.

65. ASEAN attached importance to minimizing the risks and impacts of climate change and enhancing the preparedness and resilience of the ASEAN people and community. There was a need for finance, technology and capacity-building as the means of implementation for climate action, and, in the context of finalizing the Paris Agreement work programme later in 2018, and the Secretary-General’s climate summit to be held in 2019, ASEAN looked forward to greater global support and action in line with the principle of common but differentiated responsibilities and respective capabilities. He reaffirmed the Association’s commitment to further implementation of the Strategic Plan for Biodiversity 2011–2020. ASEAN would continue its efforts in other environmental areas, such as mitigating human-caused disasters and pollution in the seas and oceans, and reducing deforestation through partnerships and cooperation within the region, with the United Nations and with its dialogue partners. Achieving the 2030 Agenda required partnership at all levels, particularly in mobilizing the means of implementation, including through cooperation in science and technology and capacity-building. ASEAN was in favour of South-South and triangular cooperation as a complement to North-South cooperation in helping countries to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals as well as the unfinished business of the Millennium Development Goals.

66. ASEAN continued to benefit from strengthened cooperation with the United Nations, including with the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific and United Nations funds and programmes. It looked forward to continued cooperation in the context of an ASEAN centre for sustainable development studies and dialogue, which would be established in 2019 in Thailand as a platform for institutional support and sustainable cooperation within ASEAN and with its development partners. Lastly, it was essential to lay the groundwork to guarantee young people a sound future.

67. **Mr. Ligoya** (Malawi), speaking on behalf of the Group of Least Developed Countries, said that the widespread incidences of natural disasters had had a major socioeconomic impact on least developed countries in 2017, affecting an estimated 23 million people. Floods, droughts and cyclones had been particularly devastating in many African and Asian least developed countries. The gains made by least developed countries were fragile, which made it vital to fully implement the Sendai Framework. Least developed countries were least equipped to undertake the measures needed to address those impacts and needed strong global partnerships and cooperation. In that context, he welcomed the establishment of the policy marker for disaster risk reduction, developed by the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development, to track funding that contributed to risk reduction. He acknowledged the World Bank Group pledge of \$1.4 billion to help Indonesians rebuild their shattered lives in the aftermath of the devastating earthquake that had recently struck their country.

68. Least developed countries needed fast-track access to available funds for disaster reduction, including the Global Facility for Disaster Reduction and Recovery, disaster risk financing and insurance, and the Crisis Response Window set up in the sixteenth replenishment of the International Development Association (IDA16). He requested the Secretary-General to explore how the Caribbean Catastrophe Risk Insurance Facility could be replicated for least-developed countries on a regional or subregional basis in order to ensure immediate access to funding in the aftermath of a disaster. He looked forward to the 2019 report of the Inter-agency Task Force on Financing for Development, which would examine climate and disaster resilience in development financing.

69. The impacts of climate change had triggered homelessness and were taking lives and increasing famine in least developed countries. Based on the IPCC special report, limiting global warming to 1.5° C would require reducing emissions to zero by 2050 and using renewable and efficient energy solutions, rapidly

reducing the use of fossil fuels, preserving and restoring forests and soils, and implementing other climate solutions. A “Paris rulebook”, expected to be adopted at the twenty-fourth session of the Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change at the end of 2018, should make it possible to reflect on the breadth of actions needed to reach that goal.

70. The most vulnerable countries, such as least developed countries, were the worst affected by the devastating impacts of climate change. Access to energy in least developed countries also remained a major challenge, as half of the world’s population without electricity lived in least developed countries. To achieve Sustainable Development Goal 7 by 2030 in least developed countries, urgent action by all stakeholders was needed. Financing requirements for that Goal currently stood at \$500 billion per year, while \$1.2 trillion yearly would be needed through 2030. The United Nations system should pay special heed to the efforts of least developed countries to achieve Goal 7, including throughout the United Nations Decade of Sustainable Energy for All. Achieving the target relating to land degradation was important; restoring degraded lands and vital ecosystems could serve as a catalyst for achieving multiple Goals. Partnerships remained the key to success in achieving the 2030 Agenda.

71. **Ms. Thompson** (Barbados), speaking on behalf of the Caribbean Community (CARICOM), said that a number of natural disasters had recently occurred in her region, including a tropical storm in the Eastern Caribbean; an earthquake off the shores of Martinique, Guadeloupe and Dominica; and, the week before, an earthquake in Haiti. Small island developing States, including those in the CARICOM region, remained the most at risk from the negative effects of climate change even though they bore the least responsibility for causing it and were the least equipped to withstand and adapt to its social, environmental and economic impacts.

72. As it worked toward strengthening resilience to the multiple impacts of climate change, CARICOM looked forward to renewed commitment to the Paris Agreement at the twenty-fourth session of the Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, and also to the Secretary-General’s high-level climate event in 2019. Both would be an occasion to take stock of progress, take critical steps going forward and encourage the global community to commit to the 1.5 Celsius target. Changing the status quo was essential to the sustainability, and even the survival, of the Caribbean Community.

73. The midterm review of the Samoa Pathway should result in a concise, action oriented and intergovernmentally agreed political declaration leading to tangible outcomes through actions, resources and the necessary transformational approaches at the national and global levels. It was of concern that the resources allocated to the SIDS Unit of the Department of Economic and Social Affairs – and much of the United Nations system – remained unchanged despite the 2030 Agenda and the expanded mandate established by the Samoa Pathway to support the sustainable development of small island developing States. That Unit, as well as the Office of the High Representative for the Least Developed Countries, Landlocked Developing Countries and Small Island Developing States, must receive predictable, reliable and adequate funding to achieve real results; an overdependence on voluntary contributions posed a genuine challenge to those entities in carrying out their intergovernmentally agreed mandates. Resources to address disaster risk reduction, climate change adaptation and critical resilience-building were urgently needed.

74. CARICOM hoped that during the current session, the biennial draft resolution entitled “Towards the sustainable development of the Caribbean Sea for present and future generations” would once again be adopted by consensus. Lastly, in the light of the insufficient progress made in addressing climate change, it urged the United Nations family to choose the path of action over rhetoric in pursuing the climate agenda.

75. **Ms. Zahir** (Maldives), speaking on behalf of the Alliance of Small Island States (AOSIS), urged Member States to show their solidarity with small island developing States through high-level participation in the 2019 midterm review of the Samoa Pathway, and constructive engagement in that process as small island developing States shared best practices while identifying ways to address the challenges they faced. Emphasizing the need for adequate support from the United Nations system to help those States implement the Samoa Pathway and the 2030 Agenda, the Alliance requested that additional resources be allocated to the two United Nations units dealing with small island developing States and encouraged Member States to support that request.

76. Support of both partner countries and the United Nations system was needed to address the major development challenges faced by small island developing States – challenges that were directly attributable to structural characteristics including small populations, spatial dispersion, remoteness and limited resources.

77. AOSIS supported the recommendation on extending international cooperation and providing means of implementation to small island developing States in order to help them implement the Sendai Framework and tackle the range of climate change impacts which made them increasingly vulnerable and undermined their progress towards sustainable development. To ensure the success of partnerships, new solutions and strategies to incentivize predictable and sustainable financing tools were needed. Recognizing that implementation of the Paris Agreement was urgent, small island developing States welcomed the transition towards renewable sources of energy. The SIDS Lighthouses Initiative and DOCK Support Program were facilitating that transition; the small island developing States would welcome further partnerships to enhance it. Lastly, AOSIS attached importance to the sustainable development of the Caribbean Sea for present and future generations, and pledged its full support for national and regional efforts, as well as those of partners and stakeholders, in advancing sustainable development across small island developing States everywhere in the world.

78. **Mr. Escalante Hasbún** (El Salvador), speaking on behalf of the Community of Latin American and Caribbean States (CELAC), said that fulfilling the 2030 Agenda and achieving its Goals called for the mobilization of adequate financial and non-financial resources. The draft resolutions to be negotiated in the Committee must provide political guidance and address sustainable development from the perspective of the challenges faced by developing countries. The common objective must be to provide added value to implementation and full follow-up of the 2030 Agenda and the Addis Ababa Action Agenda in order to eradicate poverty in all its forms and dimensions.

79. It was important to take into account the challenges of achieving sustainable development for least developed countries, landlocked developing countries, small island developing States, middle-income countries, countries in conflict or post-conflict situations, and developing countries which had transitioned to middle-income status but nevertheless continued to face structural gaps and vulnerabilities.

80. While the high level political forum was key to follow-up and comprehensive review of the 2030 Agenda, its current format did not reflect the integrated, indivisible and interlinked nature of the Sustainable Development Goals. Furthermore, its meetings under the auspices of the General Assembly and the Economic and Social Council should go beyond academic discussion of themes and ensure a dynamic platform for regular dialogue; they should also be closely

coordinated to ensure coherence and establish links and policy guidance that were mutually reinforcing towards achieving sustainable development.

81. As demonstrated by regional forums on sustainable development in Latin America and the Caribbean, follow up and review processes at the regional and subregional levels could be useful opportunities for peer learning, including through voluntary activities and the sharing of best practices and discussions on shared targets. Nevertheless, such efforts should be linked to the high-level political forum in order to contribute to its work and provide relevant and coherent results on regional follow-up mechanisms, bearing in mind that the regional dimension of the development system and its reform process should take into account the particularities of each regional commission and the way the work of the development system related to the specific needs and realities of each region, thus moving away from a “one-size-fits-all” approach.

82. Implementation and follow up of the 2030 Agenda required unequivocal commitment by the international community as a whole. ODA was vital in catalysing and sustaining development financing for developing countries. Developed countries could contribute by honouring their long-standing commitments in that arena and establishing binding timelines for delivery of ODA and other forms of North-South cooperation. South-South and triangular cooperation also had a role to play, but should be complementary to, and not a substitute for, North-South cooperation. Equally important was capacity-building combined with the exchange of knowledge and successful practices in the countries of the global South, and other emerging forms of cooperation, such as financial cooperation for the development of infrastructure, social development, health and education, and transfer of technology. An effective strategy for financing for development would require new and additional, public and private, domestic and international financial resources as well as the participation of civil society and other relevant stakeholders in efforts to achieve Sustainable Development Goal 17, taking into account national plans and policies.

83. CELAC member States were committed to joining in efforts to promote education, human resource training, and technology transfer on favourable terms, including concessional and preferential terms, in order to bridge existing social and economic gaps. The region was vulnerable to climate change and natural disasters caused by human activity, including in small island developing States, coastal low-lying States, the countries in the Central American isthmus, those

suffering from the effects of El Niño and La Niña, and landlocked developing countries. CELAC member States recognized the importance of strengthening the implementation of the Paris Agreement and of the Sendai Framework, and of achieving all the goals set out in those instruments in the Latin American and Caribbean region. They looked forward to the reports that would be generated by the Sendai Framework Monitor, which would enable the continued measurement of progress at the national level using the Sendai Framework indicators. All those efforts would help to substantially manage disaster risk reduction, with the aim of preventing loss of life and controlling adverse impacts on livelihoods, health and national economies. In the light of the IPCC special report, he urged parties to conclude work agreed under the Paris Agreement as soon as possible and report on results no later than the third part of the first session of the Conference of the Parties serving as the meeting of the Parties to the Paris Agreement, to be held in Poland in December 2018.

84. CELAC countries rejected the promotion and unilateral application of economic, financial or commercial measures that were incompatible with international law and the Charter of the United Nations, and which could hinder development financing and impede full implementation of economic and social development, especially in developing countries.

85. **Ms. Kanimozhi** (India) said that the actions and experience of India, home to one sixth of the world’s population, and governed democratically and consistently among the fastest-growing large economies, had global implications. India was pursuing development partnerships with other developing countries, in a spirit of South-South cooperation, and had presented a voluntary national review on its achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals in 2018. The agency overseeing its implementation of the 2030 Agenda would be measuring annual progress made in health, education and water management, and would monitor local level development and provide appropriate incentives to the provinces. An index had been prepared to rank provinces competitively, using 75 indicators to capture progress made towards the Goals.

86. Her delegation fully supported the Secretary General’s comprehensive proposals for reform of the United Nations development system and called upon traditional donors to step up voluntary contributions for the timely operationalization of the proposed reinvigorated resident coordinator system. It also welcomed efforts to reform the Department of Economic and Social Affairs with a view to implementing the 2030 Agenda. India had signed its



United Nations Sustainable Development Framework for 2018–2022 the previous week.

87. Sustainable development required addressing climate change through appropriate mitigation and adaptation measures. In that context, her delegation welcomed the initiative for renewed focus on climate action. India was transforming its energy mix towards renewable energy, with a view to producing 175 gigawatts of renewable energy, including 100 gigawatts of solar power, by 2022, and had partnered with France and other countries to launch the International Solar Alliance as a means of promoting collective global efforts on climate action. Earlier in the month, UNEP had conferred the Champion of the Earth award on Prime Minister Modi.

88. Her country valued the role of global partnerships towards achieving the Sustainable Development Goals and looked forward to the forthcoming Conference on South-South Cooperation which would be taking place in Buenos Aires in March 2019. It was forming development partnerships with least developed countries and small island developing States under the India-United Nations Development Partnership Fund, had contributed to the United Nations Tax Trust Fund for the second successive year, and had also contributed to the trust funds for the Technology Bank for Least Developed Countries and for the organization of the midterm review of the implementation of the Vienna Programme of Action for Landlocked Developing Countries for the Decade 2014–2024.

89. **Mr. Bin Momen** (Bangladesh) said that implementation of the 2030 Agenda would depend largely on the international community's success in halting global climate change and reducing disaster risks. The findings in the IPCC special report with regard to the consequences of global warming on poverty eradication, food security and public health were of deep concern.

90. Bangladesh was one of the 10 most climate-vulnerable countries in the world; climate change thus posed an existential threat to its 160 million people, although the country had hardly contributed to environmental deterioration. His Government's commitment to the Paris Agreement was evident through its pledge not to exceed the average per capita emission of the developing world; its firm commitment to low-carbon, climate-resilient development; and its plans to move towards "carbon budgeting", resilient industrialization and de-carbonized manufacturing pathways. Bangladesh had submitted its nationally determined contributions in 2016 and had mainstreamed climate actions and disaster management into its

national planning and sustainable development strategy. More than 1 per cent of its gross domestic product was being used to tackle climate change, and \$450 million in national resources had been allocated towards adaptation and mitigation.

91. To ensure food security, his Government had been investing in transforming its agriculture and making it more resilient to the impacts of climate change and disasters. It also planned to increase tree coverage from 22 per cent to 24 per cent over the next five years, and was implementing a large-scale project for the conservation of the Sundarbans, the world's largest mangrove forest, which had been designated a World Heritage site by the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO). His country's Delta Plan 2100 was a record 82-year development plan that took into account local geomorphology and the impact of global climate change.

92. His Government was adopting a scientific and inclusive approach to disaster risk reduction that included hazard identification and mitigation, community preparedness and integrated response efforts. It had established disaster management information centres with communications links to all the country's high-risk areas and adopted a range of initiatives, including earthquake risk assessments and tsunami and storm surge risk mapping which fed into city planning and emergency response services. Those initiatives had significantly increased the nation's capacity to respond proactively to disasters. In addition, his country had hosted the second International Conference on Disability and Disaster Risk Management in May 2018, which had resulted in the Dhaka Declaration on Disability and Disaster Risk Management, outlining actions to strengthen multi-stakeholder platforms and intergovernmental initiatives to implement the Sendai Framework for persons living with disabilities.

93. While Bangladesh had drawn mostly on its own resources, it was essential that its development partners provide financial resources and ensure technology transfer to help with climate change mitigation and adaptation and disaster risk reduction. He hoped that the current session of the General Assembly would engage in a focused discussion on climate finance and justice, in order to put the world on track to meeting the pre-2020 ambition and long-term goals of the Paris Agreement.

94. **Mr. Naumkin** (Russian Federation) said that addressing global climate change was a prerequisite for achieving sustainable development. The findings in the

IPCC special report demonstrated the need not only to step up collective action to reduce greenhouse gas emissions but also to improve adaptation measures. Agreement on a set of rules for the implementation of the Paris Agreement had become essential and the outcome of the negotiations at the twenty-fourth session of the Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change would have great significance for the continued effectiveness of the international climate regime. Every effort must be made to agree on a balanced package.

95. Action to combat climate change should be comprehensive in nature, covering such sectors as energy, transport and agriculture. The forestry sector also played an important role in climate regulation. As the Russian Federation alone accounted for 20 per cent of the world's total forest area, his Government had recently endorsed a forest development strategy that would contribute towards the national goal of reducing greenhouse gas emissions to no more than 75 per cent of the 1990 level by 2020.

96. Global sustainable development, however, would not be achieved without assistance to countries in special situations, including small island developing States. Accordingly, the international community must step up its efforts to implement the Samoa Pathway and ensure that the preparatory process for the related midterm review in 2019 was both comprehensive and inclusive. In recent years the Russian Federation had been forging partnerships with small island developing States to build their resilience to climate change and strengthen their sustainable development capacities. Furthermore, his Government had provided targeted humanitarian assistance to Vanuatu in the wake of Tropical Cyclone Pam, had assisted in the recovery efforts of Antigua and Barbuda, Cuba and Dominica in the aftermath of hurricanes Irma and Maria, and had contributed \$7.5 million to a UNDP project for natural disaster prevention and mitigation in Pacific small island developing States.

97. The Russian Federation was one of the first countries to provide assistance to countries affected by natural disasters. Only the previous week a Russian vessel had shipped 23 tons of humanitarian assistance to meet the basic needs of those affected by the earthquake in Sulawesi, Indonesia. Similarly, over the past 25 years, Russian rescue workers had been deployed to more than 80 countries and the annual budget allocated to humanitarian assistance was approximately \$90 million.

98. The Sendai Framework provided a good basis for the international community to step up its joint work on disaster risk reduction. In that context, it was important

not only to ensure the timely implementation of the Framework's targets, including in the short term, but also to establish a global network of national response centres that could exchange information and provide assistance in a timely manner.

99. **Mr. Martínez Pichardo** (Mexico), speaking as a youth delegate, said that it was imperative to move away from an international system that was limited to interactions among its members, and towards an international society of shared values and interests that was respectful of existing multilateral frameworks. The international community had launched a paradigm shift with its adoption of the 2030 Agenda; however, the Sustainable Development Goals could only be achieved if their comprehensive and indivisible nature was respected. It was thus urgent that the General Assembly, at its seventy-fourth session, review the structure of the high-level political forum, which, in its current format, was more divisive than inclusive.

100. Mexico had demonstrated its broad commitment to combating climate change, which was one of the most pressing causes facing humankind. As climate change also had an impact on social issues such as poverty reduction, it was imperative to continue to promote multilateralism and to consider how economies were organized, and, at the individual level, to change a number of daily habits which undermined the environment.

101. Accordingly, the twenty-fourth session of the Conference of the Parties must adopt a work programme that was balanced and agreeable to all, incorporated all the elements of the Paris Agreement and ensured that no one was left behind.

102. At a time when intergovernmental discussions on mitigating greenhouse gas emissions were moving forward, discussions on disaster risks should not be delayed, as strengthening countries' resilience to natural disasters was vital. The Sendai targets for disaster risk reduction must be fulfilled and progress made on that agenda at the forthcoming sixth session of the Global Platform on Disaster Risk Reduction to be held in May 2019. As a mega-diverse country and current President of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity, Mexico was concerned at the slow pace of progress in fulfilling the Aichi Biodiversity Targets. The challenge at the forthcoming meeting of the Conference of the Parties would be to set even more ambitious targets and launch discussions on possible post-2020 schemes. It was also important to continue mainstreaming biodiversity into agriculture, forestry, fisheries and tourism.

103. Civil society had a key role to play and should also be able to take ownership in an integrated approach to sustainable development, based on the 2030 Agenda, the Addis Ababa Agenda, the Paris Agreement, the Sendai Framework and other multilateral instruments. Various social groups, particularly youth, as agents of change, should also have a chance to assume ownership in fulfilling the 2030 Agenda and tackling structural barriers in the development paradigm. Indigenous peoples, too, with their rich ancestral knowledge, could help achieve a more harmonious coexistence with the planet.

104. Lastly, he wished to stress the role of partnerships towards achieving the 2030 Agenda; youth seeking to initiate change would be grateful for more opportunities to engage in dialogue with civil society, Government and the private sector. Young people aspiring to be the first generation to live in peaceful and sustainable societies that left no one behind believed that it was crucial to work with the United Nations, which was a catalyst for global change and played a vital role towards achieving the people-centred 2030 Agenda.

105. **Ms. Leyva Regueira** (Cuba) said that there was a growing gap between North and South, and an increasing polarization of wealth. Unsustainable production and consumption patterns continued and vast amounts of financial resources were being squandered on arms dealing and speculation. Against that backdrop, specific actions towards sustainable development must continue to be taken, on the basis of a just and equitable international order, inclusive and coherent policies, a revitalized global partnership, effective mobilization of financial resources, as well as capacity-building and technology transfers to benefit developing countries. Moreover, developed countries must honour their historic commitments and responsibilities.

106. Leaving no one person or country behind entailed recognition and respect for a range of approaches, visions and models, decided upon by each respective country in the exercise of its right to self-determination, taking into account its national circumstances and priorities.

107. Cuba remained committed to the goals set out at the major United Nations conferences and summits on sustainable development in its three dimensions, and, in particular, to strengthening the mechanisms for the effective implementation, at all levels, of the Samoa Pathway.

108. Referring to the IPCC special report, she noted that the United States of America, which had been a main polluter, had refused to join the international community towards fulfilling the Paris Agreement,

hence undermining the very life of future generations and the survival of all species. She urged all States parties to the Paris Agreement to fulfil their obligations under it and to broaden its scope on the basis of common but differentiated responsibilities.

109. The economic, commercial and financial embargo imposed by the United States Government against Cuba for nearly six decades was the most unjust, severe and protracted system of unilateral sanctions ever applied against any country. It constituted a massive, flagrant and systematic violation of the human rights of the Cuban people and was an act of genocide under the Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide of 1948. It violated the Charter of the United Nations and international law, and hindered international cooperation. Indeed, that hostile policy was the main obstacle to the development of Cuba and the Cuban people's enjoyment of all their human rights. It also hindered implementation of the 2030 Agenda and its Goals and was the chief stumbling block to the development of economic, commercial, and financial relations between Cuba and the United States as well as the rest of the world, owing to its extraterritorial nature, with damages reaching more than \$933 billion since the embargo was first imposed.

110. **Mr. Sukhee** (Mongolia) said that his Government aspired to consolidate its democratic governance, preserve an ecological balance, eradicate poverty in all its forms and join the ranks of upper middle-income countries by 2030. To that end, it had been undertaking measures to ensure coherence between the Sustainable Development Goals and its national development policies, including through its Green Development Policy and State Policy on Energy, and planned to deliver its first voluntary national review on implementation of the 2030 Agenda in the 2019 high-level political forum.

111. Global warming, climate change and disaster risks were daunting challenges which had a particular impact on the development of the least developed countries, the landlocked developing countries, small island developing States and middle-income countries. The geographical location and fragile ecosystem of Mongolia made it especially vulnerable to the effects of climate change. Its intended nationally determined contribution under the Paris Agreement would include a 14 per cent reduction in greenhouse gas emissions by 2030, and its phased action plan to implement its National Green Development Policy prioritized 255 activities to address climate change. The action plan also aimed to increase the use of renewable energy in electricity generation from 7.6 per cent in 2014 to 30 per cent by 2030. The top priorities in the government

energy policy were a reliable energy supply, efficiency and productivity, environmental sustainability and green development issues. His Government had also launched the country's first large-scale renewable energy project – the 50-megawatt Salkhit wind power plant – in 2012, and was launching a Northeast Asia super-grid project whose benefits would include energy security, job creation, and reduced carbon dioxide emissions in the region.

112. With Asia ranking as one of the world's most disaster-prone regions, Mongolia was engaging constructively in regional cooperation to enhance disaster resilience, reduce risk and increase effectiveness of disaster prevention activities, for example, through an initiative to establish a Northeast Asia disaster risk reduction platform in its territory. The project had been discussed, and had garnered support, at the Ulaanbaatar Dialogue on Northeast Asia and the second Asian Ministerial Conference on Disaster Risk Reduction, which it had hosted in Ulaanbaatar in July 2018 in collaboration with the United Nations Office for Disaster Risk Reduction. The Asian Ministerial Conference had also been an opportunity to explore innovative approaches to preventing, reducing and managing disaster risks. Lastly, he said that strengthening development partnerships was vital for the sustainable development of countries like Mongolia.

113. **Ms. Shurbaji** (Syrian Arab Republic) said that, three years after the adoption of the 2030 Agenda, exceptional circumstances were impeding many States' efforts to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals. For eight years, her Government had faced challenges that exceeded its capacity to cope, including the terrorist war being waged against Syria, the unilateral economic sanctions on the country, and the losses and damage inflicted upon the Syrian people and the country's infrastructure by the so-called international coalition and its practices.

114. Nevertheless, Syria persisted in cooperating with the United Nations development system in pursuit of its national development priorities, namely, relief, meeting basic needs and recovery. Her Government was articulating a strategy around those priorities to manage the crisis and its repercussions, crafting a vision for rebuilding the whole of society, not just the economy. Relaunching the society's economic and social life from the current halt in development activity would constitute the first step towards building institutional capacity, promoting social justice, creating the conditions for the return of the displaced and refugees and ultimately restoring all components of economic, social and environmental development.

115. The Sustainable Development Goals could not be achieved while States insisted on adopting politicized agendas, in contravention of the purposes and principles of the Charter of the United Nations. Syria urged the international community to provide support for its development initiatives without succumbing to double standards or politicization, attempting to interfere in the country's internal affairs or imposing restrictions on the Organization aimed at narrowing the scope of assistance to humanitarian relief alone. However, until the unilateral economic sanctions imposed on the Syrian people were lifted, it would be difficult to move beyond emergency relief initiatives designed to meet the urgent needs of the Syrian people and, instead, focus on fostering economic growth and rebuilding the country's infrastructure, education, health-care and other sectors.

116. Turning to the report of the Secretary-General on the oil slick on Lebanese shores ([A/73/302](#)), she underscored that that oil slick was just one of many negative repercussions of the aggressive behaviour of Israel. The international community must ensure that the Israeli occupation authorities were held legally and morally responsible for their repeated violations of international law, including relevant United Nations resolutions.

*The meeting rose at 1 p.m.*