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Chair: Ms. Frazier (Malta)

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

General debate (*continued*)

1. **Mr. Prongthura** (Thailand), speaking as a youth delegate, said that developing countries lacked sufficient resources and capacity to respond adequately to the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) and climate crises. As one of the most climate-vulnerable countries, Thailand stressed the need for adaptation and resilience and called for climate finance commitments to be met in a timely manner, with 50 per cent allocated to adaptation action. His country's risked-informed approach to a green, inclusive and sustainable recovery would be based on its homegrown sufficiency economy philosophy and bio-circular green economic model. It already had a strong and resilient universal health-care system underpinned by village health volunteer networks – a bottom-up approach that should be expanded to other sectors. Closing the development gaps would require a reinvigorated resident coordinator system and adequate North-South, South-South and triangular cooperation. For its part, Thailand would be joining with the United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific and the United Nations Office for South-South Cooperation to host the Global South-South Development Expo in 2022.

2. **Mr. Al-Mouallimi** (Saudi Arabia), speaking via video link, said that in the face of the challenges posed by the COVID-19 pandemic, achieving the Sustainable Development Goals would require extra resolve and determination. In the five years since the launch of its Vision 2030 strategy, Saudi Arabia had made outstanding progress towards its ambitious goals. It was creating a climate conducive to diversified economic growth that was less dependent on oil and made greater use of renewable energy. His Government had programmes to develop infrastructure, encourage local industry, reduce unemployment and generally create a better quality of life for all citizens. It was devoting particular attention to the tourism industry and was building a globally competitive digital infrastructure at home at the same time as helping other countries to bridge the digital divide.

3. The Kingdom was also taking measures to fulfil its commitments under international climate change agreements. As Chair of the Group of 20 for 2020, it had promoted a circular carbon economy and the use of renewable energy. The Saudi Green Initiative and the Middle East Green Initiative would both make valuable contributions to meeting global climate change targets.

4. In keeping with its policy of solidarity with States affected by humanitarian and natural disasters, his

country had provided hundreds of millions of dollars in pandemic relief funds and been at the forefront of efforts to restore balance and stability to global markets. The Kingdom also supported efforts to ensure equitable vaccine access for all peoples and would remain committed to international cooperation for sustainable development and humanitarian relief.

5. **Mr. Kim Song** (Democratic People's Republic of Korea) said that frank discussions were needed to arrive jointly at more rational and realistic solutions for overcoming the many challenges confronting the world. Regarding the pandemic, international solidarity was required to end it quickly, as well as to ensure the sharing of scientific knowledge and technologies and impartial research into the root cause. There was no room for vaccine nationalism.

6. Solidarity was also needed to cope with climate change, environmental degradation and the food crisis. All countries should make sincere efforts to comply with the international conventions on climate change and the environment, which should be continuously updated. In that regard, his Government strongly condemned the decision of Japan to release a large amount of radioactive water into the ocean.

7. Peace and security were also essential to overcome the global health crisis and achieve economic development. In that connection, the ongoing aggressive war games on the Korean Peninsula destabilized the region and hindered his country's development. Similarly, economic sanctions against Cuba, the Islamic Republic of Iran and the Syrian Arab Republic were hampering their development and their ability to control the pandemic. However, despite foreign aggression, the pandemic and abnormal weather conditions, his country continued to make progress towards self-supporting development, thanks to strong leadership.

8. **Mr. Mahmoud** (Egypt) said that his country's Egypt Vision 2030 strategy put Egyptian citizens first by strengthening social protection networks, especially in rural areas, benefiting some 60 million people at a cost of \$45 billion. Efforts to promote balanced regional development had helped to reduce poverty and unemployment, stemmed internal migration to cities and slowed the sprawl of urban slums. Egypt had presented three voluntary national reviews to the high-level political forum on sustainable development, the most recent in 2021. It would continue to be active in negotiations on reform of the United Nations development system and in particular revitalizing the role of United Nations resident coordinators.

9. Financing remained a major challenge to the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development at both the

national and international levels. Egypt was diversifying sources of funding for development programmes through partnerships with the private sector and civil society. In March 2020, it had signed a protocol with the Joint Sustainable Development Goals Fund to support the implementation of both Egypt Vision 2030 and Agenda 2063 of the African Union. He commended the decision of the Group of 20 to extend the suspension of debt service for the poorest countries until the end of 2021. Illicit financial flows were another threat to the implementation of the 2030 Agenda and his country had taken a number of measures to enhance awareness, data collection and international cooperation on that issue.

10. His country took a special interest in climate change because of its relationship to desertification. He recalled the initiative put forward by Egypt when it had hosted the United Nations Biodiversity Conference in 2018 and noted that Egypt would be hosting the twenty-seventh session of the Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change scheduled for 2022. As a country that was well below the water poverty threshold, Egypt took a keen interest in cross-border cooperation among riparian States to ensure that downstream States would not be left vulnerable to unilateral and unsustainable measures taken by upstream States.

11. **Mr. Kimura** (Japan) said that COVID-19 continued to pose a serious threat to human security. In June 2021, Japan had co-hosted the Gavi COVAX Advance Market Commitment Summit, where it had increased its pledged contribution to the COVID-19 Vaccine Global Access (COVAX) Facility to a total of \$1 billion. It would also provide around 60 million doses of vaccine to developing countries, as well as “last mile” support for vaccine administration. As part of its commitment to leading international efforts to achieve universal health coverage, it would contribute to the next high-level meeting on universal health coverage. It would also host the Tokyo Nutrition for Growth Summit 2021.

12. Japan intended to reduce its greenhouse gas emission by 46 per cent by 2030 and to net zero by 2050. It would also provide public and private climate finance of around \$60 billion to developing countries over the next five years. In a related area, it would continue to promote implementation of the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015–2030, which was due for a midterm review in 2023.

13. With respect to the financing of sustainable and inclusive development, the Committee needed to deepen discussions on how to enhance transparency in public finance and how to build back better after the pandemic.

For its part, Japan had recently raised around \$180 million to promote women’s empowerment and gender equality through the issuance of gender bonds. His delegation would work within the Committee to deepen the discussion of the importance of digital cooperation and inclusive and credible science, technology and innovation in promoting sustainable development.

14. Regarding the comment of the representative of the Democratic People’s Republic of Korea about the treated water to be released from the Fukushima nuclear power station, his Government would continue to share information on its handling with the international community, including through the International Atomic Energy Agency.

15. **Mr. Giorgio** (Eritrea) said that while ambitious themes were commendable, it was premature to discuss resilience and recovery when millions of people were still battling COVID-19 with little or no resources. Despite the impassioned rhetoric about leaving no one behind, the international community had been doing just that since the start of the pandemic. In Africa, 90 per cent of the population had yet to receive their first dose of the vaccine while the developed world was considering a third round of vaccines. A vaccine was not a commodity to be cornered by those who could afford it. Ensuring equitable distribution of vaccines was the only way to secure the well-being of all.

16. The countries contributing the least to greenhouse gas emissions were bearing the brunt of climate change, and even as it spiralled out of control, the developed countries had yet to deliver the billions of dollars promised for climate finance. In that connection, the international community should not expect developing countries, where many people still did not have dependable access to electricity, to sacrifice development to climate change mitigation.

17. With 2030 fast approaching, it was time to demonstrate strong solidarity on achieving the Sustainable Development Goals. Member States should advocate a global economic order that strove for equality, and developed countries should refrain from adopting restrictive financial and political measures, including unilateral sanctions, that impeded the development efforts of the targeted countries.

18. **Mr. Vélez** (Mexico), speaking as a youth delegate, said that equitable distribution of COVID-19 vaccines was a moral imperative and in the interest of every country. Member States must ensure that by the next session of the General Assembly, 70 per cent of the world population was vaccinated. While the current situation was discouraging, the health crisis presented a

unique opportunity for the Committee to advance the 2030 Agenda. Its resolutions could form the basis of a green, sustainable and equitable recovery.

19. The Committee should promote joint initiatives to ensure greater international cooperation on access to COVID-19 vaccines, medicines and related equipment, as well as universal recognition of the vaccines approved by the World Health Organization (WHO), which would make it possible to ease travel restrictions, thereby contributing to recovery and strengthening multilateralism. It also should propose steps to strengthen the capacity of the international system to respond to future health crises.

20. Mexico would continue to promote the issuance of sustainable development, gender and green bonds, as well as the suspension of debt service. Especially given the vital role of development finance in recovery from the pandemic, it welcomed the Secretary-General's report on enhanced cooperation between the United Nations and all relevant partners, in particular the private sector (A/76/319). Cognizant of the importance of closing the digital gap, Mexico reaffirmed its support for the Secretary-General's Road Map for Digital Cooperation, which it was endeavouring to implement. In all of its actions, Mexico would work to ensure that the most vulnerable were not left behind, and it stood ready to contribute actively to the Committee's deliberations.

21. In the lead-up to the twenty-sixth session of the Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, the Committee should reiterate the urgency of developing nature-based climate adaptation and mitigation strategies that ensured well-being and social justice. Its recommendations would be incomplete if they did not recognize the specific needs of vulnerable groups.

22. **Mr. Hauri** (Switzerland) said that COVID-19 had had a negative impact on sustainable development and sustainable development financing. However, the lessons learned should enable improvements in crisis preparedness and resiliency. Given the urgent challenges facing all countries, Member States needed to move faster to implement the 2030 Agenda and the Paris Agreement adopted under the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change. In the coming weeks, the Committee should continue to develop normative guidelines for sustainable development in a spirit of cooperation and consensus-building. It was essential to focus on the resolutions with the highest impact, such as the one on operational activities for development of the United Nations system, which his delegation was pleased to be facilitating

during the seventy-sixth session. Switzerland welcomed the possibility of virtual or hybrid deliberations, which allowed the United Nations to continue its vital work.

23. Switzerland remained strongly committed to the implementation of the 2030 Agenda, which would be impossible without security. In 2022, for the first time, Switzerland was a candidate for a non-permanent seat on the Security Council, where it would continue to work for humankind, sustainable development, multilateralism, innovation and peace.

24. Without quality data and statistics, it would be impossible to measure progress towards sustainable development, and Switzerland was therefore pleased to host the United Nations World Data Forum later in October 2021. With respect to technological development and digitization, his Government worked closely with academia and the private sector to develop innovative technologies for sustainable development projects. Within the General Assembly, his delegation was active in efforts to promote state responsibility and international cyberspace law, particularly with regard to resolutions on science and innovation and on information and communications technologies for sustainable development.

25. **Ms. Fatima** (Bangladesh) said that a bold and ambitious road map was needed to ensure a sustainable and resilient recovery from the pandemic. Providing universal, affordable access to vaccines should be the top priority. She reiterated her Prime Minister's call to declare COVID-19 vaccines a global public good. Vaccine production and distribution capacity should be scaled up urgently by transferring vaccine technologies to developing countries that had the production capacities.

26. In the context of the Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change and the Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity, her Prime Minister had called for limiting global temperature rise, enhancing climate finance and facilitating technology transfer, as well as for upscaling adaptation measures and increasing investment and technology support in the areas of agricultural research and development, efficient food systems and renewable energy.

27. Her delegation welcomed the Secretary-General's proposed global digital compact to connect all people to the Internet, including all schools. As Co-Chair of the Preparatory Committee of the fifth United Nations Conference on the Least Developed Countries, Bangladesh sought to contribute to a bold and ambitious programme of action for the next decade that would include an incentives-based graduation structure. It was seriously concerned about the pandemic's

disproportionate impact on women, who should be placed front and centre in response and recovery efforts. By emphasizing women's participation in sociopolitical life and support for women in national COVID-19 recovery efforts, her country had been able to lift millions of families out of poverty, increase school enrolment and reduce inequality, and it stood ready to share good practices with other developing countries.

28. In many developing countries, external financing from exports and remittances had shrunk severely. Her delegation urged development partners to provide targeted support to revitalize external sources of financing, including export earnings, remittances, official development assistance (ODA) and private financing. Migrant workers, who had been hit hard by the pandemic, needed international support to achieve a full recovery.

29. **Mr. Akram** (Pakistan) said that the COVID-19 pandemic had brought the development divide into stark relief: almost all the vaccines and stimulus funds had stayed in the wealthiest countries. However, the greatest injustice was that the countries which had contributed the least to climate change were bearing the brunt of it. At the current rate, very few of the Sustainable Development Goals would be met by 2030. His delegation therefore welcomed the global development initiative proposed by the President of China.

30. The Prime Minister of Pakistan had also proposed a development agenda. In it, he called for waiving intellectual property rights on COVID-19 vaccines, fully funding COVAX, the vaccines pillar of the Access to COVID-10 Tools (ACT) Accelerator, and lifting applicable export and other restrictions. To relieve the unsustainable debt burden on developing countries, the Debt Service Suspension Initiative of the Group of 20 should be further extended, the debts of the most stressed countries should be cancelled or suspended, the private sector should participate in debt restructuring, and more concessional assistance should be granted. At least \$150 billion of unutilized special drawing rights assigned to wealthy countries should be reallocated to developing countries, and the cost of borrowing for developing countries should be lowered through innovative financial mechanisms.

31. The developed countries should fulfil their climate finance pledges, with 50 per cent allocated for adaptation. Massive investment should be made in Sustainable Development Goal-aligned sectors such as infrastructure, and concerted efforts should be made to establish a fair trading system. The digital divide should be bridged through technology access and informational technology infrastructure and skills development. It was

also necessary to halt illicit financial flows, for which purpose the recommendations of the High-level Panel on International Financial Accountability, Transparency and Integrity for Achieving the 2030 Agenda were of great interest, and he urged the Committee to act on them.

32. **Mr. Salim** (Kenya) said that the pandemic had caused the deepest recession in nearly a century. While Kenya had taken swift action to cushion different sectors of its economy, poverty and income inequality had worsened. A successful recovery would depend on equitable global access to the vaccines.

33. Welcoming the multilateral and bilateral initiatives to mobilize finance for development, he stressed that structural changes were needed in order to increase investments in developing countries significantly. His delegation recognized the important role of science, technology and innovation and urged increased international digital cooperation in the form of technology transfer and capacity-building to close the digital divide.

34. As a nature-based economy, Kenya continued to seek green and blue solutions that would deliver jobs and prosperity for the younger generations. Its updated nationally determined contribution aimed to cut greenhouse gas emissions by 32 per cent by 2030. It had also identified a range of ocean-based adaptation priorities. His delegation continued to stress the importance of collective climate action towards a just and fair energy transition for developing countries, and it hoped that the upcoming session of the Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change would deliver concrete action on adaptation finance.

35. Kenya welcomed the commemoration of the fiftieth anniversary of the United Nations Environment Programme, as well as the high-level meeting on the New Urban Agenda and the international meeting entitled "Stockholm+50: a healthy planet for the prosperity of all – our responsibility, our opportunity". It also looked forward to co-hosting the 2022 United Nations Conference to Support the Implementation of Sustainable Development Goal 14: Conserve and sustainably use the oceans, seas and marine resources for sustainable development.

36. **Mr. Chumakov** (Russian Federation) said that Member States must work together to implement the 2030 Agenda by adopting a balanced approach in which the three dimensions of sustainable development were fully taken into account. That also meant creating a fair partnership among States, without the creation of any new economic barriers or restrictions. Furthermore, in

the interests of swiftly removing restrictions on international travel, his country supported the mutual recognition of vaccines approved by national supervisory bodies.

37. The United Nations should play a central role in shaping an environmental agenda that was based on equality and mutual respect for the interests of Member States. Before any new ambitious climate goals were set, it was important to fully implement the Paris Agreement. In that regard, his delegation looked forward to agreement on common approaches to the functioning of market and non-market mechanisms during the twenty-sixth session of the Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change. It also noted the importance of stepping up measures to adapt to the negative consequences of climate change, especially in countries with a high level of vulnerability to nature disasters. His Government was actively engaged in implementing the Paris Agreement at the national level and was completing the development of a national strategy for socioeconomic development with low greenhouse gas emissions.

38. The architecture of the global financial and economic system must be reformed on the basis of equality and inclusiveness, and in the interests of the sustainable and productive growth of national economies. The Russian Federation advocated increasing the role of regional systems of international financial and technological cooperation. President Putin, for example, had proposed a greater Eurasian partnership based on closer ties between the Eurasian Economic Union and the Belt and Road Initiative, in which the Association of Southeast Asian Nations and the Shanghai Cooperation Organization would also be included.

39. The imposition by various countries and groups of countries of coercive measures against developing countries was unacceptable. His delegation called for support of President Putin's initiative to create "green corridors" free of trade wars and sanctions, especially for goods that were necessary to combat the pandemic.

40. There was a clear need to step up scientific exchanges, technology transfer and investment in infrastructure, education and innovation, and to move towards a new technology basis with more inclusive digitized labour markets. International organizations of the United Nations system would play an important role in shaping the new information society.

41. The level of foreign debt remained an important issue. The Russian Federation intended to work constructively on a number of initiatives within the

framework of the Group of 20 and the Paris Club of Industrial Country Creditors. It supported an individual approach to settling the debts of each country in the interests of achieving the Sustainable Development Goals.

42. While the important economic summits held during high-level week of the General Assembly had been welcome, there had unfortunately been a lack of balance at those and other recent United Nations events held related to the economic sphere with regard to the choice of their moderators and panellists, who held views that reflected the positions of only one group of countries. He called on the Secretariat to pay particular attention to that matter in the future.

43. Lastly, his delegation hoped that the Second Committee would preserve its potential for consensus, which remained an important part of its work.

44. **Mr. Al-Khalidi** (Iraq) said that his delegation supported international efforts to meet the challenges posed by COVID-19 and expressed solidarity with health-care workers around the world who were devoting their time and lives to fighting the pandemic. The adverse economic effects of the pandemic would be affecting development efforts for years to come. His country remained committed to implementing the 2030 Agenda and had presented a voluntary national review to the high-level political forum in 2021. However, it continued to face the twin challenges of COVID-19 and terrorism at a time when cuts in oil prices and production, under the agreement of April 2019 between the Organization of the Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC) and non-OPEC members, were creating growing budget shortfalls.

45. Iraq supported General Assembly resolution [75/233](#) on the quadrennial comprehensive policy review of operational activities for development of the United Nations system and urged greater efforts to reinvigorate the resident coordinator system through more balanced geographical representation and the increased employment of staff from host countries. He welcomed several events that had already been held during the high-level week of the current session, including the second Sustainable Development Goals Moment, the high-level dialogue on energy and the Food Systems Summit, and looked forward to the high-level event on jobs and social protection for poverty eradication to be convened at the initiative of the Secretary-General and the Governments of Jamaica and Canada. He closed by noting that in Iraq, sand and dust storms continued to pose problems for vegetation, air quality and air traffic, as well as causing respiratory problems that compounded the symptoms of COVID-19.

46. **Ms. Abuhaj** (Sudan) said that six years after the adoption of the 2030 Agenda, the challenges of eradicating poverty and hunger, now complicated by the COVID-19 pandemic, required a refocusing of energies and an ever more judicious use of limited resources. She called on the United Nations, its agencies and friendly States to support her country's food security efforts with technology transfer, capacity-building, support for agricultural research centres and technical expertise.

47. The Sudan was committed to the Sustainable Development Goals at the highest levels and had created national mechanisms to monitor and follow up on its implementation efforts. It had presented a voluntary national review in 2018 and would be going through the process again in 2022. Following dialogue between the transitional Government and the United States authorities, the Sudan had been removed from the list of State sponsors of terrorism in December 2020, making it eligible for the Heavily Indebted Poor Countries Initiative.

48. Her country was grateful for support from the international community for the ongoing economic and social reforms in the Sudan. Most recently, the World Bank had set aside \$2 billion in grants for the Sudan for poverty reduction and sustainable economic recovery. The transitional Government's reform efforts had already been reflected in more stable currency rates and lower inflation.

49. **Mr. Ben Naftaly** (Israel) said that developed and developing countries alike were confronting the dual crises of the COVID-19 pandemic and climate change. Israel had recently agreed to support several ambitious initiatives at the fifteenth meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity, and it would work to promote nature-based solutions at the twenty-sixth session of the Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change. In 2020, the President of Israel had endorsed the Leaders' Pledge for Nature.

50. His country was sharing COVID-19-related information in its digital medical records system with foreign researchers. As a world leader in entrepreneurship, Israel held intensive seminars for aspiring entrepreneurs in many developing countries.

51. Because many economies in the developing world relied heavily on agriculture, Israel sponsored a biennial resolution on agricultural technology for sustainable development. The COVID-19 pandemic had highlighted weaknesses in the food chain, and initiatives to build back better should aim to make food systems more robust and more sustainable. Special water-saving agricultural techniques – an area of Israeli expertise –

could help to save livelihoods and lives in countries where increasingly frequent droughts severely affected agriculture. The Agency for International Development Cooperation (MASHAV) shared its expertise in agriculture, education, health care and many other areas and worked in close partnership with United Nations agencies to implement projects around the world.

52. Gender equality and the rights of lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer, intersex and asexual persons were not subject to interpretation.

53. Israel was pleased with the continued progress towards normalization of relations with its neighbours, which would enable progress on the Sustainable Development Goals and should serve as an example of what was possible elsewhere.

54. **Mr. Rai** (Nepal) said that the Committee was convening at a turning point in history. Humanity's very future depended on global solidarity, cooperation and coordination to ensure access to COVID-19 vaccines for everyone everywhere.

55. The pandemic had halted or reversed progress towards the Sustainable Development Goals, especially for the least developed countries, landlocked developing countries and small island developing States. Overcoming the gaps that the pandemic had widened would require strong regional and global partnerships. It was necessary to scale up ODA, foreign direct investment and aid for trade and climate finance, to reallocate special drawing rights and to suspend or cancel debt. The initiatives taken by the Group of 20, development partners and international financial institutions were positive but far from sufficient.

56. The existential threat of climate change continued unabated. It was time to ensure climate justice for poor, climate vulnerable countries such as Nepal that contributed very little to greenhouse gas emissions. Developing countries needed adequate, accessible and predictable climate finance to implement their nationally determined contributions. They also needed adequate technology transfer, both for climate change mitigation and adaptation and to close the digital divide, which was a matter of urgency.

57. **Mr. Fernandez De Soto Valderrama** (Colombia), reaffirming his country's commitment to implementing the 2030 Agenda, said that for a sustainable, resilient and inclusive recovery it would be necessary to take advantage of the opportunities inherent in the orange economy and in South-South and triangular cooperation. Economic support measures such as those recently enacted in Colombia were helpful, but they must be accompanied by an enabling international

financial system. In particular, new criteria for minimum financial risk should be established in recognition of the additional emergency debt required for recovery and climate action.

58. While not a major contributor of greenhouse gases, Colombia was particularly vulnerable to climate change and had set targets of a 51 per cent reduction of emissions by 2030 and carbon neutrality by 2050. It would continue to spearhead discussions on a post-2020 global biodiversity framework for adoption at the fifteenth meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity.

59. **Mr. Pieris** (Sri Lanka) said that the cost of recovery from the pandemic and continued resilient development put a devastating financial strain on his country. Its foreign currency reserves had shrunk owing to a decline in tourism and remittance and export revenues, compounded by the exit of investors from the debt and equity markets. In the face of the pandemic, the Government had reprioritized expenditure, focusing on rights-based financing, to provide continuous access to free education and health care and address social protection priorities. For example, it had launched a programme to provide emergency cash assistance and essential food items to low-income families who had lost their livelihoods as a result of the quarantine curfews and lockdowns, and it was providing emergency food assistance. It had issued debt moratoriums and had introduced financial concession schemes for financial institutions to provide additional support for businesses affected by the pandemic.

60. Successful global recovery would require global solidarity. States would need to uphold their ODA commitments, and the international financial institutions would need to be flexible and transparent in their financing and make finance tools equitable and readily accessible. However, recovery would not be possible at all while half of the world faced COVID surges and lockdowns.

61. **Ms. Al-Thani** (Qatar) said that her country's investments in technology and innovation had positioned it well to take preventive measures to protect its population against COVID-19. Qatar had also been in the forefront of international efforts, having provided some \$140 million to health-care organizations, international agencies and charitable groups, including a \$10 million contribution to WHO. She noted that Qatar Airways had generously returned travellers to their home countries and transported medical supplies around the world under trying pandemic conditions. She was pleased to announce that Qatar had just made a \$20 million multi-year contribution to support

accelerator laboratories of the United Nations Development Programme. In January 2022, Doha would be hosting the fifth United Nations Conference on the Least Developed Countries, which would help to chart a course for recovery from the pandemic.

62. At the United Nations Climate Action Summit in September 2019, Qatar had announced a \$100 million contribution help small island developing States meet the challenges posed by climate change. Total funding pledged by the Qatar Fund for Development in 2020 had come to \$533 million. Qatar would soon be opening a United Nations House in Doha to bring together the offices of various United Nations agencies under one roof.

63. **Mr. Valtýsson** (Iceland) said that, in the absence of immediate collective action, the unequal distribution of vaccines and vastly different abilities of countries to address the socioeconomic impact of COVID-19 would deepen inequalities and halt the recovery. Billions of people affected by the pandemic had no social safety net, and it had been disproportionately hard on the most vulnerable, especially women and children. To build back better, Member States needed to follow through on the commitments made at the Generation Equality Forum and invest in gender-responsive social protection.

64. Iceland was doing its part to contribute to global recovery and advance the Sustainable Development Goals. First, it had contributed to COVAX and was sharing vaccines. It had set a goal of reaching carbon neutrality by 2040, and since 2018 it had more than doubled its contribution to international climate finance. In addition, his country had been a global champion for just and inclusive energy transitions in the lead-up to the high-level dialogue on energy, launching its own energy compact and joining in others, including the gender and energy compact. At the recent United Nations Food Systems Summit, it had advocated the implementation of comprehensive school feeding programs and had emphasized the need for an enhanced focus on the role of aquatic food in sustainable development. As a member of the blue food alliance, it would continue to actively oppose illegal, unregulated and unreported fishing. Lastly, Iceland also co-chaired the Group of Friends on Desertification, Land Degradation and Drought.

65. In closing, he encouraged the delegations to focus their efforts on the resolutions that would have the most impact on implementation of the 2030 Agenda and the Addis Ababa Action Agenda of the Third International Conference on Financing for Development.

66. **Mr. Ipo** (Côte d'Ivoire) said that the effects of the pandemic had all but erased progress towards attaining the Sustainable Development Goals, making multilateralism all the more essential. Redoubled effort was needed to meet the challenges of development financing, climate change, loss of biodiversity and social inequalities while promoting human rights. The first priority must be urgent collective action to speed recovery from the pandemic, including making COVID-19 vaccines universally available.

67. More public and private development financing was needed to fund programmes for reducing inequalities and poverty in developing countries. In that regard, his delegation welcomed the Group of 20 Debt Service Suspension Initiative and the Common Framework for Debt Treatments beyond the Debt Service Suspension Initiative, as well as the Secretary-General's recent renewed appeal to developed countries to mobilize \$100 billion per year in climate financing in accordance with their commitments.

68. His Government had made eliminating social inequalities a top priority. Alongside its COVID-19 response plan, it was rolling out a social programme aimed at further reducing poverty and promoting the equitable distribution of wealth. It had also enacted a quota for women in the National Assembly in order to promote the advancement of women.

69. **Mr. Arriola Ramírez** (Paraguay) said that his delegation welcomed the theme chosen for the general debate, which echoed that of the current session of the Economic and Social Council. Coordination of work was more essential than ever, in order to ensure effective multilateral action. The Government of Paraguay had updated its 2030 development plan in 2018 and, despite the difficult global circumstances, had presented a second voluntary national review. While the 2030 Agenda provided a road map for building back better, following it would require multilateral and international cooperation.

70. Special consideration should be given to the needs and challenges of the least developed countries, landlocked developing countries and small island developing States. As a landlocked country, Paraguay was forced to lower taxes to attract investment, which reduced the revenues available for development programmes.

71. The Paraguayan economy was based mainly on production of food for export. In most developing countries, agriculture played a vital role in poverty reduction and rural development, and open, transparent and predictable agricultural trade was essential to ensure

global food security and achieve the Sustainable Development Goals.

72. Paraguay had opted for hydroelectric power, and the ongoing water crisis – a consequence of climate change – threatened power generation. It also impeded foreign trade by interfering with river transport. It was absolutely essential to honour the Paris Agreement commitments, including the commitment to provide climate finance.

73. **Mr. Manalo** (Philippines) said that the Philippines had five priorities for the session. First, vaccine inequity must be redressed. His Government strongly supported global initiatives such as the ACT-Accelerator and COVAX and would continue to contribute to those facilities. It also supported efforts to diversify global vaccine manufacturing capacity and underlined the need to enable the transfer of life-saving technologies to local companies to support national and regional responses.

74. Second, his delegation wished to advance discussions on increased, targeted support for middle-income countries, given that 8 out of 10 'new poor' lived in middle-income countries.

75. Third, it was necessary to ensure that the actions and solutions decided at the United Nations Food Systems Summit would have an impact and be transformative, including by encouraging global and regional cooperation.

76. Fourth, the Philippines supported urgent and ambitious global climate action. It had submitted its first nationally determined contribution, with a target to reduce greenhouse gas emissions by 75 per cent by 2030. In that connection, developed countries must fulfil their long-standing commitment to climate finance, technology transfer and capacity-building in the developing world. His Government looked forward to a concrete outcome from the twenty-sixth session of the Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change and would work constructively towards the success of the fifteenth meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity.

77. Fifth and last, his delegation called for strengthened cooperation to ensure quality education by developing online learning platforms and resources for children and youth.

78. **Ms. Oppong-Ntiri** (Ghana) said that the pandemic had exacerbated inequalities and was gradually becoming a pandemic of the unvaccinated in developing countries. To compound that injustice, rich countries

could borrow cheaply for pandemic recovery, while middle- and low-income countries could not.

79. At the upcoming session of the Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, Ghana would join the call for nature-based solutions to be integrated into recovery efforts. Regarding building back better, the Agreement Establishing the African Continental Free Trade Area offered an opportunity to promote industrialization and foster skills development for African youth.

80. During the current session, the Committee should focus its efforts on poverty eradication; on reform of the international financial architecture, in order to provide more funding to build back better and speed up long-term sustainable financing; on boosting multilateralism and international cooperation; on updating the parameters used to appraise economic development; and on urgent and sustainable action to build ecosystem resilience and integrity and halt biodiversity loss. Her delegation reaffirmed its support for the African Union Agenda 2063, as well as for the basic principles of equity and social justice.

81. **Mr. Chimbindi** (Zimbabwe) said that COVID-19 vaccines should be made public goods in order to ensure equitable access, which was critical to global recovery and a sustainable future for all. Furthermore, given that most developing countries had been forced to redirect resources from development programmes to COVID-19 measures, it was imperative to assist the most vulnerable countries financially by assembling an effective economic stimulus package that incorporated debt relief and payment deferral and waived interest payments on bilateral and multilateral debt.

82. It was essential to institute a mechanism that would allow countries to respond effectively to natural disasters and other environmental shocks and to redesign existing instruments to handle different kinds of crises. As a result of climate change, Zimbabwe had endured catastrophic floods, landslides and drought, and efforts were being made to climate-proof the agricultural sector by reducing reliance on rain.

83. **Mr. Sahraoui** (Algeria) said that the pandemic had highlighted – and in some cases widened – gaps between States. The recovery would be a test of the international community's capacity for joint action and would determine the fate of the Sustainable Development Goals.

84. Recovery would depend first on vaccinating as many people as possible. Unfortunately, vaccination rates were extremely uneven, with some of the least

developed countries lagging behind at rates of less than 2 per cent. Providing the 11 billion doses required to vaccinate 70 per cent of the world's population would require all countries with the capacity to ramp up production as soon as possible. He urged the Secretary-General to make sure that COVID-19 vaccines were the collective property of humanity. His own country was well on its way to the 70 per cent threshold domestically and had already begun to manufacture vaccines that would help with the global distribution effort.

85. Priority needed to be placed on closing the digital divide, which was one of several aspects of global inequality that the pandemic had brought into sharp focus. Interruptions in the delivery of health, education and a host of other basic services would imperil achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals. With that in mind, Algeria had made digital development a pillar of its new economic programme.

86. Climate change meant that tomorrow's generations were hostage to today's decisions. Bold progress was needed on the three treaties on climate change, biological diversity and desertification. His country was fulfilling its Paris Agreement commitments with a national strategy that included substantial reductions in carbon emissions and increases in renewable energy. Algeria had been the third-ranking country in Africa for sustainable energy in 2020. The 2030 Agenda would remain a dream unless sustainable solutions were found to problems associated with technology transfer, indebtedness and insufficient financing.

87. **Ms. El Hilali** (Morocco) said that the Moroccan approach to sustainable development emphasized the development of human capital. It included structural reforms, such as making sustainable development a constitutional right, adopting a national charter on the environment and sustainable development, accelerating the solar energy plan and instituting an industrialization plan and a green agriculture and food security plan. Morocco had also established a national sustainable development commission and had recently completed a new development model that included measurable objectives and a monitoring and arbitration mechanism. To ensure public awareness and participation in sustainable development, it organized exchanges with different stakeholders on development-related topics. Predictable and diversified financing were also deemed essential.

88. Morocco had presented two voluntary national reviews. To continue the impetus of two decades of unprecedented development, it was implementing policies, strategies and mechanisms to reduce disparities

among its 12 regions. It had reacted quickly to the COVID-19 pandemic by establishing a fund to support the national economy and cushion the impact on households and small and medium-sized enterprises, and thanks to business support measures and the gradual reopening of its economy, it was experiencing renewed economic growth.

89. Even before COVID-19 had disrupted supply chains, a food crisis had been brewing in many disadvantaged regions, including Africa. As the African representative to the advisory committee for the United Nations Food Systems Summit, Morocco had done its utmost to encourage cooperation for ensuring food security. Committed to fostering South-South cooperation, the King of Morocco had launched an initiative at the level of the African Heads of State and Government to establish an operational framework for joint efforts to combat the pandemic. Morocco also continued to provide medical assistance to the African Union Commission and to more than 20 African countries.

90. **Ms. Joyini** (South Africa) said that the pandemic had exposed the fragility of humanity and the urgency of meeting the Sustainable Development Goals, especially Goal 1 on ending poverty. Equitable distribution of COVID-19 vaccines was essential, and she reiterated the call by her country and India for the World Trade Organization to issue an emergency temporary waiver of some trade-related aspects of vaccine intellectual property rights in order to allow more countries to produce them. South Africa also called on the international community to work to strengthen health systems globally, including through supporting WHO. In that connection, she urged Member States to work together to implement the recommendations contained in the Secretary-General's report, *A Common Agenda*.

91. The pandemic had made it more difficult to mobilize resources for developing countries, further aggravating the pre-existing liquidity and debt crisis in Africa. Given that the 2030 Agenda could only be implemented if developing countries had access to predictable, appropriate and accessible means of implementation, South Africa called on the international community to forge public-private partnerships for sustainable development. At a time when ODA and foreign investment in the developing world were decreasing, it was essential for developed countries to deliver on their commitments in the Addis Ababa Action Agenda.

92. The international community should do more to help developing countries close the connectivity gap.

However, in addressing the digital divide, it was important to ensure that developing countries were not treated solely as consumers of expensive foreign technology. They must be empowered to improve, develop and manufacture digital products.

93. Multilateral cooperation was essential to building back better and should emphasize means of implementation support and adaptation efforts. The lowest carbon dioxide emitter, Africa, was disproportionately affected by climate change, and it needed access to affordable, reliable and sustainable energy to reduce poverty and achieve inclusive growth. In context of recovery from the pandemic, United Nations leadership was more vital than ever to ensure that no one was left behind.

94. **Mr. Dai Bing** (China) said that to achieve a post-pandemic recovery and advance the implementation of the 2030 Agenda, the first step was to fight the pandemic, for which the best weapons were cooperation and unity. Vaccine nationalism should be eschewed, and vaccines should be treated as a global public good. Meanwhile, there should be overall planning for pandemic prevention and control and for economic and social development.

95. After the pandemic, priority should be given to economic recovery and development. As the master key to solve all problems, development should have a prominent position in the international policy framework. Development efforts should give attention to country-specific needs and to tackling unbalanced development within and among countries. Such efforts should focus first and foremost on poverty reduction, but also on food security, education, the digital economy and interconnectivity.

96. Recovery from the pandemic presented an opportunity to accelerate the transition to a green, low-carbon economy and improve economic, energy and industrial structures. The developed countries needed to provide effective financial, technical and capacity support to the developing countries and to deliver on their \$100 billion climate finance commitment as soon as possible. All parties should work to build consensus on global, ecological and environmental governance during the upcoming meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity and session of the Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change.

97. Member States should practice genuine multilateralism and deepen development partnerships through consultation and joint development and sharing, working actively to build an open world economy and resolutely opposing all forms of protectionism and

unilateralism. It was necessary to build more equal and balanced global development partnerships, strengthen North-South cooperation, deepen South-South and triangular cooperation, enhance the independent development capacity of developing countries and increase their representation and voice in global economic governance.

98. Speaking recently before the plenary, the President of China had proposed a global development initiative to accelerate implementation of the 2030 Agenda and promote greener and healthier global development. For its part, China aimed to cap carbon dioxide emissions before 2030 and to achieve carbon neutrality by 2060. It supported green energy and low-carbon development in developing countries and would not build new overseas coal-fired plants. An active proponent of South-South cooperation, China was working with other developing countries to implement its Belt and Road Initiative. It would provide \$3 billion in development assistance over the next three years, and it would distribute 2 billion doses of COVID-19 vaccine to other countries by the end of the year. In addition to donating \$100 million to COVAX, China would donate another 100 million doses of vaccines to developing countries in 2021.

99. **Mr. Pedroso Cuesta** (Cuba) said that the world had been off track to meet the Sustainable Development Goals even before the pandemic. However, the pandemic had exacerbated inequalities and structural differences within and among countries. Just when strong multilateralism and international cooperation were most needed, they had proved weak, and the developing countries had received little support, including for the acquisition and administration of COVID-19 vaccines.

100. It would be possible to reverse course only if all States honoured their commitment to multilateralism, international cooperation and respect for the Charter of the United Nations and the principles of international law, including by taking into account different national realities, capacities and levels of development and respecting the sovereign equality of States. In that regard, the international system must not become a tool for legitimizing unilateral measures imposed by the most powerful. To achieve the Sustainable Development Goals, the industrialized countries must acknowledge their historical debt and strengthen special and differential treatment for developing countries. The problem was not a lack of knowledge or resources – simply a lack of political will, compounded by an unjust international order.

101. Regarding climate change, it was imperative to modify unsustainable production and consumption

patterns. It was also time for developed countries to assume solidary leadership in reducing emissions and providing developing countries with sufficient resources to address not only climate mitigation and adaptation, but also climate-related loss and damage, including by fulfilling their commitment to mobilize \$100 billion per year for mitigation and adaptation.

102. On countless occasions the international community had rejected the imposition of unilateral coercive measures as incompatible with the Charter and international law. Nevertheless, for 60 years the Cuban people had struggled under such measures as a result of the illegal, immoral and unfair economic, commercial and financial embargo imposed by the Government of the United States of America. The impact of the embargo had intensified in 2019 with the activation of Title III of the Helms-Burton Act and the imposition of hundreds of new measures. In spite of such adverse conditions, Cuba was pressing forward with its 2030 national economic development plan.

103. **Mr. Hermida Castillo** (Nicaragua) said that the havoc wreaked by the COVID-19 pandemic had undermined the efforts of developing countries to address existing challenges caused by the capitalist system of exploitation. Recovery would require stronger multilateralism, cooperation and solidarity. It was essential to declare the COVID-19 vaccines a common good of humanity, provide sufficient financial resources for equitable access and distribution and build vaccine production and distribution capacities in the developing countries.

104. The pandemic had underscored the need for a new international economic model based on inclusion, equity, social justice and respectful equality among States and prioritizing poverty eradication and access to health care as universal human rights. Cooperation to address COVID-19 should not replace measures to attain the Sustainable Development Goals of the 2030 Agenda, especially Goal 1 on the eradication of poverty. Developed countries should meet their ODA commitments by providing additional, predictable and sufficient resources, technology transfer and capacity-building. Unilateral coercive measures were undermining the efforts of developing countries to implement the 2030 Agenda and should be suspended immediately. In the context of the pandemic, they constituted crimes against humanity.

105. Nicaragua had managed to reduced poverty significantly, from around 42 per cent in 2007 to less than 25 per cent in 2017, through social and economic programmes and projects. Education and health care were free, and between 2006 and 2020, drinking water,

sanitation and electricity coverage had gone from under 55 per cent to almost 99 per cent. Domestic production was up 76 per cent, and thousands of kilometres of roadway had been paved.

106. To protect and preserve the right to life on the planet, the parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change must ensure that the results of their negotiations at the upcoming session of the Conference of Parties included direct, unconditional cooperation for developing countries, especially the most vulnerable ones.

The meeting rose at 1.05 p.m.