Economic and Social Council

2024 session
27 July 2023–24 July 2024
Coordination segment

Summary record of the 6th meeting
Held at Headquarters, New York, on Wednesday, 31 January 2024, at 3 p.m.

President: Mr. Rakhmetullin (Vice-President)............................. (Kazakhstan)

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In the absence of Ms. Narváez (Chile), Mr. Rakhmetullin (Kazakhstan), Vice-President, took the Chair.

The meeting was called to order at 3.05 p.m.

Agenda item 8: Coordination segment (*continued*)

> *Discussion 3: "Sustainable, resilient and innovative solutions to advance climate action"*

1.   **The President** said that the discussion was an opportunity to explore the ways in which the subsidiary bodies of the Economic and Social Council and the entities of the United Nations system were addressing the current crises and advancing the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development by accelerating climate action, including strengthening resilience to climate-related disasters and building risk-informed policies.

2.   **Ms. Fleming** (Under-Secretary-General for Global Communications), moderator, said that extreme weather was wreaking havoc around the world. Global temperature records had been shattered in 2023, and current efforts to contain the climate crisis were insufficient. Efforts to address other global challenges, such as hunger and poverty, were being undermined by the failure to meet climate goals. The highest possible level of ambition was required to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and secure climate justice.

3.   **Ms. Amoroso das Neves** (Chair, Commission on Science and Technology for Development at its twenty-seventh session), panellist, said that the matters before the Commission at its twenty-seventh session, to be held in Geneva in April 2024, would include the role of science, technology and innovation in the implementation of the 2030 Agenda, the eradication of poverty in times of multiple crises, data for development, global cooperation in science, technology and innovation for development, and, as requested by the Council in its resolution 2023/3, progress in the implementation of the outcomes of the World Summit on the Information Society.

4.   The incipient green technological revolution provided countries with opportunities to advance climate action, economic diversification and job creation. Green technologies were essential to the transition from fossil fuels to renewable energy sources, the fight against climate change and the promotion of prosperity. The ability to harness those benefits, however, was influenced by the maturity of the technologies. Mature technologies, such as biomass and solar energy generation, might seem more affordable than others, as they required less research and development, and countries could import the required

machinery. The related markets, however, were difficult to enter, since the incumbents had developed efficient production processes and were able to trade internationally at competitive prices. Immature technologies, such as green hydrogen, offered newcomers relatively more opportunities than mature technologies, but demanded greater capabilities and more research and development, which developing countries often lacked. Nonetheless, demand- and supply-side policies and incentives had enabled many uses of green technologies in developing countries, including bioethanol in Brazil and solar photovoltaics in China.

5.   The use of digital frontier technologies enhanced the global value chain and made production greener and more efficient; advanced robotics, three-dimensional printing, sensors and wireless technologies could be used to monitor environmental standards, optimize logistics through reduced carbon emissions, increase operational efficiency through lower energy consumption and design more environmentally friendly modes of production. Data-processing technologies could reduce the environmental impact of production; for example, artificial intelligence was employed to optimize the use of green energy, and blockchain technology was used in supply-chain management to reduce the environmental impact of recalls.

6.   Such technologies offered many means of advancing climate action, but many of their main providers were from a handful of developed economies, despite growing pockets of excellence in developing countries. As had happened in previous waves of technological change, developing countries would be left behind without incentives and mechanisms for technology sharing. The Governments of developing countries, together with international donors and multinational development banks, should establish funds, complemented by foreign direct investment, to acquire technologies and strengthen local innovation capacities. Those Governments should also establish development centres to enhance workers' skills in the adoption, adaptation and creation of technologies, and should provide scientific, technological, managerial and organizational training. Lastly, they should build international partnerships to facilitate innovation and the adoption of technologies, since technologies emerging from developing countries could be more appropriate to the conditions and resources of other developing countries.

7.   **Ms. Noronha** (Assistant Secretary-General, United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP)), panellist, said that UNEP, the United Nations Office for Disaster Risk Reduction, the Office of the United Nations High

Commissioner for Human Rights, the Indigenous Peoples major group, and the stakeholder group for lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and intersex persons, had organized a Sustainable Development Goal action segment for Goal 13, on climate action, at the 2024 Partnership Forum of the Council. The main points discussed at the segment had been the importance to climate action of interconnected impact, transformative potential, youth inclusion, efforts to address disproportionate risks, policy frameworks and inclusive partnerships. Climate action \was instrumental to accelerating progress towards the Goals. Inclusive partnerships involving governments, the private sector, academia, the media, civil society and Indigenous people were vital to climate action, in particular to rights-based initiatives supported by political leaders and adequate resources. Young people must be included in United Nations processes, and all stakeholders must take into account the Global Youth Statement issued at the twenty-eighth Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change.

8. To promote transformative action for the achievement of Goal 13, UNEP provided policy-relevant science and data through the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change, the International Resource Panel, the Intergovernmental Science-Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services, the Global Environment Outlook reports and the World Environment Situation Room. Shortly before each Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, the Programme issued reports on gaps related to emissions, production and adaptation. It provided assistance related to the enhanced transparency framework for action and support under the Paris Agreement.

9. UNEP had teams, partnerships, knowledge products and a portfolio of $740 million to advance decarbonization and resilience through policies, technology and standardization, with a focus on just transitions, in energy, industry, transport, agriculture, buildings and construction, and forests and nature-based solutions.

10. The Programme provided assistance related to capacity-building, technology and financing for the implementation of the Paris Agreement. The UNEP Finance Initiative had convened alliances of asset owners, banks and insurers to help to reach net-zero greenhouse gas emissions. The Programme promoted the application of climate-friendly norms by the private sector and financial markets, and hosted the Climate and Technology Centre and Network.

11. In a policy brief currently being prepared on ecosystem-based adaptation for the achievement of Goal 13, UNEP would emphasize the need to take a holistic socioecological approach, address the adaptive capacity needs of local stakeholders and focus on the long-term sustainability of initiatives.

12. To develop sustainable, resilient climate action plans, countries should collaborate to support multilevel approaches based on climate science; digitalized solutions; a collective ambition to achieve the goals of the Paris Agreement; coordinated support, including from the United Nations; the building of skills to diversify livelihoods and opportunities; the establishment of research and capability-development networks to advance sustainability science and solutions; and the implementation of the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework.

13. To close adaptation and emissions gaps, countries should encourage citizens to avoid using transport altogether where possible, or to use public transport or electric vehicles; provide capacity support for the national implementation of the regional roadmaps of the Global Alliance for Buildings and Construction; support clean-energy transformations through energy efficiency and renewable energy; take action on the minerals required for the energy transition; and work with the Group of 20 to reduce methane emissions from oil and gas, and to reduce industrial emissions.

14. Public and private financing must be provided to fill gaps related to nationally determined contributions and long-term strategies. To that end, developing countries must be able to access climate funds, subsidies must be reformed and support must be provided for climate finance readiness programmes through which bankable projects had already been identified.

15. **Mr. Moreira da Silva** (Executive Director, United Nations Office for Project Services (UNOPS)), panellist, said that the outcome of the first global stocktake of the implementation of the Paris Agreement, adopted at the twenty-eighth Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, included a list of actions that must be taken in addition to Member States' decisions on their nationally determined contributions. Global renewable energy capacity must be tripled and the average annual rate of improvement in energy efficiency must be doubled by 2030. The phasing-out of coal-fired power plants must be accelerated. Countries must transition away from fossil fuels. The finance for adaptation provided to developing countries must be doubled from 2019 levels by 2025 and, at the twenty-ninth Conference, new climate finance commitments must be

established. To that end, each year, $6 trillion must be provided for climate action and $1.7 trillion must be invested in renewable energy in developing countries to achieve net zero. A policy compact was also needed to foster innovation, and research and development.

16. In addition to financing and policies, however, implementation capacity was essential, particularly in fragile contexts. Resilient, sustainable infrastructure was essential to adaptation and the minimization of loss and damage. Energy infrastructure was of particular importance to climate mitigation. Infrastructure was essential to the achievement of 92 per cent of Sustainable Development Goal targets and was related to 80 per cent of emissions; unless the energy, transport and communications infrastructure was decarbonized, the international community's climate goals would not be reached.

17. Another challenge was lack of access to infrastructure; a third of the world's population lacked access to clean cooking, almost 700 million people had no access to electricity and less than a quarter of the renewable energy investments needed for developing countries had been provided. That challenge was particularly important in Africa, which was home to 60 per cent of all solar potential but only 1.5 per cent of installed photovoltaic capacity, and which received only 3 per cent of solar energy investment.

18. **Ms. Hendriks** (Deputy Executive Director, United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN-Women)), panellist, said that the world was falling critically short in its efforts to meet climate and gender equality goals. Women and girls in the poorest countries, who had contributed nothing to the climate crisis, too often bore its greatest cost. UN-Women and the Department of Economic and Social Affairs had recently projected that as many as 236 million more women and girls would fall into food insecurity by 2050 owing to climate change. Women were doing more and more unpaid care and domestic work to ensure that their households had food and water in contexts of growing scarcity. They also faced escalating gender-based violence as economic conditions worsened; in places where aridity had increased, rates of early and forced marriage had risen.

19. The incremental, hard-fought progress made towards gender equality was under threat, but the innovation, expertise, commitment and courage of women and girls showed that it was not too late to choose a different path. To put the rights of women and girls at the centre of climate action, UN-Women was advancing efforts to put gender equality at the heart of agreements related to the Rio Conventions, developing

a gender action plan for the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015–2030, and implementing joint programmes on climate-smart agriculture and women's employment in the Middle East.

20. The international community should ensure that the critical role of women and girls in climate justice was mainstreamed in normative agreements, including those resulting from the fourth International Conference on Small Island Developing States, the high-level political forum on sustainable development and the Summit of the Future. Power dynamics must be changed and financing must be provided in order to ensure that women and girls' diverse voices were heeded in climate-related discussions. In climate finance mechanisms, non-economic loss and damage, such as the effects of losses of land and crops in terms of increased household care work and vulnerability to gender-based violence, must be recognized, and higher priority must be given to women's economic empowerment. The world must invest in women; the sixty-eighth session of the Commission on the Status of Women, to be held in March 2024, would be an opportunity to promote global norms on the intersection of poverty and financing, to ensure that financing went to those who needed it most.

21. **Ms. Ramratan** (Suriname) said that the effects of climate change threatened ecosystems, economies and societies in every country. The international community must not only reduce emissions but also address the social and economic dimensions of the climate crisis in order to leave no one behind. Suriname was committed to reducing its carbon footprint in order to reach sustainable, resilient climate solutions, and to remaining carbon-negative despite new developments in its oil and gas sector. It was among the countries most vulnerable to the effects of climate change, because of its low-lying coast, and it was not spared the effects of natural disasters. Suriname was strengthening its capacities in terms of climate action and institutions, and aimed to be one of the first countries to sell carbon credits under the Paris Agreement crediting mechanism. International solidarity was essential to mobilizing the necessary political and financial support to fight climate change.

22. **Mr. Szczerski** (Poland) said that climate change had arrived at a time when societies were more vulnerable than ever because of ongoing conflicts, increasing poverty and the inadequate protection of human rights. In order to build resilience to such challenges, Governments, the scientific community, the private sector, civil society and local authorities must enhance their cooperation. The Council and its subsidiary bodies must do more to prepare for international crises and safeguard development gains.

23. The resilience of infrastructure must be enhanced to minimize the effects of shocks on basic services. In the interests of securing what had been achieved and making further progress while avoiding starting from scratch after each disaster, Poland had initiated General Assembly resolution 77/282, co-sponsored by more than 80 countries and adopted unanimously, on building global resilience and promoting sustainable development through regional and interregional infrastructure connectivity. The Assembly would explore the matter further in April 2024, during Sustainability Week. As the international community prepared for the third United Nations Conference on Landlocked Developing Countries and the fourth International Conference on Small Island Developing States, more should be done to integrate climate change adaptation and resilience into existing policies, including in infrastructure. He requested further information regarding the ways in which the bodies represented by the panellists could help to build resilience to climate-related shocks.

24. **Mr. Malovrh** (Slovenia) said that the Council had a vital role in bringing the United Nations system together to address the climate crisis by implementing the 2030 Agenda in its economic, social, and environmental dimensions. In climate action, business as usual was not working; anticipatory steps must be taken and resilience must be built. To that end, the Slovenian Centre for Excellence for Space Sciences and Technologies and Jomo Kenyatta University, Nairobi, were using microsatellite imagery to improve the management and climate resilience of river and marine ecosystems.

25. Slovenia aimed to address the root causes of fragility related to climate change and conflict. In its disaster risk reduction and resilience activities, it gave high priority to fighting food insecurity and improving access to water, since food production was a major driver of climate change. Slovenia and the World Food Programme were working together on a project to build resilience to climate change in Kenya through ecoscience-based management and beekeeping.

26. The Security Council and the Economic and Social Council should both help to address climate change, conflict and food security. A growing corpus of scientific data confirmed that climate action should be regarded as essential to ensuring lasting peace and preventing conflict. It should be recognized, in the Pact for the Future and the New Agenda for Peace, that just, inclusive and innovative climate action must take into account the nexus between the climate and peace and security.

27. **Ms. Ríos Serna** (Colombia) said that the climate crisis threatened the survival of the human race, aggravated inequality, poverty and food insecurity, and jeopardized the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals. Despite the progress made at recent sessions of the Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change and the technological solutions proposed, the efforts of industrialized countries and major emitters would not transform the current economic model in the manner required to prevent temperatures from rising to 1.5ºC above pre-industrial levels by 2100. That transformation must be based on solidarity, human rights and climate justice, and would require a reform of the international financial system, in particular the related incentives, to reduce capital costs and debt, and increase fiscal space, in developing countries. Innovative climate financing instruments, including debt-for-climate and debt-for-nature swaps, must be established, and the relationship between debt, climate and nature must be better understood.

28. A transformative gender approach must be mainstreamed in all policies and activities. Colombia gave high priority to its national policy on gender and climate change, which it had developed in conjunction with grassroots movements and in consultation with women and children, who suffered disproportionately as a result of climate change.

29. **Ms.** Annisa **Paramita** (Observer for Indonesia) said that, in climate action, implementation was as important as ambition. Indonesia was exploring innovative financing arrangements, including public-private partnerships; in West Java in September 2023, it had opened the biggest floating solar plant in Southeast Asia. The plant, a multi-stakeholder partnership between Governments, the private sector and civil society, would accelerate development and ensure that no one was left behind. The Economic and Social Council should use its resources and expertise to strengthen multistakeholder partnerships, and to lead synergy and policy coordination.

30. She requested further information on the ways in which United Nations system entities were integrating climate risk assessment and resilience-building measures into their development programmes, particularly in the regions most vulnerable to climate change.

31. **Mr. Abdelaal** (Observer for Egypt) said that he welcomed the fact that the Council was reviewing progress towards Sustainable Development Goals 1 and 13 in 2024, because climate action could be taken only in the broader context of poverty eradication.

Implementation was the elephant in the room in discussions of climate action, including at the sessions of the Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change. According to the Standing Committee on Finance established by the Conference of the Parties, developing countries would need $5.6 trillion to implement their nationally determined contributions by 2030. In addition, they would need $300 billion annually for adaptation. The implementation of ambitious pledges to cut emissions was an increasingly important question, particularly for Africa, which was responsible for only 4 per cent of global emissions but was particularly vulnerable to the adverse effects of climate change. In order for developing countries to achieve a just transition, they must be provided with differentiated means of implementation, in accordance with the decisions of the Conference of the Parties, not only for climate mitigation measures but also for adaptation and resilience-building; however, only around 20 per cent of the climate financing provided by wealthier countries to developing countries went towards adaptation. As a result, developing countries were bearing most of the financial burden of the transition.

32. **Ms. Merodio Gómez** (Vice-President of the National Institute of Statistics and Geography of Mexico and Co-Chair of the Committee of Experts on Global Geospatial Information Management) said that citizens, businesses, Governments and many other stakeholders benefited every day from geospatial information and location-based services, which connected places, people and activities. The United Nations Integrated Geospatial Information Framework was essential to the work of the United Nations Committee of Experts on Global Geospatial Information Management in strengthening the use of geospatial information by national bodies and improving government decision-making processes to face development challenges. The Committee stood ready to help the Council to prepare for the high-level political forum, the Summit of the Future and other intergovernmental processes, so that the transformational power of geospatial information was placed in the right hands and Member States could take evidence-based decisions to address the multiple crises facing them. By implementing the Framework, the Committee and Member States would build capacity in geospatial information management to benefit the environment.

33. Geospatially integrated data, such as Earth observations, were essential to informed decision-making in the service of inclusive development. Geospatial information was vital to the consistent measurement of emissions and other aspects of climate action. She requested further information regarding the ways in which the Committee and other bodies could help UNEP to access the data needed to measure the effects of the Programme's activities.

34. **Ms. Amoroso das Neves** (Chair, Commission on Science and Technology for Development at its twenty-seventh session) said that, in climate action, coordination among the entities of the United Nations system was a challenge on a similar scale to implementation. The Commission on Science and Technology for Development suffered, in its work on the green and digital transitions, from a lack of follow-up on and implementation of its discussions, even at the ministerial level. The Council would be a possible forum for such follow-up, but coordination among the United Nations system entities was needed to raise awareness of the projects facilitated by the Commission, including an Earth observation project launched in January 2024 in the Azores, Portugal, by the Atlantic International Research Centre and the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development. That project had implications for climate action and agriculture but was not well known elsewhere in the United Nations system.

35. Business as usual was no longer an option. The membership of the Commission must be expanded to broaden its discussions and improve the implementation of its decisions. Emerging technologies supported by appropriate infrastructure were also essential to climate action. More dialogue was needed to bridge the gaps between entities in order to strengthen financial support, invest in human capital and build partnerships for innovation in climate action.

36. **Ms. Noronha** (Assistant Secretary-General, United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP)) said that, in addition to progress towards Sustainable Development Goals 1 and 13, progress towards Goal 16 was also being reviewed in 2024. Goal 16 had also been discussed at the Partnership Forum, at which the interconnectedness of the Goals had been emphasized. Climate-sensitive, climate-resilient development depended on investment not only in health, agriculture and education but also in institutions, innovation and the capacity to enforce rules and regulations. Failure to enforce rules often resulted in climate vulnerability, as in the case of unregulated construction in coastal areas affected by sea-level rise.

37. The pillars of the United Nations, namely, peace, human rights and development, were underpinned by environmental action, because climate crises and environmental issues caused conflicts, human rights violations and de-development. Environmental and climate responses were intertwined with development,

as emphasized in the outcomes set out in the Sharm el-Sheikh Adaptation Agenda. The Coalition of Finance Ministers for Climate Action was an example of the coordination needed to implement the Paris Agreement. The challenge was to conduct that coordination while enhancing the related financing, technologies and capacities. UNEP strengthened implementation capacities through the Climate Technology Centre and Network of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change; the Partnership for Action on Green Economy, which worked to accelerate development through sustainable economic policies and climate resilience; the Programme's work on early warning systems with the World Meteorological Organization; and the Climate and Clean Air Coalition to Reduce Short-lived Climate Pollutants. The Programme was also working with the United Nations to help countries that produced energy transition minerals to use them for their development, while addressing the resulting concerns about the progress of the transition. She would provide further information in writing about the ways in which the Committee of Experts on Global Geospatial Information Management could help UNEP to access data on the effects of its activities.

38. **Mr. Moreira da Silva** (Executive Director, United Nations Office for Project Services (UNOPS)) said that the momentum generated by the adoption of General Assembly resolution 77/282 must not be lost. Infrastructure was essential to both mitigation and adaptation, because simply building clean infrastructure would not prevent future climate shocks. To give infrastructure the central place it deserved in climate action, coordination was necessary among many United Nations agencies, and financing must be aligned with targets for sustainability, resilience, and loss and damage. UNOPS and the United Nations Office for Disaster Risk Reduction would host the secretariat of the Santiago network for averting, minimizing and addressing loss and damage associated with the adverse effects of climate change, a network established to promote the technical assistance and capacity-building required for the success of the loss and damage fund established at the twenty-seventh session of the Conference of the Parties. Disaster response and prevention, and building back better to prevent future shocks, were crucial to minimizing loss and damage; infrastructure should therefore be at the centre of the discussions at the Council forum on financing for development follow-up, the high-level political forum and the Summit of the Future.

39. The argument that climate action should be postponed in favour of resolving other urgent issues, such as the world's many conflicts, was based on a false dichotomy between the climate and conflict. In fact, conflict increased the climate vulnerabilities of the countries involved and made them less able to adapt to future shocks; the more the international community invested in climate resilience, therefore, the better for those countries. Conversely, the climate crisis could fuel conflict by diminishing the role of institutions, and exacerbating tensions and vulnerabilities. It was thus essential for the Security Council to address climate change, conflict and food security.

40. The reform of the international financial architecture had been addressed by the Secretary-General and in the political declaration adopted at the high-level political forum on sustainable development convened under the auspices of the General Assembly in September 2023.

41. United Nations system entities were integrating climate vulnerabilities into their projects through the resident coordinators. Following the reform of the United Nations development system, climate risks were integrated into common country analyses. As a result, climate action could be triggered only if those analyses failed to address those risks.

42. UNOPS had been working with the small island developing States and the Alliance of Small Island States on the establishment of a global data hub that would make use of geospatial data. It had discussed the use of such data to inform programmes, policies and projects with the Statistical Division of the Department of Economic and Social Affairs.

43. **Ms. Hendriks** (Deputy Executive Director, United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN-Women)) said that the poorest women and girls suffered the most from the climate crisis, because pre-existing inequalities, such as lack of access to land and resources, lack of time and financing, and unequal access to work and natural resources, constrained their ability to build resilience. The transition to sustainable economies presented opportunities to address some of the most persistent labour inequalities through the prospect of decent work in key sectors. However, although 24 million new jobs were projected to be created by 2030, 80 per cent of them would be in traditionally male-dominated sectors. Gender inequality in the world of work must be eliminated to ensure that just transitions gave women access to new forms of employment in new sectors. Through its feminist climate justice framework, UN-Women promoted investment in care and social protection in the interest of just transitions that benefited people and the planet.

Discussion 4: "Effective, strong and responsive institutions to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals and the future we want"

44.   **The President** said that the panellists would explore the ways in which the Council's subsidiary bodies and United Nations system entities were promoting peaceful societies by building effective, accountable and inclusive institutions in pursuit of the 2030 Agenda.

45.   **Ms. Fraser-Moleketi** (Chancellor of Nelson Mandela University and Chair of the Committee of Experts on Public Administration at its twenty-second session), panellist, said that the issue of the implementation of the 2030 Agenda and the related need for coordination had been discussed repeatedly in the past and must be resolved. Commitments related to the planning of such implementation must be renewed. The Sustainable Development Goals must be used as a policy framework for the future, and as guidance to overcome the current polycrisis and foster resilience. References to individual Goals in country-specific development strategies, visions and development plans must be strengthened, with an emphasis on economic growth and social policy support to fight hunger, poverty and climate change.

46.   Capacity development in the public-sector workforce was essential in order to change cultures and mindsets, and to raise awareness of the Goals. The Goals must be central in the planning of national budgets rather than an additional requirement for international compliance; otherwise, the implementation of the 2030 Agenda would be nothing but an elusive dream.

47.   Agile, data- and insight-driven institutions were needed to improve preparedness for and resilience to crises. In the current era of polycrises, new skillsets and more collaborative, citizen-centred mindsets were needed to build resilience against potential future shocks. Policies and reforms that responded to people's concerns, such as eradicating poverty, reducing inequality, providing decent work and protecting ecosystems, would substantially enhance public trust. To ensure that no one was left behind, policies must be implemented to respond to people's needs, because citizens' trust was undermined at times of crisis, including conflict between countries and inequality within countries.

48.   A stronger case should be made for the contribution of evidence to improved social and economic outcomes, while also taking into account the ways in which information was communicated and used, for example by converting ideas and evidence into issues that mattered to different segments of society. The

reality of political economies and the politicization of development was resulting in major problems, including factionalization, that threatened the United Nations itself.

49.   **Mr. Steiner** (Administrator, United Nations Development Programme (UNDP)), panellist, said that strong, responsive institutions were essential to peaceful and inclusive societies; that was why the international community invested in institutions, citizens accepted government, and parties were elected or removed from power. In a world that was experiencing deep disruption characterized by conflicts, crises and climate change, the institutions on which justice and development depended were being called into question in virtually every country, and social capital was being eroded. Development outcomes were increasingly being contested by judicial means, including in the areas of environmental sustainability and gender inequality. Trust in the institutions that had helped to introduce vaccines against the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) had been eroded by the ensuing social division over the safety of those vaccines.

50.   To achieve Goal 16, collaboration among stakeholders must be enhanced to produce data and insights on where resources, finance and expertise should be channelled. The global progress report on Sustainable Development Goal 16 indicators, issued in 2023 by UNDP, the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights and the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, contained a dataset on all those indicators and highlighted areas of concern including high levels of corruption, unresponsive institutions and the questioning of social contracts. The dataset was essential to improving cooperation among levels of government, national statistics offices and civil society to address reversals in progress towards the Goal. The report had already improved cooperation at the national level, including through the United Nations country teams.

51.   Coordination was required to strengthen the role of institutions in enabling the implementation of the 2030 Agenda as a whole. As revealed in the Sustainable Development Goals insight reports prepared by UNDP in 2023, public institutions were struggling to develop systemic approaches rather than work in silos, and to recognize that the 2030 Agenda was a challenge to precisely those elements of government that had often led to failures in the past. The Programme had also carried out integrated work on the intersection between Goal 16 and the other Goals, including by establishing a gender equality seal for public institutions. The seal had initially been developed for internal use within UNDP, and had been expanded at the request of the

Programme's partner institutions to sensitize their country teams. UNDP was now working with ministers of finance and tax administrations in 30 countries to support institutions that were committed to gender equality.

52. The Programme aimed to build the capacity of institutions to face future challenges. Countries did not need to be told what their current problems were; rather, they needed support to take decisions on investment and policy reform in anticipation of the future. The Programme helped Governments to establish their reform agendas through its work on the lessons of the COVID-19 pandemic, the importance of digital public infrastructure, digital exclusion and inclusion, and the increasing pressure on developing countries' tax systems to generate more revenue without exacerbating inequality. Through the FutureGov initiative, one of 12 high-impact initiatives taken by the United Nations to accelerate progress towards the Sustainable Development Goals, the Programme and the Department of Economic and Social Affairs provided integrated support to countries in preparing for the crises to come.

53. **Ms. Hendriks** (Deputy Executive Director, United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN-Women)), panellist, said that stronger, more effective institutions that were more oriented to the priorities and rights of women and girls were needed to honour the gender equality commitments made in the 2030 Agenda and achieve "the future we want". The Secretary-General had stated, in his report entitled "Our Common Agenda" (A/75/982), that it was time to renew the social contract between Governments and their people, and within societies, so as to rebuild trust and embrace a comprehensive vision of human rights. Much remained to be done to rebuild that trust and realize the full rights of all human beings, especially those who were most left behind, including women and girls.

54. The current intersecting crises and escalating inequalities disproportionately affected women; the number of women and girls living in food insecurity was expected to increase by 236 million by 2050. To achieve Sustainable Development Goal 1, progress in the reduction of extreme poverty among women needed to be 26 times faster than it was today. Financing was critical to building accountable, inclusive institutions that served women and girls, but long-standing deficiencies of international financial systems had become clearer as a result of the current crises. The ongoing discussions of the reform of global financial safety nets and international tax cooperation were essential in order to increase fiscal space and eradicate poverty through the application of a gender lens.

55. In order to end women's poverty, sustained investment in a comprehensive set of policies was needed. To make that investment, Governments needed political will; adequate fiscal space supported by equitable, inclusive international financial systems; gender-responsive, accountable institutions; and the meaningful participation of women and girls. Public resources must be channelled into gender-responsive, pro-poor policies. Gender-responsive budgeting enabled Governments to estimate the cost of, and invest in, the promotion of decent work, social protection and care, in order to help women and girls to move out of poverty sustainably. UN-Women had worked with 64 countries in 2022 to ensure that gender-responsive budgeting was at the heart of public finance management systems, and new policies and laws.

56. Women's organizations and gender advocates needed to be supported in demanding that institutions be held accountable for women living in apparently endless cycles of poverty. Those organizations needed robust, flexible, multi-year financing to challenge gender discrimination and biased social norms, enable a whole-of-society approach, promote equality, and support the empowerment of women and girls living in poverty.

57. The sixty-eighth session of the Commission on the Status of Women would be an opportunity to discuss the links between gender equality, financial systems, institutions and poverty eradication. UN-Women, the United Nations system and civil society would support Member States in adopting progressive agreed conclusions at the session.

58. **Mr. Anyaegbu** (Nigeria) said that his Government recognized the diversity of the people of Nigeria and the problems they faced in making ends meet. The country's public institutions were striving to create an enabling environment for individuals to engage in productive activities. In response to the existential threat of poverty, his Government had declared a state of emergency in relation to food security and had renamed the Ministry of Agriculture the Federal Ministry of Agriculture and Food Security.

59. Public institutions, however, did not exist in isolation but within an international community. Without the requisite cooperation from the international community, the policies adopted by public institutions would be futile. Poverty knew no bounds, and its eradication must be central to the Pact for the Future. The United Nations should focus on achieving Sustainable Development Goal 1.

60. To strengthen institutions, the Council and its subsidiary bodies should help Governments to create an enabling environment for local production. Nigeria had increased its share of intra-African trade from $1 billion in 2022 to $1.4 billion in the first half of 2023, in an enhancement of its commitment to the African Continental Free Trade Area. That increase was small when compared with the projection of the International Monetary fund that intra-African trade as a whole would increase by 52.3 per cent by 2025, but Nigeria would achieve even more if its public institutions received the requisite international support for local production.

61. **Mr. Imanuel** (Indonesia) said that trust, the foundation of development in all its dimensions, would be built by strengthening institutions' ability to meet people's needs; one of the lessons of the COVID-19 pandemic had been that, in all countries, trust in institutions was a necessary precondition for the wide administration of vaccines. Now, however, the challenges facing the international community were increasing in complexity at a staggering pace. The needs in relation to COVID-19, for example, had changed in most countries from the distribution and administration of vaccines to the provision of support in addressing the pandemic's lingering socioeconomic effects, including unemployment and reduced access to education. Integrated data were essential, but data collection was often outpaced by changes in people's needs. He therefore requested further information regarding what should be done to ensure that institutions, including the United Nations, remained relevant, agile, and capable of adapting to and anticipating rapid changes in needs.

62. **Mr. Bredel** (United Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO)) said that UNIDO was a member of the United Nations inter-agency task team on science, technology and innovation for the Sustainable Development Goals, a prime example of collaboration between the United Nations, Member States and entities outside the system. In a world of rapid technological change, transformative policies and institutions in science, technology and innovation were essential to accelerating the achievement of Goal 16. He therefore welcomed the strong link made between science, technology and innovation and sustainable industrial development in the zero draft of the Pact for the Future. Industry was not only a major beneficiary of science, technology and innovation, but also a key source of new technologies and innovation.

63. Policies in science, technology and innovation must be guided by the Goals, and based on an innovation systems approach in order to address simultaneous critical failures of those systems. More support was needed to strengthen developing countries' capacity to formulate science, technology and innovation policies and to ensure that science, technology and innovation informed the design of policies more broadly, including in relation to industry. The task team and UNIDO had developed guidelines on the formulation of science, technology and innovation policies oriented towards the Goals, as part of the capacity-building programme under the task team's work stream on such policies. UNIDO had also introduced an industrial policy laboratory and a digital readiness tool.

64. Member States should respond to the recent United Nations call for science-policy briefs and case studies to inform the discussions at the 2024 multi-stakeholder forum on science, technology and innovation for the Goals, which would be an opportunity to build on the commitment, made in the political declaration of the high-level political forum on sustainable development convened under the auspices of the General Assembly, to bridge divides in science, technology and innovation ahead of the Summit of the Future.

65. **Mr. Gatev** (Observer for Bulgaria) said that strong, inclusive and responsive institutions were crucial to the implementation of the 2030 Agenda; institutions underpinned all social interaction and their proper functioning was essential to transformative change. In 2023, the Council had held a special meeting on the theme "Unleashing the transformative power of Sustainable Development Goal 16: improving governance and reducing corruption". One of the main messages of the meeting had been that, in order to improve the integrity of public institutions and make them more transparent, effective and accountable, a whole-of-society approach must be taken, including collective action by the public and private sectors, civil society and the media. He requested further information on the ways in which the United Nations development system could facilitate such action.

66. **Mr. Cassayre** (Observer for the International Development Law Organization) said that, given the importance of effective and inclusive institutions, progress towards Goal 16 would greatly increase progress towards the other Goals. The International Development Law Organization attached particular importance to target 16.5, on the reduction of corruption, since corruption cost an estimated $2.6 trillion per year; target 16.1, on the reduction of violence, since violence was estimated to cost $17.5 trillion annually; and target 16.9, the provision of legal identity for all, because people without legal identity could not vote or get access to employment, education or health care.

67. **Mr. Steiner** (Administrator, United Nations Development Programme (UNDP)) said that the success of the African Continental Free Trade Area would depend not only on the eradication of poverty under Goal 1 but also on investment in effective, common institutions under Goal 16, since the establishment of such institutions would be crucial to African countries' ability to trade freely with each other. Progress towards Goal 16 would also enhance progress towards many other Goals, including Goal 7, on access to affordable, clean energy; if free trade in Africa was to involve manufactured goods and services as well as natural resources, and if frontier technologies such as green hydrogen were to be exported from African countries, the continent needed institutions capable of facilitating partnerships among investors, technological bodies and regulators to enable the large energy investments required.

68. Through the FutureGov initiative, UNDP aimed to build public-sector skillsets to make institutions more adaptable and resilient, and to shift mindsets towards systems thinking. The transition from single-issue problem-solving to systemic transformations was one of the most important links between the 2030 Agenda and Agenda 2063: The Africa We Want. Public institutions' capacity to work with other stakeholders, including the private sector, must be strengthened, bearing in mind the fact that many private-sector actors would invest in Africa only if high standards of governance and transparency were met.

69. UNDP constantly strove to facilitate collective action by reforming the United Nations development system, including the country teams, and by strengthening coordination and joint planning, including through the United Nations Sustainable Development Cooperation Frameworks. More importantly, the Programme must enable public institutions to be future-focused in the same way as a new president, who, when taking charge of the Government, considered ways of repositioning the economy to address social objectives such as poverty eradication. Such agility and policy entrepreneurship must also be established at public institutions to incentivize innovation and entrepreneurial thinking.

70. With regard to new skillsets, UNDP had established its Accelerator Labs to learn from those who were inventing the future every day in villages, start-ups, think tanks and universities. Public institutions, particularly in the development sector, often overlooked the fact that ingenuity began with those who had to solve their own problems immediately. The Accelerator Labs had enabled UNDP as an institution to learn in a far more agile way. The Programme was beginning to understand thousands of solutions, some of which were already available, in order to help Governments to change their regulatory policies, create incentives and remove barriers, such as those facing start-ups in Africa in obtaining venture capital to market their products.

71. **Ms. Fraser-Moleketi** (Chancellor of Nelson Mandela University and Chair of the Committee of Experts on Public Administration at its twenty-second session) said that Goal 16 was a cross-cutting Goal, progress towards which would enable progress towards all the others. Even in countries with diverse populations, agile public institutions would create the enabling environment required to engage in productive activity.

72. The Committee of Experts on Public Administration's policy briefs on sound policymaking and foresight had been used by United Nations agencies and could also be of use to Member States. Through the African Peer Review Mechanism, the Committee had worked with the African Union and the Department of Economic and Social Affairs to encourage African countries to conduct peer exchanges on the implementation of the principles of public administration developed by the Committee pursuant to Goal 16. The exercise had been based on the importance of the human capital of the public service to the implementation of programmes that benefited citizens, the civil society and the private sector.

73. Political trust, namely, citizens' trust in Government and its institutions, policymaking in general, and the ability of political leaders and parties to honour their commitments, was one component of public trust. The fairness and honesty of government officials, and the absence of corruption, were essential to political trust. The other component of public trust was social trust, namely, citizens' confidence in each other as members of a community based on a social compact. Political and social trust enhanced social cohesion and promoted peaceful and inclusive societies, which reinforced trust in Government, in a virtuous circle. The Committee worked closely with UNDP and planned to expand its collaboration with United Nations agencies and the Council's subsidiary bodies to ensure that the policies of the United Nations system and the Member States were influenced by new ways of thinking.

74. **Ms. Hendriks** (Deputy Executive Director, United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN-Women)) said that the capacity of the United Nations system in terms of foresight must be strengthened, as the Secretary-General had emphasized in "Our Common Agenda

policy brief 11: UN 2.0 – forward-thinking culture and cutting-edge skills for better United Nations system impact" (A/77/CRP.1/Add.10). In order to equip the United Nations to serve Member States better, the Organization must be able to perceive a possible future, and then to identify related scenarios, actions and policy decisions. UN-Women had improved its foresight capacity by increasing the gender-related data at its disposal. It viewed strategic foresight analysis as essential to the support with which it provided Member States. Many of the econometric models used in foresight analytics, however, did not take into account differences in identities related to gender, socioeconomic conditions, race, geography and ethnicity. UN-Women, in conjunction with the Pardee Center for International Futures, had therefore established gender-aware foresight models to help the United Nations system and Member States to plan for the future. The significant growth in food insecurity expected on the basis of those models must inform policymaking worldwide, including in relation to the African Continental Free Trade Area, supply chains and agrifood producers, and the role of women-owned enterprises in producing food and ensuring that women's families had access to it.

75. The increasing interdependency of Member States and United Nations system entities was strengthening their ability to produce and use data. Half of the data required to monitor progress towards the gender-related indicators of the Sustainable Development Goals were currently available. Although that proportion was twice as high as in 2016, further investment in statistical systems and strategies was essential. Through the Women Count programme, UN-Women worked with 73 Member States to strengthen ecological modelling in statistical systems, and to improve the production and use of data. Data must inform the strengthening of public institutions and the building of trust as part of an enhanced social compact, in the service of all, for the implementation of the 2030 Agenda.

76. **Mr. Anyaegbu** (Nigeria) said that the population of Nigeria, over 200 million people, accounted for almost a quarter of the population of Africa. It was thus unfair to conduct comparative analyses of public institutions in Nigeria and other African countries, because of the magnitude of the challenge faced by his Government in responding to social issues.

77. Corruption was a problem all over the continent, but it was also possible for funds to leave Africa with no questions asked, with no red flag being raised until those funds arrived in the country of destination, following which it could take years for them to be repatriated. In *Economic Development in Africa Report 2020: Tackling*

Illicit Financial Flows for Sustainable Development in Africa, the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development had stated that, between 2000 and 2015, $836 billion had been lost through illicit capital flight from Africa. That amount could have paid the continent's debt, which had been $770 billion in 2018, and left $66 billion for the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals.

78. Public institutions did not exist in isolation but required concerted support from the international community. In the discussions on a recent draft resolution on investment at the United Nations, developed countries had claimed that the onus for establishing an enabling environment for investment was on the South, whereas developing countries had argued that the responsibility was in fact shared. The bone of contention was whether public institutions could make progress in isolation without international cooperation to stop financial leakages.

79. **Ms. Fraser-Moleketi** (Chancellor of Nelson Mandela University and Chair of the Committee of Experts on Public Administration at its twenty-second session) said that national contexts must be taken into account; policies that had worked in one country could not necessarily be replicated elsewhere. As Nigerians had led global institutions and done much to build regional institutions, the country had the human and intellectual capital, as well as the policy frameworks, to establish effective national institutions in a way that took account of its specific characteristics.

80. The High-level Panel on Illicit Financial Flows from Africa had been established precisely because of the importance attached by the international community to stopping such flows. Presentations on the matter had been made at the African Union and the United Nations, including the Security Council. Nigeria, like every other country, must now meet international regulatory requirements for transparency and accountability in relation to such flows. Doing so was no easy matter, and various African countries, including Nigeria and South Africa, had been greylisted. Progress in stopping international financial flows must be accelerated at the country level and beyond.

The meeting rose at 5.55 p.m.