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## **Economic and Social Council**

### **Substantive session of 2013**

General segment

#### **Provisional summary record of the 39th meeting**

Held at the Palais des Nations, Geneva, on Friday, 19 July 2013, at 10 a.m.

*President:* Mr. Sajdik (Vice-President)

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*In the absence of Mr. Osorio (Colombia), Mr. Sajdik (Austria), Vice-President, took the Chair.*

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

*Panel discussion to mark the 10-Year framework of programmes on sustainable consumption and production patterns (10YFP)*

**Ms. Lemmet** (Director of the Division of Technology, Industry and Economics, United Nations Environment Programme – UNEP), moderator, said that the current meeting provided an opportunity to take stock of the progress made on the implementation of the 10-year framework of programmes on sustainable consumption and production (“the Framework”) which had been adopted at the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development (Rio+20) in 2012.

**Mr. Hoballah** (Sustainable Consumption and Production Branch, Division of Technology, Industry and Economics, UNEP) said that the global environmental situation was not improving and population growth, projected to reach 2 to 3 billion by 2030, would have a major impact on consumption and production patterns. The Framework had been adopted in order to: facilitate a more rapid shift towards sustainable consumption and production in all countries; increase resource efficiency; decouple economic growth from environmental degradation; and support capacity-building and access to financial and technical assistance for developing countries. It was also intended as a platform for knowledge-sharing.

A trust fund had been set up to receive and mobilize resources to support implementation with regard to the Framework. Private and public donors could contribute to general funds and to specific related programmes and initiatives. Programmes on consumer information, sustainable lifestyles, sustainable public procurement, building and construction processes and sustainable tourism would be at the core of the Framework. Other possible items for inclusion were sustainable agrifood systems, transport, mobility, creating sustainable cities, and sustainability of small and medium-sized enterprises. The programmes would bring together existing and new initiatives and partnerships, and help to build synergies and facilitate capacity-building.

The 10YFP Inter-Agency Coordination Group had met for the first time in May 2013. Several of the 19 participating agencies had already expressed interest in co-leading programmes. More than 105 countries had nominated national focal points. The Global SCP Clearinghouse had been launched in May 2013. It brought together more than 1,000 members and experts from some 500 institutions in over 100 countries. The Framework would be developed in five steps: stocktaking and consultations; development of programme proposals by key partners; submission of a template for online comments; approval by the secretariat and endorsement by the Board; launch and implementation. The programmes would build on the Marrakech Process and other relevant initiatives; the first two would be launched in late 2013. A number of regional meetings had been held on sustainable consumption and production processes.

A communication strategy, a quarterly newsletter, an official website, and global and regional networks of national focal points had been created in order to facilitate communication and outreach for the Framework. The next steps would be: nomination of stakeholder focal points; holding of the first Board meeting; organization of regional meetings in Africa and Asia; fundraising; programme launch; and engagement with the private sector and civil society.

**Mr. Kambuaya** (Indonesia), Minister of the Environment, said that, as one of the most populous and fastest growing regions in the world, the Asia-Pacific region attached great importance to sustainable consumption and production. Indonesia had adopted a “pro-

growth, pro-job, pro-poor and pro-environment” policy strategy in line with the global sustainable development agenda. In recognition of the importance of the Framework, it had also launched a road map for the period 2013–2023 to make sustainable consumption and production a national priority. For the first biennium, the road map provided for “greening” of building, procurement, industrial and tourism programmes as a first step towards incorporating sustainable consumption and production into national development policy.

The concept was not easy to grasp and tangible measures should be taken to help Governments and stakeholders to implement the programmes and communicate their objectives to the public. Capacity-building, global partnership and sharing of best practices were also vital elements, especially in the light of dwindling resources. While global action was important, targets must be set nationally and take account of country-specific circumstances.

**Ms. Kohli** (Observer for Switzerland), Senior Policy Adviser, Federal Office for the Environment, said that Switzerland had been a supporter of the Framework from the outset. It had led the Task Force on Sustainable Public Procurement and actively supported the Agrifood Task Force on sustainable consumption and production patterns. Sustainable public procurement had been part of the country’s development strategy since 2002. Internationally, Switzerland had supported Ghana in the design and implementation of policies to ensure transparency, accountability and sustainability in public procurement. The International Sustainable Public Procurement Initiative was an important tool for global implementation.

Various Swiss ministries were engaged in dialogue on national sustainable food consumption and production issues. Switzerland also supported the adoption of voluntary standards by private entities operating at the international level, such as Fairtrade.

**Ms. Notutela** (South Africa) said that her country supported the Framework in the broader context of sustainable development and poverty reduction and had launched its own national framework for public and private sector stakeholders. Her Government was working with the independent, non-profit Green Building Council, which had been set up in 2007, to tackle the problem of environmental degradation caused by rapid urbanization. Green building practices were rapidly gaining ground in South Africa, which currently had 36 “Green Star-rated” buildings, including the new Department of Environmental Affairs Head Office.

The African regional 10-year framework linked SCP objectives with the challenge of meeting basic needs and providing sustainable livelihoods. At the 2010 Conference on Promoting Green Building Rating in Africa, a resolution had been adopted on the establishment of an Africa-wide Green Building Council network. The Conference participants had recognized the need for public awareness-raising and capacity-building within the industry and had agreed that the Green Building Council of South Africa should host the website of the African network and mentor representatives of councils in other countries. She commended the International Finance Corporation and the World Green Building Council on their decision to support green building practices in emerging markets.

South Africa was a pioneer of responsible tourism and had several bodies that accredited green-tourism and social-responsibility initiatives. South Africa had supported the creation of the Sustainable Tourism Certification Alliance Africa as a regional standard-setting body and a platform for generating and sharing knowledge, skills, capacities and other resources.

Steps must be taken to develop cleaner national production centres, national policies that included the concept of sustainable consumption and production, and arrangements for transfers of environmentally sound technologies. SCP could be used by developing countries to bypass inefficient and polluting phases of development.

**Ms. Romero Caballero** (Mexico) said that the main focus of the post-2015 development agenda should be poverty eradication and conservation of the environment. A large component of the agenda would concern unsustainable consumption patterns, natural resource management, public transportation, clean technologies, and chemical waste treatment. The 10-year framework of programmes on sustainable consumption and production patterns should be tailored to each country's situation and needs and should be adequately funded. A set of benchmarks should be defined to help make sure that programmes were actually effective. Mexico had adopted a strategy to facilitate the transition towards sustainable consumption and production and had established an advisory group comprising representatives of the Government, academia, industry, civil society and international organizations to deal with that task.

**Mr. Piminov** (Russian Federation) said that the Framework would be a useful tool for the implementation of sustainable development activities. The Framework design should be flexible and allow for creative approaches to be taken to meeting regional and national priorities. He would welcome more details about the programme on consumer information, sustainable lifestyles and education, particularly whether it would tackle the consumerist mindset. He also wanted to know how the objective of achieving sustainability at all points of the life cycle of goods was approached in the Framework and whether there were plans to assign responsibilities to the members of the Inter-Agency Coordination Group in such a way as to avoid duplication of mandates.

**Mr. Devanlay** (Observer for the European Union) asked the panellists how they thought the subject of sustainable consumption and production fitted into ongoing discussions regarding the post-2015 development agenda.

**Mr. Nasr** (Observer for Egypt), pointing out that the Framework Trust Fund overlapped with existing funds to deal with climate change and other sustainable development issues, asked whether a coordination mechanism was planned. He also wished to know whether efforts regarding the delivery of consumer information would be coordinated with the International Organization for Standardization.

**Ms. González Zambrano** (Observer for the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela) said that the Rio+20 outcome document was a crucial part of the process to change production and consumption patterns. Effecting that kind of change was a substantial challenge, because it went against the grain of the capitalist model. However, the change must come rapidly, and educating the population to become more responsible consumers should play a pivotal role. Recalling the propensity of some States to establish a link between sustainable consumption and production and the use of fossil fuels, she said that those who tried to persuade Governments to do away with fuel subsidies were encroaching on national sovereignty; fossil fuels were a vital source of income for many developing countries. Energy and development should be addressed as separate issues; development goals were established on a multilateral basis, whereas energy policy was set at the national level. Moreover, her country was a prime example of how it was possible to be fossil fuel-rich and yet have a clean energy programme. United Nations discussions about sustainability should not be concerned with geopolitical considerations. She asked for information about best practices in sustainable consumption.

**Mr. Hoballah** (Sustainable Consumption and Production Branch, Division of Technology, Industry and Economics, UNEP) said that his branch, in conjunction with the Inter-Agency Coordination Group, would be advocating for the inclusion of sustainable consumption and production in the post-2015 development agenda. The Framework Trust Fund was not yet operational, but discussions had been held on forging ties with country-based climate change funds. In addition, the Fund would focus primarily on climate change mitigation projects. The branch was already cooperating with the International Organization

for Standardization on labelling and the construction sector. It had developed a set of carbon metrics that had been approved by the organization's central secretariat.

**Ms. Kohli** (Observer for Switzerland) said that food waste would figure prominently in discussions about sustainable consumption. Sustainable consumption and production should be included in the sustainable development goals, but discussions were at too early a stage to define clear targets and the means of achieving them.

**Ms. Notutela** (South Africa) said that the approach of South Africa to sustainable consumption and production had to be balanced against the development requirements stemming from the challenges of poverty, unemployment and inequality. It was premature to speculate on the final content of the sustainable development goals, but her country's priority remained poverty eradication.

**Mr. Kambuaya** (Indonesia) said that the report of the High-Level Panel of Eminent Persons on the Post-2015 Development Agenda should be considered an integral part of the sustainable development goals and that the Framework represented a concerted effort to move forward with sustainable development.

**Mr. Yoo** Yeonchul (Republic of Korea) asked for clarification of the approval process used in the Framework design exercise.

**Mr. Hoballah** (Sustainable Consumption and Production Branch, Division of Technology, Industry and Economics, UNEP) said that the UNEP secretariat checked that the Framework was consistent with all the components of the Rio+20 outcome document regarding the elaboration of programmes. Once approval had been obtained, the Framework would be submitted to the Small Board, which would then authorize the launch.

**Ms. Barthelemy** (Inter-Agency Support Branch, Division for Sustainable Development, United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs) said that the Inter-Agency Coordination Group had been established to support the implementation of the Framework, to give it greater visibility and to coordinate United Nations activities for the roll-out of Framework programmes. The Group would be supporting the Open Working Group on Sustainable Development Goals, which would be discussing sustainable consumption and production at its January 2014 meeting. It also planned to reach out to other inter-agency mechanisms involved in the Rio+20 follow-up process and to carry out research on for example sustainable consumption and production indicators and monitoring tools. The United Nations must ensure that the Framework remained relevant by keeping it on the agenda for intergovernmental discussions on sustainable development.

**Mr. Arden-Clarke** (Acting Head, 10-Year Framework of Programmes Secretariat, UNEP), accompanying his statement with a digital slide presentation, said that the Global SCP Clearinghouse was a web-based tool that would be used initially to recruit partners for the implementation of the Framework. It had been designed to promote sustainable consumption and production, disseminate information and best practices, foster networking and partnerships and track news and events worldwide. It was an evolving platform that hosted online communities devoted to exploring themes such as energy efficiency. The Clearinghouse would eventually provide country profiles, maps of sustainable consumption and production initiatives, reports, and webinars.

*A short film giving a virtual tour of the Global SCP Clearinghouse website was projected.*

*The meeting was suspended at 11.55 a.m. and resumed at 12.05 p.m.*

**Implementation of the Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples by the specialized agencies and the international institutions associated with the United Nations** (A/68/62, E/2013/65-A/68/76, E/2013/55 and E/2013/L.24)

**Regional cooperation** (E/2013/16–21 and E/2013/L.28)

**Economic and social repercussions of the Israeli occupation on the living conditions of the Palestinian people in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, and the Arab population in the occupied Syrian Golan** (E/2013/13-A/68/77 and E/2013/L.16)

**Mr. Proaño** (Ecuador), speaking on behalf of the Special Committee on Decolonization, said that non-self-governing territories must be given sufficient aid in order to be able to avail themselves of the opportunities opened up by science, technology, innovation and culture. Introducing the draft resolution entitled “Support to Non-Self-Governing Territories by the specialized agencies and international institutions associated with the United Nations” (E/2013/L.24) and the report of the Secretary-General on the implementation of the Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples by the specialized agencies and the international institutions associated with the United Nations (A/68/62), he said that the approach to sustainable development set out in the post-2015 agenda would be crucial for non-self-governing territories. Only some non-self-governing island territories were included in the list of small developing island States as non-members of the United Nations and associated members of the regional commissions. The others were largely ineligible for United Nations funds. The Special Committee and the governing powers and States and territories concerned all had a role to play in rectifying the situation.

**Mr. Alami** (Director of the Emerging and Conflict-Related Issues Division of the United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia), accompanying his statement with a digital slide presentation, said that he wished to introduce the note by the Secretary-General on the economic and social repercussions of the Israeli occupation on the living conditions of the Palestinian people in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, and of the Arab population in the occupied Syrian Golan (E/2013/13-A/68/77). He said that the discriminatory policies of Israel against Palestinians amounted to de facto segregation. Palestinians were deprived of equal access to roads, infrastructure, basic services and water and were subject to myriad military orders that applied only to them.

The Israeli zoning regime effectively restricted Palestinian construction to 1 per cent of Area C in the West Bank and 13 per cent of East Jerusalem. Palestinians were thus forced to build without permits and risked subsequent demolition. In 2012, 3,000 Palestinians had been displaced in the Gaza Strip after their homes had been destroyed or damaged during the Israeli November offensive. Another 815 had been displaced in the West Bank as a result of home demolitions. Israel had seized more than 40 per cent of the West Bank in order to build settlements. All 150 Israeli settlements and approximately 100 outposts on Palestinian territory were illegal and settlers residing in them represented 19 per cent of the overall population of the West Bank. The aim of the construction of the 708-km wall along the West Bank was to open the way for annexation of additional Palestinian land. In all, 68 per cent of land in the West Bank had become inaccessible to Palestinians.

Israel continued to pursue a policy of disproportionate and excessive use of force and arbitrary detentions against Palestinians. Between 30 March 2012 and 29 March 2013, 268 Palestinians had been killed and 4,483 others had been injured by Israeli security forces and settlers. Israeli security forces used practices on Palestinian detainees that amounted to

torture. Such practices included the systematic and institutionalized ill-treatment of Palestinian child prisoners. Settler violence against Palestinians was increasing and generally went unpunished. Israel had blockaded the Gaza Strip since 2007.

Israel exploited 89 per cent of the available water in Palestinian territory but prevented Palestinians from using or boring wells. Palestinians in the West Bank each received 70 litres of water per day, compared to 450 litres for Israeli settlers. In Gaza, up to 95 per cent of water had become unfit for human consumption. Sanitation infrastructure had also deteriorated.

In 2011, 25.8 per cent of Palestinians in the West Bank and Gaza had been living in poverty and 12.9 per cent in deep poverty. In East Jerusalem, 78 per cent of Palestinians lived below the poverty line. More than 40 per cent of Palestinian households were classified as food insecure or vulnerable to food insecurity. High rates of anaemia among children and pregnant women had been recorded, and half of children under 2 suffered from iron deficiency anaemia. Almost 290 educational facilities had been damaged during the November 2012 offensive in Gaza and 38 schools in the West Bank were under threat of demolition. In the occupied Syrian Golan, Syrian Arab citizens were subject to discrimination.

**Ms. Chan** (Observer for Fiji), speaking on behalf of the Group of 77 and China and recalling that, under Article 62 of the Charter of the United Nations, the Economic and Social Council could make recommendations for the purpose of promoting respect for, and observance of, human rights and fundamental freedoms for all, said that the international community should support all efforts to end the suffering of the Palestinian people and of the Arab population in the occupied Syrian Golan.

**Mr. Zuhairi** (Observer for the State of Palestine) welcomed the note of the Secretary-General and said that Israel was continuing to violate international law in the Occupied Palestinian Territory. The actions of Israel represented an attempt to destroy the economic and social life of the Palestinian community and had caused losses estimated at billions of United States dollars. Industry, agriculture and trade were all severely affected by Israeli policy. Palestinians were losing their homes and unemployment was rising. People were unable to move freely in the Occupied Palestinian Territory. The occupation was tantamount to a crime against humanity.

The Government of Palestine pursued a two-State policy under which a Palestinian State would be created within the 1967 borders. An independent State of Palestine would be in a position to embark on its own path to sustainable development and would not need foreign assistance. The Council should adopt the resolution tabled by Fiji, on behalf of the Group of 77 and China, and Turkey (E/2013/L.16).

**Mr. Berdyev** (Russian Federation), turning to the subject of regional cooperation, called for closer intergovernmental cooperation in the work of the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe and the United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific, specifically in regard to transport, the power and timber industries, innovation and economic integration. A binding European forestry agreement that was concluded under the auspices of the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe would provide a framework for future cooperation and allow forestry policy to play a valuable role in the promotion of sustainable development across Europe. The Russian Federation supported cooperative efforts by the two commissions to create a barrier-free Eurasian transport zone.

His country welcomed the upcoming conclusion of the agreement between member States of the United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific on dry ports as well as the recent signing of the memorandum of mutual understanding by the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe and the Eurasian Economic

Commission. It was to be hoped that normal work with the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe on the power industry would soon be resumed. The Russian Federation contributed US\$ 1.2 million annually to the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe and the United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific to finance technology transfers, but was concerned that budget cuts in both commissions would hamper their effectiveness.

**Mr. Altinors** (Turkey), turning to the subject of the Israeli occupation and its repercussions, said that Israeli practices in Gaza were not only illegal and unsustainable, but they severely hindered economic activity in the occupied territories. Israeli settlement policy constituted a major obstacle to the resumption of peace talks. Stability and security could only be achieved through a just and comprehensive peace, economic growth and human development. The contribution of Turkey to the regular budget of the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA) had risen by more than 100 per cent in the previous four years. The Turkish Cooperation and Development Agency, which had been operating in the Occupied Palestinian Territory since 2005, was investing US\$ 32.5 million in 36 projects there.

**Ms. Khries** (Observer for Jordan) said that a two-State peace process whereby East Jerusalem would become the capital of a Palestinian State must be pursued. As more Israeli settlements were built, Palestinians were losing their homes and seeing their farmland destroyed. The international community must oblige Israel to face up to its responsibilities and comply with all the relevant United Nations resolutions.

*The meeting rose at 1 p.m.*