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## Second Committee

### Summary record of the 14th meeting

Held at Headquarters, New York, on Tuesday, 16 October 2018, at 10 a.m.

*Chair:* Mr. Remaoun (Vice-Chair) . . . . . (Algeria)

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- (k) The role of the international community in the prevention of the radiation threat in Central Asia (*continued*)

In the absence of Mr. Skinner-Kl e Arenales (Guatemala), Mr. Remaoun (Algeria), Vice-Chair, took the Chair.

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

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

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- (j) **Combating sand and dust storms** (continued) (A/73/306)
- (k) **The role of the international community in the prevention of the radiation threat in Central Asia** (continued)

1. **Mr. Mackay** (Belarus) said that his country was continuing to make steady progress towards achieving sustainable development on the basis of the 2030

Agenda for Sustainable Development, in close cooperation with both domestic and foreign partners. Over the last few years, his Government had established a comprehensive system for attaining the Sustainable Development Goals, which included the development of the relevant institutional framework. In addition, the President of Belarus had established a national coordinator for the Goals who was also in charge of the Sustainable Development Goal Council.

2. The implementation of the 2030 Agenda was an integral part of his Government's work. In that context, the national strategy for the sustainable development of Belarus was being brought into line with the 2030 Agenda and the updated version would highlight linkages between national efforts and the Goals. His Government's past success in achieving the Millennium Development Goals and its systematic approach to implementing the 2030 Agenda had contributed to the national development outcomes achieved to date. For example, according to its most recent Human Development Index ranking, Belarus now belonged to the group of countries with a very high level of human development.

3. A parliamentary group working on the Goals had held its first open hearings in December 2017, on the basis of which concrete recommendations had been made to the Government and other stakeholders. The impact of all draft laws on the attainment of the Goals was also being analysed.

4. His Government had also created an open partnership group on sustainable development comprising representatives from civil society, business and scientific circles and international organizations. Partnership with all domestic and international stakeholders was key to successfully implementing the 2030 Agenda. Belarus therefore prioritized international cooperation on sustainable development, including by exchanging lessons learned for the achievement of the Goals.

5. Reviews of implementation of the 2030 Agenda were another effective form of international cooperation. By the start of 2019 Belarus would have participated in national, regional and international reviews of its efforts to implement the 2030 Agenda.

6. The first regional forum of national coordinators for the Goals had been held in Minsk in February 2018. One important outcome had been the initiative to create a partnership network of national coordinators for the Goals. Towards that end, Belarus had recently proposed the establishment of a United Nations database of national coordinators for the Goals. The database could be launched at the high-level political forum on

sustainable development to be held under the aegis of the General Assembly in September 2019.

7. **Mr. Hermida Castillo** (Nicaragua) said that the international community must work together to achieve the 2030 Agenda on the basis of common but differentiated responsibilities. Joint efforts were required to eradicate poverty, hunger, malnutrition, emerging diseases, war and conflict, and violence against women and children, as well as to address the impact of climate change.

8. Nicaragua attached priority to poverty eradication, which would support development in harmony with Mother Earth that would ensure peace and prosperity for future generations. Greater ambition and political will were required to achieve the 2030 Agenda. Developed countries must honour their commitment to allocate 0.7 per cent of their gross national product as official development assistance, in addition to providing new, additional and predictable financing. Moreover, all coercive economic measures applied by developed countries that hindered development must be repealed.

9. The recent record high temperatures across the world, and the low levels of ambition demonstrated with regard to cutting greenhouse gas emissions, were of grave concern. Developed countries should change their unsustainable production and consumption patterns, and should fulfil their commitments related to financing and technology transfer.

10. The Committee had a vital role to play in sustainable development. Member States should act in good faith and in solidarity in order to ensure that the current session of the General Assembly resulted in the best possible outcomes.

11. **Mr. Alnahdi** (Saudi Arabia) said that a collective effort to narrow the gap between developed and developing countries was crucial for achieving the Sustainable Development Goals. Different countries had different needs, and the principles and national legislation of each country should be respected. His Government attached great importance to protecting the environment, including from the impact of the country's urban and industrial boom, by, inter alia, curbing pollution, making optimal use of renewable water resources, rendering waste management more efficient and combating desertification, all through the use of modern technology. Moreover, preserving biological diversity was central to human health and food security.

12. In the interest of preserving forests and wildlife, reducing overgrazing and developing ecotourism, the Custodian of the Two Holy Mosques had established a council on royal reserves under the chairmanship of His

Highness the Crown Prince. Six protected areas would be open for use by citizens and residents of the Kingdom.

13. His country supported international efforts to combat desertification, which affected most of the countries in the Arab world. In line with the Saudi Vision 2030 economic plan, Saudi Arabia had launched several sustainable development initiatives, which included planting 4 million trees, establishing over 100 national parks and rehabilitating 60,000 hectares of agricultural land and pastures in the coming four years.

14. Saudi Arabia shared the concern expressed by the Secretary-General in his report on the oil slick on Lebanese shores ([A/73/302](#)), namely, at the continued disregard by Israel of international resolutions calling on it to bear responsibility for the environmental disaster caused by the occupying Israeli army's devastating attack on oil storage tanks off Lebanese shores. Such disregard was unsurprising, given that country's habit of flouting international law as it persisted in occupying Palestinian territory and the Syrian Golan.

15. **Mr. Sengdalavong** (Lao People's Democratic Republic) said that the international community must promote inclusive development and mobilize adequate resources to support developing countries, in particular least developed countries, landlocked least developed countries and small island developing States. To that end, development partners must meet their official development assistance commitments and stakeholders at all levels must make immediate and concerted efforts to advance the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals in order to ensure that no one was left behind.

16. His Government had established a national steering committee chaired by the Prime Minister to ensure the achievement of the Goals. It had also been working closely with the United Nations country team to mainstream the Goals into its national socioeconomic development plan for 2016–2020, as reflected in its voluntary national review presented at the 2018 high-level political forum on sustainable development. The Government continued to promote green growth and sustainable development in alignment with its vision 2030 programme, development strategy 2025 and national socioeconomic development plan for 2016–2020, initiatives that covered three main areas: sustained economic growth, social development and environmental protection. The Lao People's Democratic Republic was firmly committed to achieving the Goals with the aim of lifting the population out of poverty. He

expressed gratitude to all stakeholders for their support for his country's national development efforts.

17. **Mr. Mezang Akamba** (Cameroon) said that the threats to the attainment of the Sustainable Development Goals, including poverty, desertification, the degradation of biodiversity and natural disasters, made it necessary to monitor the implementation of Agenda 21, the Programme for the Further Implementation of Agenda 21 and the outcomes of the World Summit on Sustainable Development and of the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development.

18. Cameroon and the Central African subregion were severely affected by pollution, climate change, the thinning of the ozone layer, the depletion of freshwater resources, deforestation, desertification, toxic waste proliferation and threats to biodiversity. In the subregion, home to the second largest forest in the world and 60 per cent of the continent's biodiversity, Lake Chad had shrunk by 90 per cent and land had become progressively degraded. In Cameroon, in a 20-year period, desertification had caused the agricultural belt to shift hundreds of kilometres south, exposing the northern part of the country to food insecurity. Consequently, his country, which produced low levels of greenhouse gases, was committed to ensuring sustainable forest management through reforestation, the promotion of renewable energy, the development of alternatives to fossil fuels, capacity-building in the area of environmentally-sound waste management, the preservation of biodiversity, and the establishment of programmes for the sound management of forest products. His Government had submitted its nationally determined contribution in accordance with the Paris Agreement under the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change and had translated the actions contained therein into viable projects. It had also established a national plan and a national observatory on climate change. The Secretary-General must encourage all stakeholders to provide timely support to Cameroon for its efforts to reduce its carbon footprint by 32 per cent between 2016 and 2035.

19. He expressed sympathy to the people of Indonesia and Haiti in connection with the recent natural disasters that had affected their countries. Cameroon had fully integrated the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015–2030 into its development programme and was implementing the Framework. In 2015, his Government had hosted the high-level meeting on the implementation of the Framework in Africa. He noted with appreciation the support provided by the United Nations Office for Disaster Risk Reduction in that regard. Cameroon had also established a national

platform for disaster risk reduction and a support fund for victims of natural disasters.

20. The Government was fostering a culture of civil protection by encouraging the population to participate in efforts to promote overall risk prevention and sustainable development. His country's growth and employment strategy therefore focused on education, health, and the elimination of all forms of exclusion and poverty. Universal education had already been achieved, and universal health coverage would soon be provided. Although a number of environmental protection measures had been taken, including the adoption of a national action plan on biodiversity, their implementation was hindered by inadequate financial and technological resources.

21. The international community had a moral obligation to ensure that no one was left behind, particularly given the disproportionate impact of climate change on the world's poor. All States must fulfil their development commitments in accordance with the principle of common but differentiated responsibilities.

22. **Mr. Tōnē** (Tonga) said that, as a Pacific small island developing State, Tonga faced unique obstacles to sustainable development. He welcomed the inclusion in the Secretary-General's report (A/73/226) of a reference to the challenges faced by small island developing States as a consequence of climate change; and of recommendations focusing on the need for international cooperation to support such States in their efforts to implement the Sendai Framework.

23. During the General Assembly's recent general debate, the Head of State of Tonga had reaffirmed that the Government had aligned its priorities for 2018–2021 with the 2030 Agenda and the SIDS Accelerated Modalities of Action (SAMOA) Pathway (Samoa Pathway). Those priorities included education, climate change, ocean health, and the prevention and control of non-communicable diseases.

24. In June 2018, his Government had hosted the regional preparatory meeting of Pacific small island developing States for the midterm review of the Samoa Pathway. The outcome of the meeting included a call to allocate additional resources to the Department of Economic and Social Affairs and the Office of the High Representative for the Least Developed Countries, Landlocked Developing Countries and Small Island Developing States to support implementation of the Samoa Pathway and the repositioning of the United Nations development system. Tonga looked forward to collaborating with partners in drafting an interregional report in preparation for the midterm review, for consideration at the 2019 high-level political forum.

25. Tonga had recently launched a joint national action plan for climate change adaptation and disaster risk management for 2018–2028, which integrated disaster risk management considerations into a set of targets aimed at building the country's resilience to climate change, the biggest challenge to its sustainable development. Furthermore, in view of the importance of biodiversity to the livelihood and well-being of its people, Tonga was stepping up the implementation of the Convention on Biological Diversity and would participate in the fourteenth meeting of the Conference of the Parties to that Convention.

26. A strong advocate of renewable energy and energy efficiency, his Government had committed to increasing renewable energy production to 50 per cent of total energy generated by 2020 and, in 2017, had commissioned a solar farm, owned by an independent power producer. Tonga also hosted the Pacific Centre for Renewable Energy and Energy Efficiency and had recently been elected Vice-President of the International Solar Alliance, representing the Asia-Pacific region at the Alliance's first general assembly. The international community, including multilateral development banks, United Nations agencies and other stakeholders, should continue to provide support to developing countries, in particular small island developing States.

27. **Mr. Bui Thai Quang** (Viet Nam) said that, in order to ensure universal access to affordable, reliable, sustainable and modern energy, Viet Nam sought to accelerate the transition to new and renewable energy and increased energy efficiency, including by promoting related policies and investments at the national and international levels. His country had committed to tripling its renewable energy production between 2015 and 2030. It also looked forward to cooperating to promote research on, and the development and transfer of, advanced technologies to facilitate the mining and processing of rare earth materials, which were essential to the manufacture of value-enhancing and environmentally-friendly products such as wind turbines, electric car batteries and solar cells.

28. **Mr. Annakou** (Libya) said that three years after the adoption of the 2030 Agenda, considerable gaps in and obstacles to its implementation remained, ranging from financing problems and internal conflicts to foreign occupation. National efforts and international cooperation must therefore be intensified, making sure to leave no one behind. In that connection, Libya underscored the right of all peoples to development and the principle of common but differentiated responsibilities.

29. Political instability and armed conflict had undermined his country's capacity to protect its borders, leaving them vulnerable to exploitation by smuggling and human trafficking rings from source and destination countries. Consequently, the influx of illegal migrants from sub-Saharan Africa placed an ever heavier burden on Libya as a transit country, compounding its humanitarian woes, as did its neighbouring countries' failure to guard their borders. Migration was a global, multilateral problem that could not be solved by leaving transit countries to shoulder the burden of masses of migrants. It was incumbent upon source and destination countries to bear their share of responsibility for illegal migration flows caused by the activity of smuggling and trafficking rings in source and destination countries.

30. As funding was the cornerstone of achieving the Sustainable Development Goals, it was time for States to implement the United Nations Convention against Corruption and create mechanisms for the retrieval of plundered assets, which, in the case of Libya, would provide a valuable source of financing for sustainable development initiatives. His Government looked forward to receiving assistance from other Governments in recovering its plundered assets.

31. Located in a semi-arid region, Libya felt the impact of desertification and drought, both phenomena arising from climate change. He urged the international community to support efforts by Libya and other affected countries to combat desertification and land degradation, and to implement all provisions of the Convention to Combat Desertification. States in Africa were particularly in need of capacity-building assistance so that they could more effectively respond to and mitigate the impact of natural disasters.

32. **Ms. Hlaing** (Myanmar) said that urgent action was needed to strengthen collaboration in support of the 2030 Agenda so that no one was left behind. Myanmar was committed to advancing the economic, social and environmental pillars of sustainable development in a balanced and integrated manner, and had been mainstreaming the Sustainable Development Goals into national policies and plans. Her country's sustainable development plan for 2018–2030 was closely aligned with the Goals; its implementation would require the involvement of development partners and international organizations.

33. Myanmar had experienced positive changes in recent years, including a 50 per cent increase in per capita income and a decrease in the poverty rate from above 40 per cent to 30 per cent. In March 2018, it had fulfilled all the necessary criteria to graduate from the category of least developed countries.

34. Foreign and domestic investment were important enablers of development. Myanmar was committed to improving its investment environment by promoting capacity-building, providing cash loans and fulfilling infrastructure requirements to boost small and medium-sized enterprises, the main driving force behind its economy. It was also developing a road map for financial inclusion for 2018–2022.

35. Her Government had increased its investments in education, was fostering creativity among youth and harnessing the potential of people, and would develop human capital to stay apace of cutting-edge technologies. It had also placed gender equality and women's empowerment at the centre of national development plans. Ranked among the countries at highest risk of natural disasters, Myanmar had taken significant steps to reduce their impact, including by developing a climate change strategy and action plan for 2017–2030 and an action plan on disaster risk reduction for 2017–2020.

36. **Ms. Zahir** (Maldives) said that there was no substitute for investment in sustainable development that focused on building countries' capacities to respond to climate change; and on reducing their risk of, and improving their resilience to, natural disasters. Countries must therefore ensure a conducive environment for domestic and foreign investment. With tourism and fisheries as its two main industries, Maldives attracted investors by promoting such practices as the locally-developed "pole and line" technique, which allowed only sustainable amounts of fish to be caught, and by maintaining the local natural environment. It therefore had an economic interest in preserving ocean health and marine biodiversity, and in protecting its beaches from erosion.

37. Climate change was the biggest threat to sustainable development. As highlighted in the 2018 special report of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change entitled "Global warming of 1.5°C," the efforts of a single country such as Maldives, while important, were not sufficient to preserve the gains made in protecting its natural environment. It was therefore essential to finalize the work programme under the Paris Agreement. She noted with appreciation the work done at the twenty-third session of the Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change under the presidency of Fiji, and recalled that the target of limiting global warming to 1.5°C above pre-industrial levels was no longer an ideal goal but was essential for the survival of humanity.

38. Her Government had implemented long-term policies to facilitate the transition to clean and renewable energy, including the elimination of subsidies for conventional energy production and the provision of incentives for renewable energy production. She recognized the role of the International Renewable Energy Agency in steering the Small Island Developing States-Lighthouses Initiative and in collaborating with Maldives on the Initiative for Renewable Island Energy, designed to support the transition of small island developing States to renewable energy. Additional resources must be allocated to strengthen the Secretariat's capacity to support such States.

39. **Ms. Koubodena** (Togo) said that her delegation welcomed the report of the Secretary-General entitled "Ensuring access to affordable, reliable, sustainable and modern energy for all" (A/73/267). More than 1 billion people currently lived without electricity, while 3 billion lacked access to clean-cooking solutions, a situation that exposed them to indoor air pollution. Approximately 3.8 million people, in particular women and children, died prematurely each year from exposure to such pollution. It was therefore essential to close the electricity access gap by harnessing the potential of decentralized renewable energy solutions. In that regard, she welcomed the establishment of the International Solar Alliance.

40. At the centre of its national development plan for 2018–2030, her Government had established an energy policy focused on leveraging public-private partnerships to promote renewable energy, connectivity to conventional power grids, and the use of individual solar kits. To achieve its goal of ensuring universal energy access by 2030, in 2017 the Government had launched a five-year project designed to provide electricity to more than 2 million people, at a cost of 68 billion CFA francs. As part of the project, the European Union and the World Bank would provide support for the installation of 100,000 off-grid home solar systems, amounting to a total of 20 to 25 million euros. She thanked all partners that were assisting with the project. Ensuring universal access to affordable, reliable, sustainable and modern energy was central to the achievement of the 2030 Agenda. International cooperation in that area must therefore be strengthened.

41. **Ms. Manav** (Turkey) said that, as a country strongly affected by climate change, Turkey had ratified the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification in Those Countries Experiencing Serious Drought and/or Desertification, Particularly in Africa in 1998; had developed a national action plan and strategy to combat desertification; and had established a web-based system for monitoring and reporting progress

in that regard. In 2015, Turkey had hosted the twelfth session of the Conference of the Parties to that Convention, of which it had served as President. During that session, it had launched the Ankara Initiative 2016–2019 to assist relevant countries in setting land degradation neutrality targets, in line with Sustainable Development Goal target 15.3; and, pursuant to the Convention, to encourage the development and dissemination of human-centric, participatory and sustainable land management approaches, with a focus on capacity-building and supporting regional and local cooperation among States parties. Turkey had also contributed to the formulation of the 2018–2030 Strategic Framework of the Convention by participating in the related intergovernmental working group. Her country's national report on land degradation neutrality had served as a model for other countries in setting their targets and, in collaboration with the secretariat of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention, her Government had organized national target-setting workshops for African and Central and Eastern European countries.

42. As part of the Ankara Initiative, Turkey had signed a memorandum of understanding on combating desertification with the Pan-African Agency of the Great Green Wall for the Sahara and the Sahel Initiative. It had also collaborated with the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations in supporting the efforts of Eritrea, Mauritania and the Sudan to combat land degradation and desertification by sustainably managing their natural resources and restoring degraded forests and landscapes. Moreover, in collaboration with the secretariat of the Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification, Turkey would host a global observance event for the World Day to Combat Desertification and Drought, which would provide impetus for achieving land degradation neutrality targets and would raise awareness of the importance of international cooperation in combating desertification.

43. As a country with rich biodiversity, Turkey was committed to contributing to global efforts to support the conservation, sustainable use and restoration of biological diversity for the benefit of present and future generations. Marine and terrestrial biodiversity were essential to sustainable development, given their interdependence with the provision of basic goods and services, their impact on the resilience of ecological systems to global change, and their cultural importance. Turkey was concerned at the negative impact on biodiversity of the degradation and fragmentation of ecosystems; unsustainable land use; the overexploitation of natural resources; the illegal

harvesting of and trade in species; the introduction of invasive alien species; the pollution of air, soil, inland waters and oceans; climate change; and desertification. The 2030 Agenda provided an opportunity to address the environmental, economic and social dimensions of development in an integrated manner. Efforts to implement the Strategic Plan for Biodiversity 2011–2020 and its Aichi Biodiversity Targets must be scaled up. As the host of the sixteenth meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity, Turkey would contribute to the development and implementation of the post-2020 global biodiversity framework, which would build on the Aichi Targets and be aligned with the 2030 Agenda.

44. Sand and dust storms, which were triggered by natural causes, climate change and unsustainable agricultural, land management and oil extraction practices, posed a great challenge to sustainable development. Her own country was exposed to sand and dust storms originating from North Africa and the Middle East. Owing to the transboundary nature of such storms, comprehensive efforts by the source and affected countries were required, and source mitigation strategies should be developed and implemented on the basis of reliable scientific data. Regional cooperation schemes and other initiatives being undertaken by United Nations bodies to address the phenomenon were also essential. Turkey had been building its capacities in the area of sand and dust storm monitoring and forecasting, and forecasts for the Middle East, North Africa and Europe, generated by an operational centre established by the World Meteorological Organization, were published online.

45. **Ms. Juárez Argueta** (Guatemala) said that her Government had been implementing its national development plan, “Katún Nuestra Guatemala 2032,” which was aligned with the Sustainable Development Goals and provided a comprehensive and proactive vision to guide the State in effecting transformational change in a broad range of priority areas. That experience had demonstrated the importance of ensuring coherence between global, national and local policies, strengthening national planning systems, and fostering broad-based ownership of and consensus on development goals. Indeed, all sectors of society, including Government, local communities, the business sector, civil society and the international community, must contribute to shaping development policies so that no one was left behind.

46. Guatemala had presented its first voluntary national review at the 2017 high-level political forum and would continue to present reviews every two years. She welcomed the support of the Economic Commission

for Latin America and the Caribbean, which provided a forum for sharing experiences and best practices adapted to the region's specificities, and thus contributed high added value at a low cost. The linkages between the regional commissions and the high-level political forum must be strengthened.

47. Her country had recently joined the Clean Seas campaign launched by the United Nations Environment Programme to promote global efforts to stop marine plastic pollution. For its part, Guatemala had deployed artisanal nets made of recovered plastic debris at 87 sites along local rivers in order to assist communities in collecting, repurposing, and appropriately and safely disposing of plastic waste. Guatemala had also collaborated with neighbouring countries in reducing pollution along its Caribbean coast.

48. Her Government would participate actively in the twenty-fourth session of the Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change and looked forward to crafting a global pact for the environment. In addition, the implementation of the Addis Ababa Action Agenda of the Third International Conference on Financing for Development, the Sendai Framework, the Paris Agreement, the New Urban Agenda and the quadrennial comprehensive policy review of operational activities for development of the United Nations system must be strengthened. The United Nations system must continue to support developing countries' efforts to achieve sustainable development. There was also a need for greater investment in the development of vulnerable groups, which were disproportionately affected by climate change and natural disasters, challenges that posed a particular risk to her region. As a middle-income country, Guatemala called for the use of a systematic approach and multidimensional indicators of development in order to better reflect the realities in the region; and, in line with the repositioning of the United Nations development system in the context of the quadrennial comprehensive review, to ensure the effective and targeted use of development funding.

49. **Ms. Yáñez Loza** (Ecuador) said that progress towards the Sustainable Development Goals must be accelerated, given the urgency and scale of the challenges faced, in particular by developing countries. Her delegation reaffirmed the objectives of eradicating poverty in all its forms and dimensions; building on the unfinished business of the Millennium Development Goals; and advancing the economic, social and environmental pillars of sustainable development, in accordance with the principles of equity and of common but differentiated responsibilities.

50. The Sendai Framework must be implemented, which would require a broader and more people-centred preventive approach, with a focus on inclusiveness, accessibility and the development of multi-hazard strategies through 2020. The 2015–2016 El Niño phenomenon had been one of the strongest on record. In neutral years, efforts must be made to prepare for, build resilience against and reduce the risk of that phenomenon, which posed serious challenges for developing countries.

51. Greater resource investment, the transfer of technology and the implementation of the Paris Agreement were required to combat climate change. The local communities and indigenous peoples' platform under the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change must be fully operationalized in recognition of their valuable knowledge in the fight against climate change. She recalled that the thirtieth meeting of the Parties to the Montreal Protocol on Substances that Deplete the Ozone Layer would be held in Quito in November 2018.

52. Land degradation neutrality had the potential to accelerate progress towards the Sustainable Development Goals. She recalled with satisfaction the global observance event for the World Day to Combat Desertification and Drought, held in Quito in June 2018, in collaboration with the secretariat of the Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification. Ecuador was committed to addressing biodiversity loss and looked forward to achieving tangible outcomes in that regard at the fourteenth meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity. It also attached great importance to ensuring access to energy and promoting renewable energy, in accordance with national development plans. A harmonious relationship must be fostered between humans and Mother Earth, which required the development of sustainable patterns of consumption and production. Ecuador recognized nature as a subject of rights.

53. **Ms. Abd Aziz** (Malaysia) said that, although more needed to be done, her delegation noted with appreciation the progress made by Member States in achieving the Sustainable Development Goals and incorporating the 2030 Agenda into their national policies. Coordinated efforts were needed to accelerate that progress, as local challenges often had a ripple effect owing to increasing global interconnectedness.

54. Implementation of the 2030 Agenda would assist her country in achieving its goal of becoming a high-income nation by 2020. Guided by its national road map for the Sustainable Development Goals, Malaysia had

reduced absolute poverty to less than 1 per cent and was currently focusing on improving quality of life for the bottom 40 per cent of households. By 2020, it aimed to double the average income of those households, thereby elevating them into the middle class. Malaysia had committed to reducing its carbon emissions relative to its gross domestic product (GDP) by 45 per cent between 2005 and 2030, comprising an unconditional target of 35 per cent and a target of 10 per cent conditional on the provision of support from developed countries. As at 2017, it had reduced its carbon emissions relative to its GDP by 26.5 per cent. Malaysia had also pledged to implement the Sendai Framework and had established a national disaster management agency following its adoption. A policy to integrate disaster risk reduction measures in planning and development activities across all sectors would also be formulated.

55. Developed countries should take responsibility for historical carbon emissions and should take the lead in addressing climate change, as they had stronger economies and more advanced technological and human resources capacities. At the same time, developing countries should also contribute towards reducing the impact of climate change.

56. As a megadiverse country, Malaysia had launched a national policy, covering the period 2016–2025, to coordinate efforts to preserve, conserve and rehabilitate biodiversity, in line with Sustainable Development Goal 14, on life below water, and Goal 15, on life on land. Her country was also contributing to strengthening means of implementation for the 2030 Agenda and revitalizing the global partnership for sustainable development through cooperation with bilateral, regional and international partners. The engagement of multiple stakeholders, resource mobilization and enhanced cooperation at all levels were required to achieve the Goals.

57. **Ms. Micael** (Eritrea) said that desertification, land degradation and drought affected billions of persons, underscoring the need for coordinated and sustained action at the national, regional and international levels. Policy measures adopted by Eritrea included ratification of the three most important environmental conventions and the elaboration of national strategies to meet its obligations under the conventions. Eritrea was committed to land degradation neutrality due to the importance of land-based natural resources to social and economic development. Lessons learned in soil and water conservation in Eritrea had shown that sustainable, resource-conserving and low external input techniques could be employed to bring degraded land back into production, improve yields and enhance

resilience. Strong partnership was needed to succeed on target-setting and the implementation of land degradation neutrality.

58. Cyclical droughts, land degradation, desertification and vulnerability to climate change made food security a big challenge for her country. Grass-roots communities, women, students, civil society organizations, religious leaders and the armed forces had been mobilized to work on soil and water conservation and afforestation. The construction of micro and macro dams had opened up opportunities to transform subsistence agricultural production into irrigated farming. Technology and innovation would be useful tools for increasing productivity in a sustainable manner.

59. At the regional level, Eritrea participated in the Great Green Wall for the Sahara and the Sahel Initiative. Improving the Organization's responsiveness would be critical to achieving the 2030 Agenda; Member States should further strengthen the role, capacity, effectiveness and efficiency of the United Nations in the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals.

60. **Archbishop Auza** (Observer for the Holy See) said that the Holy See was encouraged by stakeholders' efforts to achieve the 2030 Agenda, whose adoption Pope Francis had considered to be an important sign of hope. The interconnection between the economic, social and environmental pillars of development embodied by the 2030 Agenda required a shift away from a profit-driven mentality towards a people-centred approach focused on integral human development, human dignity and environmentally-sensitive ethics. The Sustainable Development Goals must not become merely statistical indicators akin to GDP, serving as a substitute for the lived experience of real people. In his address to the seventieth session of the General Assembly, Pope Francis had insisted that men and women must be allowed to be dignified agents of their own destiny in order to escape from extreme poverty.

61. An important contributor to sustainable development, tourism must be promoted not only for its economic and social benefits but for the opportunity it provided for mutually enriching encounters between persons of different cultures and backgrounds. Instead of imposing barriers in developing countries between affluent visitors and the local population, bridges must be built between tourists and residents on the basis of their common dignity. The lack of physical encounters between those groups contributed to a numbing of conscience and tendentious approaches to global challenges, such as progressively reducing birth rates among poor populations as a means of eliminating

poverty. Ultimately, integral human development would require a renewal of humanity and the development of a society that was inclusive of all people, particularly the most vulnerable groups, and in which economic wealth served the common good.

62. **Ms. Barth** (International Labour Organization (ILO)) said that a transition to a greener economy was required in order to preserve jobs, in particular the 40 per cent of jobs located primarily in Africa and in Asia and the Pacific that directly depended on ecosystem services, and to create the jobs needed to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals. Indeed, while actions under the Paris Agreement to limit global warming to 2°C above pre-industrial levels would lead to the loss of 6 million jobs, those losses would be offset by the creation of roughly 24 million jobs and an improvement in job quality, particularly in the agricultural sector. Conversely, failure to address climate change would undermine GDP growth, productivity and working conditions, as projected temperature increases would make heat stress more common, especially in the agricultural sector and in developing countries, reducing the number of hours worked globally by 2 per cent by 2030.

63. Ensuring a just transition to an environmentally sustainable economy and society would require major changes in global production and consumption patterns, affecting workplaces worldwide. ILO had therefore adopted a set of guidelines to ensure that responses to climate change advanced employment creation, social justice and fair transitions for workers, enterprises and communities.

64. In conjunction with the United Nations Environment Programme, ILO, the United Nations Development Programme, the United Nations Industrial Development Organization and the United Nations Institute for Training and Research, the Department of Environmental Affairs of South Africa would co-host the third ministerial conference of the Partnership for Action on Green Economy, which would bring together around 500 leaders and innovators from various sectors to advance policies to reduce poverty, create jobs, protect the environment and maintain economic growth. Committee members were invited to participate in the conference. ILO looked forward to working with the Committee to harness the opportunities presented by current demographic trends and advances in technology and automation to foster the highly-skilled workforce and fairer working conditions required by a green economy.

65. **Mr. Mabhongo** (International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA)) said that the efforts of IAEA to expand

the use of nuclear technology in developing countries were contributing directly to the achievement of nine Sustainable Development Goals. The Agency had provided thousands of fellowships to scientists in developing countries through its technical cooperation programme, with a view to addressing the evolving development challenges faced by its member States. Significant progress had also been made in modernizing its eight nuclear applications laboratories: a new laboratory focused on nuclear techniques for insect pest control had been established in 2017, and the construction of a new building that would house three laboratories managed jointly by IAEA and the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations would be completed in 2018.

66. In September 2018, IAEA had hosted a scientific forum on the role of nuclear technology in mitigating, monitoring and adapting to climate change. About 70 per cent of the world's electricity was generated using fossil fuels. To meet 2050 climate change goals, 80 per cent of electricity would need to be generated from low-carbon sources. Nuclear power currently produced only 11 per cent of global electricity but accounted for nearly one third of low-carbon electricity generated worldwide. IAEA did not attempt to influence countries' decisions to introduce nuclear power but rather assisted those countries that chose to do so in using such power safely, securely and sustainably.

67. Nuclear technology could help countries address some of the challenges already caused by climate change. For example, isotopic techniques could be used to improve the effectiveness of drip irrigation in conserving water, and radiation could be used to produce new varieties of crops that generated higher yields and were more resistant to drought and disease, a particular advantage for exports. Radiation had also been used successfully to sterilize harmful insect pests in Brazil, Libya and Morocco. Nuclear science furthermore provided valuable data to inform the development of environmental protection policies and monitor their effects. In November 2018, IAEA would host a ministerial conference on innovations in nuclear science and technology for peaceful uses and on mechanisms for their deployment in member States.

68. **Ms. Aberg** (Observer for the International Renewable Energy Agency) said that the Agency welcomed the findings contained in the 2018 special report of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change. The use of renewable energy and increased energy efficiency were the most cost-effective ways to achieve the reduction in energy-related carbon emissions required to ensure a sustainable future. Renewable energy was also increasingly viewed as

essential in strengthening resilience to climate change and accelerating post-disaster recovery. By 2050, a transition to renewable energy in line with global climate objectives would boost global GDP growth by 1 per cent, lead to a net gain of 11 million jobs owing to the expansion of the renewable energy sector, and contribute to a 15 per cent increase in welfare, mainly as a result of health benefits yielded by reduced air pollution.

69. Progress towards Sustainable Development Goal 7, on affordable and clean energy, must be accelerated, as highlighted in the review of that Goal conducted at the 2018 high-level political forum, to which the Agency had contributed. The business case for renewable energy had never been stronger. Since 2015, the average cost of utility-scale solar photovoltaic systems had fallen by 24 per cent, while the costs of offshore wind energy had decreased by 19 per cent. In 2017, renewable power capacity additions had outpaced additions from conventional sources for the seventh year in a row. Moreover, off-grid renewable electricity capacity was emerging as a solution for the more than 1 billion people who still lacked access to electricity. Nevertheless, to meet climate objectives, the deployment of renewable energy solutions must increase six-fold compared with the levels set out in current plans. The main challenges ahead would be to scale up renewable energy in end-use sectors such as heating, cooling and transport, ensure universal energy access and achieve a just transition. A shift in policy and regulatory focus, the mobilization of financing and strengthened partnerships would be required to achieve those goals.

70. **Mr. Richter** (International Organization for Migration) said that climate change and natural disasters were reshaping migration patterns worldwide. Sudden-onset disasters had grown in frequency and intensity, driving an estimated 26 million people into poverty each year. In 2017, 18 million people had been displaced by weather-related events, more than the number of people displaced by conflict and war. Slow-onset events such as land degradation and the depletion of fishing resources owing to ocean acidification also contributed to migration.

71. Climate change disproportionately affected the economies of small island developing States, least developed countries and landlocked developing countries, significantly hindering their progress towards the Sustainable Development Goals. Between 2008 and 2017, some 320,000 people had been displaced in the Pacific region owing to natural disasters, a trend that was likely to continue in the future, considering that more than 3 million people in small island developing

States resided in low-elevation coastal zones that were threatened by sea level rise and coastal erosion.

72. The International Organization for Migration supported the development of policies to address climate and migration challenges at the national and regional levels, and was encouraged by the solutions being implemented to address those challenges under the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change and the Sendai Framework. The Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration was also essential in outlining specific commitments to address drivers of environmental migration and respond to the challenges faced by migrants and States; those commitments must be translated into action as preparations for the implementation phase began. In addition, the nexus between migration and climate change must be addressed more explicitly in the Samoa Pathway.

*The meeting rose at 11.50 a.m.*