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## Second Committee

### Summary record of the 16th meeting

Held at Headquarters, New York, on Wednesday, 17 October 2018, at 3 p.m.

*Chair:* Mr. Braquetti (Vice-Chair) ..... (Monaco)

## Contents

Agenda item 24: Eradication of poverty and other development issues (*continued*)

- (a) Implementation of the Third United Nations Decade for the Eradication of Poverty (2018–2027) (*continued*)
- (b) Industrial development cooperation (*continued*)

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*In the absence of Mr. Skinner-Kl e Arenales (Guatemala), Mr. Braquetti (Monaco), Vice-Chair, took the Chair.*

*The meeting was called to order at 3.10 p.m.*

**Agenda item 24: Eradication of poverty and other development issues** (continued) ([A/73/274](#) and [A/73/274/Corr.1](#))

**(a) Implementation of the Third United Nations Decade for the Eradication of Poverty (2018–2027)** (continued) ([A/73/298](#))

**(b) Industrial development cooperation** (continued) ([A/73/121](#))

1. **Ms. Alhosani** (United Arab Emirates) said that her country devoted 1.31 per cent of its gross national product to official development assistance (ODA), almost double the 0.7 per cent stipulated by the United Nations, making it one of the major world donors. In 2017, the United Arab Emirates had donated 19.3 billion dirhams to 147 countries. More than half that amount had been in the form of grants in support of development plans carried out by the beneficiary countries. For example, her Government had signed an agreement with Jordan on an economic aid package worth \$833 million to stimulate growth in that country.

2. The main foreign aid policy aims of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation were to improve living conditions and alleviate poverty in less fortunate societies; to foster stability and peace in the region; to build strong ties with other countries, whether recipients of aid or donors with which the United Arab Emirates worked together; and to broaden economic and investment ties with and stimulate growth in developing countries. It met those objectives by supporting development plans in partner countries and cooperating with donor entities, the private sector and development organizations.

3. The empowerment of women and girls, which was a key to breaking the cycle of poverty, was a high priority for her Government. Under a new initiative, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation aimed to ensure that gender equality and the empowerment of women were included as fundamental components of all its bilateral and multilateral foreign aid programmes by 2021. For example, of the 2,700 persons employed by the Fatima bint Mohamed bin Zayed Initiative's centre in Afghanistan, 70 per cent were women. The aim of that project was to empower women through education, workshops and initiatives relating to social development, health care, clean water and economic

reform. Employees received a daily wage and free health care and had access to loans and vocational training. A condition for participation was the undertaking to send their children aged up to 14 years to school. The United Arab Emirates would maintain its efforts to improve people's lives and reduce poverty around the world.

4. **Ms. Sarrestani** (Islamic Republic of Iran) said that, as the world entered the Third United Nations Decade for the Eradication of Poverty (2018–2027), progress on poverty reduction had been uneven across regions and countries. It was a matter of concern that much of the world's population was still trapped in extreme poverty. Unequal technological progress and unilateral economic sanctions had contributed to inequality, leaving millions behind. Targeted multilateral poverty reduction strategies would be crucial to reaching those further behind and achieving the ambitious Sustainable Development Goals.

5. While the importance of national policies and development strategies for sustainable development and poverty eradication could not be overemphasized, they should be complemented by international programmes to enhance the development opportunities of developing countries. At the same time, national conditions must be taken into consideration and national ownership strategies and sovereignty respected. The United Nations should take an active role in encouraging global multilateral action and improving technical assistance for strengthened national capacity.

6. Despite the challenges faced by her country, including unjust economic sanctions, millions of refugees resident there for more than three decades and the fight against drug trafficking, poverty eradication remained a top priority of its national development plan. The Constitution and other domestic legislation also contained many provisions focusing on poverty reduction. The Government planned to implement a coordinated social welfare mechanism that would promote the participation of non-governmental institutions and charities in poverty alleviation programmes and identify children and households under the poverty line.

7. **Mr. Hermida Castillo** (Nicaragua) said that the eradication of poverty in all its forms and dimensions was the greatest challenge facing the world. As poverty was multidimensional, the achievement of Sustainable Development Goal 1 was central to the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

8. To break the cycle of poverty, the international community must adopt a multidimensional strategy based on the empowerment of women and girls, access

to decent work and the provision of basic health and education services.

9. His Government and people had worked unstintingly to eradicate poverty. Between 2009 and 2016, poverty in Nicaragua had decreased from 42.5 per cent to 24.9 per cent and extreme poverty from 14.6 per cent to 6.9 per cent. However, despite the efforts made to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals, coercive economic sanctions had hindered progress, directly affecting people in their fight against poverty. It was therefore essential that any coercive, unilateral economic measures be lifted immediately.

10. Everyone had a right to development and the international community must answer to the millions of people for whom development remained an impossible dream. To effect the necessary change, developed countries must meet their ODA commitments and provide additional, predictable and sufficient financial resources. Moreover, cooperation among all Member States would be necessary to eliminate the barriers to development. Without political will and solidarity, it would not be possible to effectively eradicate poverty for the protection and well-being of all.

11. **Mr. Hamdouni** (Morocco) said that while significant progress had been made worldwide in reducing rates of extreme poverty and undernourishment, many countries, especially in sub-Saharan Africa, continued to combat poverty and inequality. That situation was exacerbated by economic and political crises, vanishing biodiversity, failing ecosystems, natural disasters and violence. Poverty eradication was essential to achieve sustainable development by 2030 and, clearly, that would require sustained political will.

12. At the national level, his Government had increased budgets for education, health and housing and had placed particular emphasis on supporting youth employment programmes. It continued to prioritize improvements to rural living conditions through policies focused on enhancing food self-sufficiency, family agriculture and income-generating activities, especially for rural women.

13. His Government's poverty-reduction strategy was based on three pillars: a public policy approach that fostered citizen engagement; the strengthening of democracy for a just and prosperous society; and the creation of a robust, competitive economy to generate sustainable, inclusive growth and bring wealth and employment for all. Several programmes had been implemented within that strategy, including a human development initiative focused on marginalized populations, a national observatory to study poverty, a Green Morocco plan to support small farms, a

programme to subsidize medical care for vulnerable populations, and a national microfinance strategy to fight poverty through concessional loans.

14. Morocco prioritized South-South and triangular cooperation in its foreign policy and was committed to working with countries in Africa for growth, poverty eradication and human development. The world had a shared moral responsibility to work together for the well-being of future generations.

15. **Ms. Oropeza Acosta** (Bolivia) said that the world was commemorating the International Day for the Eradication of Poverty on 17 October amidst a global consensus that poverty was a matter of justice and human rights. Despite the unfavourable global economic environment caused by plummeting commodity prices in 2014, Bolivia had maintained stable growth and a robust and dynamic economy. Historically one of the poorest countries in the region, Bolivia had taken urgent measures in its ongoing efforts to overcome that challenge. As a result, per-capita gross domestic product (GDP) had tripled since 2006, extreme poverty had fallen from 37 per cent to 17 per cent and poverty in general had declined from 60 per cent to 36 per cent.

16. Her country continued to combat inequality. In 2005, the richest 10 per cent of Bolivians earned 128 times more than the poorest 10 per cent, whereas by 2017 they earned only 47 times as much. Bolivia had also achieved the lowest unemployment rate in the region. Those outcomes would not have been possible without regaining sovereignty over natural resources. Nationalization had enabled the development of indigenous communities through the distribution of budget surpluses and growing public investment in strategic national industries.

17. As women and indigenous peoples were the hardest hit by poverty, public policies and programmes were focused on mitigating its impacts and providing access to basic services, which were necessary to for the full exercise and enjoyment of human rights.

18. Bolivia was fully committed to balancing the three pillars of sustainable development in the implementation the 2030 Agenda. Profound structural changes to the current unsustainable model of production and consumption would be required for countries to finally be able to offer a dignified life to their peoples, which in Bolivia was called *vivir bien* (living well).

19. **Mr. Viengviseth** (Lao People's Democratic Republic) said that as poverty hampered socioeconomic development, its eradication was the top priority of

developing countries, especially those in special situations. Tackling poverty would require a holistic and cross-cutting approach. To achieve the ambitious Sustainable Development Goals, immediate and concerted efforts were required through enhanced partnerships with all stakeholders under Goal 17.

20. Adequate resources must be mobilized to support the achievement of the Goals. In that regard, the Addis Ababa Action Agenda of the Third International Conference on Financing for Development should be fully implemented while leadership and ownership by every Government would also be vital.

21. His Government had undertaken policy reforms to mobilize sufficient resources for the implementation of its national development plan, which included the relevant Goals and targets of the 2030 Agenda and elements of other globally agreed development initiatives, such as the Istanbul Programme of Action for the Least Developed Countries for the Decade 2011–2020 and the Vienna Programme of Action for Landlocked Developing Countries for the Decade 2014–2024. A national Sustainable Development Goal had also been adopted to mitigate the impact of unexploded ordnance and improve the lives of the rural population.

22. His Government had also taken various actions to increase the mobilization of domestic resources, with limited success however, due to the small size of the country's economy. It was therefore working closely with the United Nations country team, development partners and other stakeholders to mobilize resources, including ODA and foreign direct investment, toward the implementation of its Five-Year Socioeconomic Development Plan (2016–2020). While such assistance had been invaluable to the progress made in the national development process, the Lao People's Democratic Republic nevertheless remained a least developed and landlocked developing country with persistent challenges. The devastating floods in August 2018 had been a particular setback to its development achievements.

23. **Mr. Gayito** (Ethiopia) said that while more than one billion people had escaped poverty over the previous quarter of a century, millions were still living in absolute poverty, especially in Africa and the least developed countries. That was unacceptable in a world of abundance. The Third United Nations Decade for the Eradication of Poverty (2018–2027) represented an opportunity to accelerate global action against poverty in line with the 2030 Agenda. In that regard, a revitalized global partnership through effective multilateralism was imperative. Despite the daunting scope of the challenge, the achievements of the past 25

years were a source of hope and inspiration to redouble collective efforts. Ethiopia welcomed the many actions taken by the United Nations system to support Member States and looked forward to positive results from its ongoing reform.

24. Recognizing that poverty was an existential threat, his Government had focused its overall public policy towards the achievement of rapid, sustained and inclusive economic growth. The integration of agricultural, industrial and environmental policies over the previous 15 years had reduced poverty by half, had significantly increased per capita income and had improved human development. Ethiopia had also created successful social safety nets to protect the most vulnerable groups.

25. In line with the aim to make Ethiopia an African hub for the light manufacturing sector by 2025, his Government was building environmentally-friendly industrial parks, and Ethiopia had become one of the first pilot countries for the Inclusive and Sustainable Industrial Development Programme of the United Nations Industrial Development Organization. Ethiopia welcomed those endeavours to transform and diversify its economy through industrialization with the ultimate objective of reducing poverty.

26. Ethiopia nevertheless remained a least developed country, with multiple challenges, including the adverse impacts of climate change, poor governance and weak institutional capacity, as well as development funding gaps. Concerted global action was critical to support its national efforts to address the multidimensional nature of poverty.

27. **Mr. Gagre** (Burkina Faso) said that the percentage of those living below the poverty line in his country remained high, with many disparities within and between regions. His Government aimed to reduce the incidence of poverty to below 35 per cent by 2020 through structural economic transformation. First, it aimed to create an enabling environment for industrial development by strengthening support sectors, particularly energy, transportation and technology infrastructure; enacting educational reform; and improving primary sector productivity. Second, it would promote competitive and sustainable industry through structural industrial investment. His Government ultimately expected to double the manufacturing industry's value added to GDP; to achieve average annual economic growth of 7.7 per cent; to create at least 50,000 decent jobs per year; and to eliminate the need to fetch water.

28. The Government was also implementing socioeconomic policies to reduce the urban-rural divide,

notably through microcredit programmes to empower women and youth. Its programme to support local economies, launched in November 2016 as one of the main initiatives to counter inequality and exclusion and improve well-being, would be implemented throughout the 13 regions of the country over the period 2017–2020 and would foster dynamic, prosperous and inclusive local economies. Similarly, the Emergency Project for the Sahel, launched in August 2017, would improve access to basic social services, increase resilience in local populations and improve local governance and security.

29. Burkina Faso would prioritize the mobilization of domestic and external resources and use innovative methods to finance its development programmes and policies. It remained committed to contributing to the promotion of a peaceful and prosperous world where no one was left behind.

30. **Ms. Ortez** (Honduras) said that while the important progress made by Member States in conjunction with the United Nations and other stakeholders was welcome, the titanic battle to eradicate poverty continued. New, enhanced and accelerated strategies would be required for the international community to effectively reduce poverty and inequality.

31. Her Government had made the elimination of extreme poverty the primary goal of its national development plan. As family income alone was insufficient to measure poverty, the national development plan was based on four main elements: consolidating peace; creating investment and job opportunities; supporting families living in extreme poverty; and combating corruption and promoting transparency in Honduran culture. The plan, which provided assistance to more than 1.8 million families living in extreme poverty, aimed to build a better life for all through small initiatives that led to great transformations for families. It included projects to improve basic housing, provide eco-stoves, water filters and subsidized nutrition and promote micro-businesses.

32. Poverty must be combated through a holistic and inclusive approach that addressed its complex economic, social and environmental dimensions. While efforts to generate more economic growth, job opportunities and access to financing should be pursued, action must also be taken to support small producers so that they could truly receive the benefits of fair trade. Gender equality, including equal opportunities for women, must also be promoted alongside inclusive policies focusing on job creation and the elimination of hunger.

33. **Ms. Taremba** (Zimbabwe) said that poverty was one of the biggest threats to progress and peace in a world of unprecedented prosperity and technological advancement. While progress in global poverty eradication had been made, too many people were still being left behind, including children and youth. For that reason, her Government had set aside millions of dollars for the establishment of empowerment banks specifically for youth and women.

34. Given the high correlation between industrialization and poverty reduction, adequate and modern infrastructure had been prioritized in Zimbabwe as a key enabler to achieve structural economic transformation. Furthermore, as part of the new Administration's vision to revitalize the economy, investment was being promoted in the agro-processing industry, fertilizer production and mineral beneficiation with a view to increasing the manufacturing sector's share of GDP from 9.7 to 30 per cent.

35. Against that backdrop, the international community should support the Government's efforts to achieve Sustainable Development Goal 9 on industry, innovation and infrastructure and the United Nations development system should increase its engagement in that area at both the national and international levels.

36. **Mr. Camara** (Mali) said that his country had been beset by a deeply rooted and multidimensional crisis since 2012, caused by underdevelopment, extreme poverty, vulnerability to climate change, food insecurity and malnutrition. Those challenges must be addressed before a truly lasting peace could be established in Mali and the Sustainable Development Goals achieved. In that regard, development projects with immediate impact had been implemented in the most vulnerable regions of the country, including income-generating activities aimed especially at youth, refugees and internally displaced persons who had returned to their place of origin.

37. In keeping with the relevant provisions of the Agreement on Peace and Reconciliation in Mali emanating from the Algiers process, his Government had made every effort to provide the people with the dividends of peace by implementing the Strategic Framework for Economic Recovery and Sustainable Development, which covered the period 2016–2018 and focused on five main areas: strengthening peace and security; consolidating macroeconomic stability; promoting accelerated, sustainable and pro-poor growth that would generate employment; ensuring equitable access to basic social services; and improving institutional development and good governance. In July 2018, Mali had presented its voluntary national review

to the high-level political forum on sustainable development, highlighting the progress made in that regard.

38. At the same time, the Government had implemented a social safety net programme to transfer funds to poor households suffering from food insecurity, which had benefited over 60,000 households by the end of September 2016 and aimed to provide assistance to over 91,000 households by the end of 2019. The President of Mali had also established an ambitious emergency social services programme for the period 2017–2020 to close the gap in access to basic social services, including water, health care, energy and rural roads.

39. **Ms. Pobee** (Ghana) said that although economic growth was important for poverty reduction, high GDP growth alone was not sufficient to guarantee poverty eradication. Despite ample evidence of burgeoning economies in Africa, the continent remained home to the world's poorest people. Globally, 783 million people still lived below the international poverty line of \$1.90 a day and inequality continued its relentless increase worldwide. Urgent action would be needed to address those challenges if Sustainable Development Goal 1 was to be met by 2030.

40. In recognition of that fact, her Government was implementing multidimensional policies to reduce poverty, including social protection initiatives in such areas as the provision of free basic and secondary education and free school uniforms, books and school meals; the promotion of sustainable agriculture and rural development; the sustainable management of natural resources; and financial inclusion and job creation. To foster the conditions for sustained poverty reduction, programmes had been established to support youth enterprise, provide microfinance and small loans, and empower people against poverty. Her Government was also drafting a national social protection law to promote the inclusive socioeconomic conditions required to eradicate poverty.

41. In addressing extreme poverty, a purposeful and coherent approach to policymaking was required across all sectors and stakeholders. Her delegation therefore welcomed an inter-agency, system-wide plan of action for poverty eradication to coordinate the efforts of the United Nations system and trusted that improved coordination would be ensured under the newly reinvigorated resident coordinator system.

42. In the context of the implementation of the Third United Nations Decade for the Eradication of Poverty (2018–2027), the United Nations must facilitate global dialogue and provide a platform to evaluate progress,

learn from successes and identify areas deserving of greater attention. In view of the increase in the number of low-income developing economies facing debt challenges, the Organization must also increase its engagement on such issues as debt relief, debt restructuring and sound debt management.

43. As part of a comprehensive strategy of structural economic transformation to eradicate poverty, increased foreign direct investment and enhanced international industrial cooperation would be required. While financing for sustainable development was critical, so too were private and public-private partnerships, which must be strengthened and expanded at all levels, including through South-South and triangular cooperation.

44. **Mr. Libouel** (Togo) said that eradicating poverty in all its forms and dimensions, including extreme poverty, was the greatest global challenge and an indispensable requirement for sustainable development. In spite of significant economic growth and the improvement in living conditions in many developing countries since 2000, poverty levels remained high in Africa and least developed countries.

45. Since 2015, development policy in Togo had been directed at transforming the country's economic structure with a view to achieving a sustainable and resilient society by 2030. Agriculture, infrastructure and investment were the priority areas of his Government's national development plan. However, as national efforts would not be sufficient to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals, they must be complemented by increased international cooperation and the promotion of innovative partnerships in key areas.

46. **Mr. Tōnē** (Tonga) said that poverty was a multidimensional issue that called for integrated approaches and innovative solutions. High-quality tourism services, for example, would not only help to preserve the environment but also contribute to job creation and stimulate business in support of sustained growth and the eradication of poverty. Ecotourism activities such as whale-watching made a vital contribution to the economy of Tonga and his Government attached great importance to mainstreaming conservation and biodiversity measures for tourism, particularly to address the impacts of climate change.

47. His Government was continuing to implement robust initiatives to encourage the use of renewable sources of energy, thereby reducing the country's reliance on fossil fuels, improving the health of Tongans through the consumption of affordable and healthy foods and advancing the protection of the marine

environment and natural resources. It was also working to ensure that the growing number of small and medium-sized enterprises in Tonga had access to adequate financial services, including microfinance, and was cooperating with the World Bank to tackle the growing problem of youth joblessness through a joint skills and employment project.

48. **Ms. Raharimboahangy** (Madagascar) said that her Government had worked over the preceding five years to get the country back on its feet after a series of political crises and natural disasters. As a result, Madagascar now enjoyed an annual rate of economic growth of 5 per cent. It saw the transition to renewable sources of energy as a way both to mitigate the effects of climate change and promote the rural economy and agriculture. At present, the country used solar energy to produce 20 megawatts of its electricity. The Government envisaged that, by 2030, 70 per cent of the country's electricity would come from mixed energy sources and 85 per cent of that amount from renewable, mostly hydroelectric, sources. Approximately 9,000 hectares of irrigated land in Madagascar had been recovered as a result of new agricultural infrastructure and a centre for geo-informatics applications for rural development had been established with assistance from the Government of India.

49. Tourism accounted for 13 per cent of the country's GDP and 11 per cent of new jobs. The number of visitors to Madagascar was increasing by 20 per cent annually and the country's rich biodiversity attracted ecotourism. As a leading sub-Saharan exporter of clothing to the European Union, Madagascar sought stable partnerships and technology transfer to develop industrial cooperation.

50. The first national census conducted since 1993 would provide valuable data for implementing the 2030 Agenda. The Government was making a concerted effort to provide universal health care and improve access to water. Her delegation welcomed the adoption of General Assembly resolution [72/233](#) and hoped that the recommendations it contained would lead to an inclusive and consistent process to reduce all forms of poverty.

51. **Mr. Tughuyendere** (Namibia) said that the efforts of his country to reduce poverty were a testament to its commitment to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals. Nonetheless, based on current trends, nearly 9 out of 10 people living in extreme poverty would be concentrated in sub-Saharan Africa by 2030. Although Namibia had reduced the level of poverty from 28.7 per cent of the population in 2009 to 17.4 per cent in 2016, its efforts were hampered by its status as an upper-

middle income country. That status was misleading, as it ignored the highly skewed distribution of wealth in Namibia, as reflected in its Gini coefficient of 0.56.

52. Under its Harambee Prosperity Plan, the Government of Namibia aimed to eliminate hunger through improved agricultural production, the establishment of a food bank and a school meals programme and the provision of emergency relief. Under the plan, efforts were also being made to provide young people with vocational training, ensure access to serviced land and improve energy, water and transport infrastructure. Moreover, the Government had launched a project in 2014 to provide affordable housing to low-income families as part of its blueprint on wealth redistribution and poverty eradication. Namibia had a comprehensive social protection system which provided grants and aid for vulnerable groups, including the elderly, orphans and veterans. Low-income groups enjoyed tax exemptions and drought relief supplements were distributed to smallholder farmers.

53. A minimum wage was guaranteed in key sectors and industries. The Government was working with the International Labour Organization to implement a decent work programme addressing such issues as child labour, domestic work, the informal economy, occupational health and safety and gender equality. Local communities were being encouraged to take part in sustainable tourism activities and efforts to protect wildlife from poachers. Efforts were also being made to diversify the economy and promote entrepreneurship and labour-intensive sectors.

54. **Mr. Eshanta** (Libya) said that eradicating poverty was the single most important Sustainable Development Goal. Poverty was a multifaceted problem, the dimensions of which included education, health care, social security and the guarantee of people's rights. To eradicate poverty, sustained efforts were needed at the national and international levels to generate decent jobs for all. Declining ODA and distortions in international trade were having an impact on the implementation of the 2030 Agenda.

55. In spite of his country's best efforts, poverty had engulfed large swaths of the population owing to the political crisis and fragile security situation in Libya, which in turn had depressed the economy, curtailed spending and fuelled inflation, unemployment and corruption. Hundreds of thousands of families had been hit by the six-fold collapse of the Libyan dinar against the dollar, the lack of liquidity in the banks and the high cost of basic goods. In an effort to alleviate the crisis, the Presidential Council of the Government of National Accord, aided by the United Nations Support Mission in

Libya, had passed legislation on a package of economic reforms, which included a new exchange rate for the dinar and addressed the issue of fuel subsidies. Building and developing industry was a key to overcoming poverty by generating employment and, through the export of manufactured goods, inflows of hard currency. Stakeholder partnerships were vital to capture the financing needed for infrastructure and industry projects and to stimulate economic and social advancement in developing countries.

56. **Mr. Fox-Drummond Gough** (Brazil) said that eradicating poverty was a prerequisite for sustainable development and that fulfilling Sustainable Development Goal 1 depended on the achievement of all the Goals as a whole. Brazil supported efforts by the United Nations to prioritize the strengthening of national statistics systems, given the importance of data collection and analysis for implementing the 2030 Agenda. Equally critical was the involvement of all stakeholders in decision-making and actions taken to address the multidimensional aspects of poverty. Any strategy to break the cycle of poverty should be human-rights based, provide decent jobs and access to food and basic services, such as education and health care, and aim to empower women and girls. In Brazil, women had been the focus of conditional cash transfer and housing credit programmes. The Government of Brazil was particularly concerned about the fact that young people were becoming the age group most at risk of poverty.

57. **Mr. Atan** (Malaysia) said that eradicating poverty was a cornerstone of his country's sustainable development action plan. Based on the national poverty line of \$2.02 per capita per day, absolute poverty in Malaysia had been reduced from 49.3 per cent in 1970 to 0.6 per cent in 2014 and the incidence of people living below the food poverty line was now extremely low at 0.2 per cent. Low poverty rates prevailed across ethnic, gender and rural-urban lines. The root of that success lay in nationwide government programmes launched in the 1960s to combat poverty, complemented by private sector and civil society efforts. Key components of those programmes had included: universal access to education and skills development; activities to generate jobs and income; entrepreneurship support; the development of basic infrastructure and amenities; and initiatives to facilitate participation in investment schemes.

58. Malaysia was not resting on its laurels, but rather working towards becoming a high-income nation by 2020. The Government was focusing on improving the standard of living of the bottom 40 per cent of households, including through improved access to affordable housing, social health insurance and internet services, and stood ready to share its development

experience and expertise by providing human capacity-building programmes and technical assistance to other developing countries within the framework of South-South cooperation.

59. **Mr. Kamwita** (Democratic Republic of the Congo) said that poverty was the single greatest brake on development. The 2030 Agenda and the Addis Ababa Action Agenda together embodied the hopes of all States for socially equitable and ecologically sustainable development. To achieve the Sustainable Development Goals, the root causes of poverty and other worldwide problems must be addressed. However, in spite of the efforts to reduce it, poverty was on the rise, especially in Africa.

60. His Government was working to reverse decades of instability in order to improve the political and security situation, reactivate the economy and thereby reduce poverty. The Democratic Republic of the Congo planned to become an emerging market economy by 2030 and a developed country by 2050. Business opportunities abounded in his country, where legislation had been passed to liberalize the energy and insurance sectors, promote private-public partnerships in areas such as agriculture and infrastructure, and stimulate national and foreign investment. The Government's development goals had progressed from post-conflict stabilization to creating jobs, redistributing growth revenue and mitigating the effects of climate change. However, against a backdrop of global economic turbulence, fragile economies were in still greater need of support and encouragement from the international community.

61. **Ms. Ribeiro** (Timor-Leste) said that poverty reduction was a priority for her country as it rebuilt after conflict and that the national poverty rate had fallen to 40 per cent in the preceding five years. Under her Government's strategic development plan for the period 2011–2030, the major areas requiring attention included education, health, water, sanitation, agriculture and fisheries. The Government was also focusing on improving infrastructure in order to attract foreign investment; road networks had been upgraded and two new airports opened. Since the country had achieved independence, the percentage of the population with access to electricity had increased to 61 per cent, access to clean water and sanitation had been broadened and small-scale rural infrastructure, such as irrigation channels, bridges and wells, had been restored.

62. In recent years, nationwide more than 2,000 classrooms had been built or repaired, along with 65 community health centres and more than 200 clinics. The enrolment rate in schools had risen from 67 per cent



to 83 per cent in the preceding five years and the gender disparity between boys and girls had diminished significantly. The infant mortality rate had also declined considerably.

63. An effective banking system had been established in Timor-Leste and the Government was stepping up its engagement with the private sector, using capital investment and local procurement policies to spur the development of local businesses. The Government had also worked with development partners to expose young people to work abroad, helping them to acquire skills and knowledge and contribute to the national economy through remittances. Efforts to provide vocational training and business mentoring to women had been stepped up since 2014. The Government had provided \$2 million to facilitate access to credit and other financial services for micro- and small businesses, especially those run by women. Indeed, microcredit was a prime tool for helping the poor to improve their lives by engaging in business.

64. **Monsignor Grysa** (Observer for the Holy See), referring to the statistics contained in paragraphs 4 and 5 of the report of the Secretary-General ([A/73/298](#)), said that the scourge of poverty remained one of the greatest global challenges. The extent of the problem was all the more troubling at a time when the international community was suffering from a deficit of trust. As people lost faith in their own political establishments, international cooperation was increasingly hobbled. To defeat extreme poverty, people must be dignified agents of their own destiny. Broken trust could be rebuilt only if everyone worked together to help to free their less fortunate brothers and sisters from oppressive poverty. In that regard, the family was the primary agent of sustainable development and a model of communion and solidarity within nations and among international institutions. A shared concern for the family was a sure means of contributing to poverty reduction and the well-being of children, promoting gender equality, improving work-life balance and reinforcing intra- and intergenerational bonds. Family-friendly policies contributed to the achievement of development goals and the cultivation of peaceful societies.

65. While each nation must be the proactive architect of its own development, none could realize its potential in isolation. Poorer nations needed regional mutual aid agreements and support from developed countries. States and international organizations should not use economic assistance or development programmes to put pressure on others to adopt policies that undermined the ethical and cultural foundations of their society. Only by placing people at the heart of its efforts could the United Nations be truly relevant to all.

66. **Mr. de Looz Karageorgiades** (Observer for the Sovereign Order of Malta) said that the Order did charitable work in over 120 countries for the sick, the poor and refugees. For the past 900 years it had done so in a spirit of charity and fraternity and without distinction on the grounds of age, origin, race or religion. The Order concurred with the view expressed by many countries regarding the need to eradicate poverty and its structural causes. Poverty should not be confused with begging. The dignity of the poor deserved respect. The great monastic orders in the West had dealt with poverty, as had the Dalai Lama. The charitable work of Mother Teresa of Kolkata among the poor should not be forgotten. The effect of efforts to confront the issue of poverty would be multiplied if they were carried out with love.

*The meeting rose at 5 p.m.*