



# Economic and Social Council

Distr.: General  
5 October 2021

Original: English

## 2021 session

23 July 2020–22 July 2021

Management segment

### Summary record of the 12th meeting

Held at Headquarters, New York, on Wednesday, 21 July 2021, at 10 a.m.

*President:* Mr. Kelapile (Vice-President) . . . . . (Botswana)

## Contents

Agenda item 12: Coordination, programme and other questions (*continued*)

- (e) African countries emerging from conflict
- (g) Sustainable development in the Sahel
- (d) Long-term programme of support for Haiti (*continued*)
- (a) Reports of coordination bodies
- (b) Proposed programme budget for 2022

Agenda item 17: Non-governmental organizations (*continued*)

Agenda item 14: 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 (*continued*)

Agenda item 16: 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 (*continued*)

Agenda item 15: Regional cooperation (*continued*)

Agenda item 19: Social and human rights questions (*continued*)

- (f) Human rights (*continued*)

Agenda item 11: Implementation of and follow-up to major United Nations conferences and summits (*continued*)

- (b) Review and coordination of the implementation of the Programme of Action for the Least Developed Countries for the Decade 2011–2020 (*continued*)

\* Reissued for technical reasons.

This record is subject to correction.

Corrections should be submitted in one of the working languages. They should be set forth in a memorandum and also incorporated in a copy of the record. They should be sent as soon as possible to the Chief of the Documents Management Section ([dms@un.org](mailto:dms@un.org)).

Corrected records will be reissued electronically on the Official Document System of the United Nations (<http://documents.un.org/>).



*In the absence of Mr. Akram (Pakistan), Mr. Kelapile (Botswana), Vice-President, took the Chair.*

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

**Agenda item 12: Coordination, programme and other questions** (*continued*)

**(e) African countries emerging from conflict**  
([E/2021/63](#); [E/2021/L.32](#))

1. **Mr. Edrees** (Egypt), Chair of the Peacebuilding Commission, said that he welcomed the Council's increasing interest in drawing upon the lessons learned from the Commission's engagement with conflict-affected countries, as those lessons were relevant for addressing the economic and social challenges of peacebuilding and sustainable development, as well as the impact of the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic. The partnership between the Council and the Commission was growing stronger, enabling the two bodies to work together to build and sustain peace, address the root causes of conflict and promote sustainable development in the conflict-affected countries under the Commission's consideration, while respecting national priorities and the inclusivity of peacebuilding processes.

2. In 2020, 12 of the 15 national and regional contexts on the Commission's agenda had been in Africa. The Commission's partnerships with regional and subregional organizations in Africa had been enhanced, as evidenced by the increased participation of the African Union and other regional representatives in the Commission's discussions. During an informal consultative meeting in 2020, the African Union Peace and Security Council and the Commission had recognized the unprecedented challenges posed by the pandemic and had called for stronger support for African Union-owned and -led post-conflict reconstruction and development efforts.

3. The Commission had worked consistently to assist with policy issues of importance to individual African countries. In line with the principle of national ownership, Governments must invest in building responsive and viable institutions, while also promoting inclusive governance through a whole-of-government approach.

4. The Commission had endeavoured to mobilize commitments from all relevant stakeholders and partners in order to meet the peacebuilding needs of conflict-affected countries. Peacebuilding and sustaining peace required coherence and coordination among United Nations bodies. To that end, the Commission had used its platform to overcome the

limitations of the United Nations system in dealing with a compound and complex set of challenges, with a view to analysing the causes of conflicts in Africa. The Commission had also strengthened synergies with the Peacebuilding Fund in support of peacebuilding efforts in conflict-affected countries.

5. By mobilizing technical and financial support for the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and for Agenda 2063 of the African Union and its first 10-year implementation plan, the Commission had advanced the complementarity of external support for local priorities, so as to strengthen national ownership and the capacity to prevent conflict. The Commission was convening the relevant stakeholders in order to generate action-oriented recommendations on how to ensure adequate, predictable and sustained financing for peacebuilding; those recommendations would be considered at the seventy-sixth session of the General Assembly.

6. Aware of the widely recognized need for scaled-up and comprehensive peacebuilding responses to increasingly complex crises, the Commission had continued to promote global solidarity and regional, South-South and triangular cooperation to enhance capacities and pool resources for peacebuilding activities. It had also fostered a comprehensive approach to peacebuilding and sustaining peace to address peacebuilding needs in Africa in a manner that underscored the linkages between Agenda 2063 and the Sustainable Development Goals. Moreover, the Commission had recently, inter alia: adopted strategies for action to strengthen its implementation of the women and peace and security agenda and the youth and peace and security agenda; promoted institution building in conflict-affected countries in line with their priorities, particularly in view of the negative impact of the COVID-19 pandemic; and supported national, regional and international measures to ensure a sustainable pandemic recovery, including by facilitating equitable access to safe and effective COVID-19 vaccines in Africa. The Commission remained committed to bringing Member States and partners together to ensure adequate responses to pressing and complex multidimensional challenges in conflict-affected contexts.

7. **Mr. Jamal** (Resident Coordinator and Humanitarian Coordinator in South Sudan), speaking via video link, introducing chapter II of the report of the Secretary-General on the implementation of integrated, coherent and coordinated support for South Sudan and the Sahel region by the United Nations system ([E/2021/63](#)), said that considerable progress had been made towards peace in South Sudan since the signing of the Revitalized

Agreement on the Resolution of the Conflict in the Republic of South Sudan, with a reduction in conflict-related violence throughout the country. However, intercommunal violence had increased. The presidency, which comprised the President, the first Vice-President and four Vice-Presidents, had been constituted in February 2020, and governors, deputy governors and commissioners had been appointed for the 10 States. Progress had been slow on some pre-transitional tasks, including the training and redeployment of the unified forces, the reconstitution of the Transitional National Legislative Assembly and the appointment of the Council of States, in which 35 per cent of posts were to be allocated to women. At present, women accounted for a scant 1 out of 10 governors.

8. The economy had recovered in 2018 and 2019, and a growth rate of 10 per cent was projected for 2021. However, recent estimates for the year pointed to an economic contraction of 4 to 5 per cent. The Sudanese pound had depreciated from about 280 pounds per dollar in March 2020 to about 600 pounds per dollar in December 2020. There was a deficit of more than 50 per cent in the 2020–2021 budget of \$1.3 billion. Relatedly, COVID-19 had slowed the economy significantly as a result of lockdown measures and plummeting global oil demand, resulting in a drop in oil prices and exports and an attendant decrease in national revenue.

9. Children and young people had suffered considerably in terms of education, owing to the lack of access to reliable telecommunications for remote learning. Humanitarian needs, already significant in 2020, remained dire in 2021. An estimated 8.3 million people were in need of assistance, and some 483,000 pregnant or lactating women were acutely malnourished and required treatment. More than 800,000 people had been affected by floods for two consecutive years, women and children most of all. Nonetheless, the spontaneous return of more than 1 million internally displaced persons since 2016 and 400,000 refugees since 2017 was a hopeful sign.

10. The United Nations country team in South Sudan had reacted swiftly and flexibly, redirecting funds for activities that had not been implemented as a result of public restrictions to other activities, including the manufacture of masks and educational programmes. The United Nations had supported the strengthening of national dialogue with the Government and national partners, coordinating a focused and constructive dialogue between the Government and the wider donor community as part of the United Nations Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework for 2019–2021. In 2020, the Interim Cooperation Framework of the

United Nations country team in South Sudan had delivered \$203 million.

11. The triple nexus approach, aimed at ensuring coherence across peacebuilding, humanitarian and development activities, was a key element of the Organization's work in South Sudan. That approach had led to increased localized dialogue, which had fostered recovery and resilience in stable areas where local stakeholders could work together. In October 2020, the Government had convened a high-level meeting with development partners, including bilateral donors international financial institutions, United Nations agencies and Government leaders. The dialogues had contributed to the reactivation of sectoral working groups.

12. The South Sudan Reconciliation, Stabilization, and Resilience Trust Fund had remained a strong coordination mechanism to support partnerships. The fund's budget had increased from \$11.7 million in 2019 to \$13 million in 2020. In addition, international financial institutions were actively participating in country team activities and provided significant funding. The country team also worked closely with the United Nations Mission in South Sudan (UNMISS) and had completed a peace and conflict analysis and identified entry points for joint activities. Humanitarian organizations had delivered assistance to more than 7.3 million people in 2020, accounting for 97 per cent of the revised target of 7.6 million recipients under the 2020 humanitarian response plan.

13. A successful political transition in South Sudan would require progress in three broad areas: political and governance issues; disarmament, demobilization and reintegration of former fighters and security sector reform; and improvements in the humanitarian and human rights situations. To that end, partnership among peace, humanitarian and development actors would be required. Key benchmarks included transparency and accountability in the public finance system, disarmament of former combatants and the establishment of a truth and reconciliation commission. Refugees and internally displaced persons returning home continued to face growing needs in such areas as food security, social services and housing; returnees were thus in need of support.

14. The provision of basic social services should help reduce violence, boost the inclusion of and mitigate negative effects on vulnerable groups. According to the climate change vulnerability index in 2017, South Sudan was among the countries most vulnerable to climate change. Natural disasters such as floods resulted in severe food shortages, hence the need for a new

flagship initiative on disaster risk reduction for floods. The country team would continue to nurture its linkages with the World Bank, the African Development Bank and bilateral donors and to leverage capacities and tools currently in place.

15. Lastly, the reduction of violence in all its forms, including sexual and gender-based violence, was another prerequisite for progress in South Sudan. Preventing violence could help to minimize the high risk of conflict over land and property following the return of internally displaced persons and refugees to their homes, only to find new occupants on their land and properties.

*Draft decision E/2021/L.32: African countries emerging from conflict*

16. **The President** said that the draft decision contained no programme budget implications.

17. *Draft decision E/2021/L.32 was adopted.*

**(g) Sustainable development in the Sahel**  
(E/2021/63; E/2021/L.33)

18. **Mr. Dieve** (Special Coordinator for Development in the Sahel), introducing chapter III of the report of the Secretary-General (E/2021/63), said that United Nations resolutions had reaffirmed the centrality of the United Nations integrated strategy for the Sahel and its support plan in providing a comprehensive framework to strengthen governance, peace, security and development in the region.

19. The Sahel region had continued to make relatively sturdy economic progress at the start of 2019, with a reported gross domestic product (GDP) growth rate of 4.8 per cent. However, inclusive growth had remained a challenge, as roughly 43 per cent of Sahelians lived below the poverty line. The informal economy accounted for about 50 per cent of national output. The resulting low productivity and vulnerability to shocks perpetuated income inequality and poverty. Moreover, the COVID-19 pandemic had exacerbated the fragility and vulnerability of Sahelian economies. GDP had therefore plummeted below 1 per cent in 2020, adversely affecting development and humanitarian support and responses. The Sahelian economies' recovery, projected to reach 4.4 per cent in 2021 and 5.1 per cent in 2022, would require stronger and more dedicated international support, including in terms of COVID-19 vaccine supply, substantial debt reduction and greater financial flows.

20. The security landscape in the Sahel had remained extremely volatile. Security incidents persisted at an

alarming rate; some 200,000 internally displaced persons and 840,000 refugees were registered in the G5 Sahel countries as a result of the conflict. The humanitarian situation in the Sahel continued to deteriorate, with 29 million people in need of humanitarian assistance and protection, the highest number ever recorded in the region. Generous contributions from donors had enabled the United Nations and humanitarian partners to provide more than 15.8 million people with life-saving assistance, often in challenging environments and hard-to-access areas. United Nations agencies, partners and non-governmental organizations had provided food aid, therapeutic nutrition, emergency shelter, access to health care, water, sanitation and hygiene, education and protection throughout the intensifying crisis. Nevertheless, humanitarian response plans were barely reaching 20 per cent of funding to date, portending a major food and nutrition crisis in the Sahel.

21. The COVID-19 pandemic had set the stage for United Nations agencies, funds and programmes to work in a more coordinated manner. They had jointly supported the pandemic response efforts of Governments and relevant institutions of the 10 countries, including by strengthening national social protection systems, supplying personal protective equipment and strengthening partnerships with regional institutions.

22. It was the ambition of the United Nations agencies, funds and programmes to intensify and scale up their joint initiative and programmes, including by reframing the existing narrative on the Sahel, which could also be regarded as a land of opportunities. The recently launched Group of Friends of Women of the Sahel and the upcoming launch of Sahel Generation Unlimited would provide further impetus to increase support for women and youth empowerment initiatives in the region.

*Draft decision E/2021/L.33: Sustainable development in the Sahel*

23. **The President** said that the draft decision contained no programme budget implications.

24. *Draft decision E/2021/L.33 was adopted.*

**(d) Long-term programme of support for Haiti**  
(continued) (E/2021/65; E/2021/L.29)

25. **Mr. Rae** (Canada), Chair of the Ad Hoc Advisory Group on Haiti, said that recent events in Haiti had reminded everyone of the importance of continuing to work hand in hand with the country and the Haitian people for a more peaceful, prosperous and democratic

future. In the aftermath of the appalling assassination of Haitian President Jovenel Moïse, the Advisory Group stood in solidarity with the people of Haiti and was committed to do its utmost to support them. It was important to recognize the extent to which the critical elements of successful development were interdependent: security and stability, popular participation, investments in infrastructure, education and economic development, full transparency and an end to corruption.

26. While the sources of recovery from the inordinate share of hardships Haiti had faced must come from within its people, those on the outside could help if they recognized the enormity of the challenge and the need for consistent assistance that was based on listening instead of lecturing.

27. The Group's work in 2021 had continued to be affected by the COVID-19 pandemic, which had prevented annual visits to Washington, D.C. and Haiti from taking place. Nevertheless, the Group had remained active throughout the year, carrying out its work by organizing a series of virtual thematic briefings. Many of the Group's recommendations had been carried over from the previous year because the country's fundamental problems had not changed, with the situation deteriorating in many respects.

28. Even before the outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic, the serious political, security, economic, social and humanitarian challenges facing Haiti had profoundly affected the country's security and stability as well as its prospects for socioeconomic development. The recent assassination of the President had brought that fact into even starker relief. It was therefore urgent for Haitian decision-makers, with the support of the United Nations and its international partners, to act quickly and efficiently to address those difficulties. The COVID-19 pandemic had the potential to deepen the multidimensional crisis facing the country, possibly reversing the development and security gains of the previous 15 years and exacerbating social and political tensions.

29. The Group had recommended that the Government of Haiti encourage all sectors of the population to work constructively to ensure the successful holding of municipal, local and parliamentary and presidential elections. It had also recommended that the international community adequately and urgently support the Government's efforts to prevent and respond to the spread of COVID-19 and to increase support for the 2021 humanitarian response plan for the country. Lastly, the Group had also encouraged the United Nations system to support pandemic response efforts and

continued to improve its coordination and consultation with the Government of Haiti.

30. The Group had observed with concern the continually deteriorating humanitarian situation in Haiti, with some 4.4 million people in humanitarian need. The spike in food insecurity persisted, and access to health care, water, hygiene and sanitation services had been significantly reduced, leading to a drop in immunization activities, an increase in cases of diarrhoeal diseases – the main cause of malnutrition among children under 5 years of age – and an increase in maternal mortality. That dire situation was, in turn, compounded by the difficult economic situation and increasing insecurity. The international community had a collective responsibility to implement the humanitarian response plan.

31. In view of the ongoing political impasse, it was urgent for an inclusive national dialogue to be conducted, so as to allow for progress on the political, social and economic fronts. Haitians must come together to chart a way forward for their country.

32. Lastly, the question of sustainable economic development remained vital to ensuring the future prosperity and stability of Haiti. More must be done to ensure that the country's immense economic potential was unlocked and maximized, thereby enabling Haiti to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals.

33. **Mr. Lemarquis** (Deputy Special Representative of the Secretary-General in Haiti), speaking via video link, said that he hoped that the tragic assassination of Haitian President Jovenel Moïse, an incident that had sent shock waves worldwide, would serve as an opportunity for Haiti to extricate itself from the downward spiral in which it had been trapped for far too long. The country's humanitarian situation was complex, with a number of essentially human-made crises ranging from the COVID-19 pandemic to the impact of gang violence and the ongoing sociopolitical crisis augmenting humanitarian needs.

34. The current humanitarian response plan for the country aimed to meet the urgent needs of 1.5 million people, including 1.2 million who were severely food insecure. Given the largely chronic nature of those needs, which were due to development deficits, the United Nations and its partners were advancing a nexus approach to reduce vulnerabilities, risks and humanitarian needs in the areas of food security, disaster reduction and social protection.

35. Over the previous nine months, gang violence in the Port-au-Prince area had displaced at least 19,000 people. The growing insecurity and road movement

restrictions were hindering the delivery of humanitarian assistance, especially in areas controlled by gangs and in southern Haiti. United Nations agencies continued to work alongside national partners to provide the displaced with support and prepare them for relocation. The security situation along critical trade routes and commercial trade areas had also led to fuel shortages and a reduced supply of goods, affecting the price of food and transport. Most Haitian families were thus experiencing financial difficulties, and the most vulnerable groups were the hardest hit.

36. Despite a relative downward trend in COVID-19 cases in early July 2021, the country was experiencing a surge in the number of cases, hospitalizations and deaths. Haiti had received its first 500,000 doses of the COVID-19 vaccine, donated by the United States through COVAX, the vaccines pillar of the Access to COVID-19 Tools Accelerator, with several additional shipments to be delivered shortly. Meanwhile, the onset of the hurricane season increased the risk of additional crises.

37. The socioeconomic situation in Haiti continued to be characterized by multidimensional poverty and inequality, growing insecurity, rampant impunity and corruption, unfulfilled human rights and other structural challenges that derailed the country from the path to achieving the Sustainable Development Goals. Profound sociopolitical polarization, the unprecedented spike in gang violence and the COVID-19 pandemic were compounding the situation.

38. Recent gang-related security threats to the industrial zone in Port-au-Prince sent the wrong signal to potential investors. Recent lootings, the destruction of investment infrastructure and other outbursts of violence were likely to keep Haiti at the bottom of international business climate and competitiveness rankings, and to perpetuate the drop in foreign direct investment, which had plummeted from \$105 million in 2018 to a mere \$30 million in 2020, resulting in fewer short- to medium-term opportunities for job creation and poverty reduction.

39. The recent tragedy had occurred in a context marred by intractable challenges. Despite the billions of dollars invested in Haiti over the previous decades, key development indicators had continued to regress in the face of limited development effectiveness. It would therefore be necessary to consider moving away from emergency aid or short-term approaches to long-term solutions, with a view to achieving a greater impact.

40. The United Nations country team in Haiti had been working on operationalizing a new direction under the One United Nations initiative, whose objective was to

focus the Organization's political and programmatic resources on the structural obstacles to achieving the Sustainable Development Goals, with a sharper emphasis on the intractable obstacles that prevented meaningful progress on the larger political and development challenges facing the country. In that context, the United Nations country team was focusing its efforts on such issues as the fight against impunity and corruption and the modernization and transformation of the economy, in addition to aligning its support behind public policies that benefited the most vulnerable. Moreover, the United Nations was working to build coalitions of national and international actors, including bilateral and multilateral partners and international financial institutions, to tackle particular structural challenges.

41. Continued support, solidarity and advocacy from all Member States and international and regional partners were crucial, including support for the United Nations team's new approach. The country's international partners should engage with that approach, with a focus on key structural issues that had hampered development in Haiti. They should also work on common strategies, coordinate more closely, ensure better alignment with national priorities and make full use of their respective advantages.

42. On the humanitarian front, it would be necessary to make every effort to alleviate suffering and save lives. However, as at early July 2021, only \$71 million had been received for the humanitarian response plan. Urgent support was particularly needed to assist and relocate the displaced. He called on all stakeholders to help alleviate the plight of children and women, the most affected by the predominantly human-made crises in the country. The time had come to seize the challenging moment faced by Haiti and its people to generate momentum for change. Haiti was very much a land of opportunity and had a great deal to offer the region and the world. In closing, he reaffirmed the United Nations country team's commitment to advance development, peacebuilding and hope in the country, while addressing humanitarian needs.

43. **Mr. Rodrigue** (Observer for Haiti) said that the Ad Hoc Advisory Group on Haiti had done commendable work, attesting to its collective interest in promoting development in the country. Haiti had been rocked to the core by the assassination on 7 July 2021 of President Jovenel Moïse; already faced with a multidimensional crisis and a spike in COVID-19 cases, the country had averted a disastrous descent into chaos thanks to wise leadership and the recent establishment of a Government.

44. The Group had expressed concern at the dire situation in the country, whose current political crisis was the product of poverty, social exclusion, economic inequality, weak institutions, human rights violations, impunity and corruption. The catastrophic humanitarian situation was also linked to weaknesses and structural obstacles to development. His Government had taken note of the recommendations contained in the Group's report, which aligned with the Government's own vision and approach to good governance. Furthermore, it endorsed the call upon political actors to engage in a constructive dialogue aimed at reaching consensus and ensuring that presidential, legislative and local elections would be held. Only through dialogue could the current crisis be overcome.

45. His Government would spare no effort to restore confidence in the electoral process and create a climate conducive to the holding of elections. It supported the Group's call for more coherent and coordinated international aid, guided by the sustainable development priorities established by the Government and the country's specificities, in order to render development assistance more effective. The Haitian Government's development objectives included improving the living conditions of the population and reducing exclusion and economic inequality. Moreover, his Government had drawn up a road map that would establish the coherent framework required to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals.

46. In the 20 years since the Group's establishment, it had carried out several missions to Washington, D.C. to confer with donors, and to Haiti to assess the country's socioeconomic development strategies. The countless reports submitted to the Council notwithstanding, expectations had not been met, with the country's socioeconomic indicators failing to attain acceptable levels and the population facing grave difficulties that had been exacerbated by the pandemic and political turmoil. More than 4 million people faced food insecurity, a state of affairs that would only worsen if urgent measures were not taken. The national economy had registered negative growth in the 2019–2020 fiscal year, and inflation remained high, at around 18 per cent. Despite the country being in such dire straits, public development assistance had declined as a result of donor fatigue. That, in turn, had led to a reduction in development-related spending.

47. Turning to the Group's recommendations, he noted that its call on international partners to work in close cooperation with the Haitian Government was a fixture in the Group's reports, to the point of repetition. The Group should reconsider its strategy or find ways to persuade donors to provide support that was

commensurate with the Haitian people's needs. The amounts contributed to date remained inadequate, hence the inefficacy of the aid. Moreover, the one-size-fits-all approach must be abandoned completely, as development strategies must be tailored to a country's specific needs.

48. The Group could play a facilitating and catalysing role in the Haitian Government's partnership with the international community to ensure that the Sustainable Development Goals remained an attainable reality for Haiti. While Haitians bore the primary responsibility for seeking sound and lasting solutions to the country's problems, it would be impossible to do so without strengthened international support. Mobilizing sufficient resources was integral to attaining the objectives that would, in turn, lead to the restoration of confidence, security and stability and, ultimately, to the achievement of long-term development.

49. A paradigm shift was urgently needed, guaranteeing coherent international support for Haiti that took into account the country's realities and needs while also respecting its sovereignty, independence, unity and territorial integrity.

50. **Mr. Ríos Sánchez** (Mexico) said that his delegation was proud to sponsor draft resolution [E/2021/L.29](#) and to be a member of the Ad Hoc Advisory Group on Haiti. The recent assassination of Haitian President Jovenel Moïse had been universally condemned by the international community. For its part, the Group had called on all development partners to continue supporting the Haitian people at that critical juncture. It would be necessary to conduct an electoral process that would allow the Haitian people to express their will democratically. The country's political and security circumstances must not overshadow its major development challenges, which it was incumbent upon the Council to address.

51. The COVID-19 pandemic had further complicated the situation in Haiti. Mexico had coordinated a shipment of ventilators to Haiti as a gesture of its support at such a difficult time.

52. His delegation welcomed the strategic One United Nations initiative to strengthen coordination between the United Nations system and action in support of Haitian institutions to confront the country's manifold challenges and ensure that the 2030 Agenda would be implemented. Mexico fully supported the social development component of a sustainable recovery under the mandate of the United Nations Integrated Office in Haiti and stressed the need to reconcile the development, human rights and security pillars. The programme of long-term support would help Haitian

institutions to adopt a system-wide focus that would maximize the impact of activities to promote political stability, security, the rule of law, good governance and, in particular, human rights and sustainable development, ultimately leading to the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals in Haiti.

*Draft resolution E/2021/L.29: Ad Hoc Advisory Group on Haiti*

53. **Ms. Herity** (Secretary of the Council) said that the Plurinational State of Bolivia and Botswana wished to join the sponsors.

54. Delivering a statement of programme budget implications in accordance with rule 31 of the Council's rules of procedure, she said that it was estimated that the support to be provided to the Ad Hoc Advisory Group would consist of: (a) travel for members of the Group and up to two staff members of the Department of Economic and Social Affairs to meet with the international financial institutions and the Organization of American States in 2022 and undertake a mission to Haiti in the same year; and (b) meeting support services and other expenses in Haiti.

55. The total resource requirements for the consultative missions to Haiti and Washington, D.C. in 2022 were estimated at \$47,900, for which provision had not been made in the programme budget for 2022 (A/76/6 (Sect. 9)). Taking into account previous Council resolutions that had extended the mandate of the Ad Hoc Advisory Group, the most recent of which was resolution 2020/11, the Secretariat advised that, should the Council adopt the draft resolution, the resource requirements in the amount of \$47,900 would be accommodated within section 9, Economic and social affairs, of the proposed programme budget for 2022.

56. *Draft resolution E/2021/L.29 was adopted.*

57. **Mr. Mack** (United States of America) said that the findings and recommendations of the current report of the Ad Hoc Advisory Group on Haiti were particularly urgent in the aftermath of the assassination of Haitian President Jovenel Moïse. Haitian leaders must now set aside their differences, engage civil society and address such long-standing challenges as insecurity, deteriorating socioeconomic conditions and humanitarian needs.

58. His delegation was encouraged to see political and civil society actors working to form a unity government that could stabilize the country and build the foundation for free and fair elections, as preserving and strengthening democratic institutions were key to restoring and maintaining peace. The United States

stood with the Haitian people as they strove to build the safer, more democratic country they needed and deserved after so many years of turmoil.

59. His delegation looked forward to continuing to support the Group's mission and to working with the international community to implement the recommendations in its report, in order to help Haiti achieve a more prosperous and secure future.

**(a) Reports of coordination bodies (A/76/16)**

60. **The Chair** took it that the Council wished to take note of the report of the Committee for Programme and Coordination on its sixty-first session, as contained in document A/76/16.

61. *It was so decided.*

**(b) Proposed programme budget for 2022 (A/76/6)**

62. **The Chair** took it that the Council wished to take note of the relevant sections of the proposed programme budget for 2022, as contained in document A/76/6.

63. *It was so decided.*

**Agenda item 17: Non-governmental organizations (continued) (E/2021/L.25)**

*Draft decision E/2021/L.25: Application of the non-governmental organization International Association for the Development of the Abaza-Abkhaz Ethnos "Alashara" for consultative status with the Economic and Social Council*

64. **The President** said that the draft decision had no programme budget implications.

65. **Mr. Imnadze** (Observer for Georgia), introducing the draft decision, said that the application of the non-governmental organization "Alashara" should be returned to the Committee on Non-Governmental Organizations so that the matter could receive in-depth consideration. As a concerned party, his delegation had not been notified of the application and therefore had been unable to voice its concerns in due time. His delegation wished to ask "Alashara" about its compliance with Economic and Social Council resolution 1996/31, which set out that the aims and purposes of the organization should be in conformity with the spirit, purposes and principles of the Charter of the United Nations. The organization in question was formally registered in the Russian Federation but operated in the Russian-occupied Abkhazia region of Georgia. Moreover, the charter of the World Abaza Congress, based in Sukhumi, Abkhazia, Georgia, was included in the founding documents of the organization,

and in accordance with that charter, the Congress and the organization were inextricably linked. The fact that “Alashara” used incorrect terminology with regard to Georgia was another reason for seeking clarification through the Committee.

66. His delegation reiterated its support to civil society engagement within the United Nations system and emphasized the important role of non-governmental organizations. The issue that it was raising did not in any way change its commitment to the promotion of civil society’s participation in the United Nations. There was, however, a need for transparency from “Alashara” given that special standing at the United Nations came with responsibility to act in conformity with the principles of the Charter of the United Nations. Returning the application back to the Committee would allow Member States to ask questions, and the organization to provide the necessary clarification and corrections to its current position. Reiterating the importance of an inclusive, fair and transparent process while granting a consultative status to non-governmental organizations, his delegation called on the Council to support draft decision [E/2021/L.25](#).

*Statements made in explanation of vote before the voting*

67. **Mr. Vitrenko** (Ukraine) said that the decisions of the Economic and Social Council regarding the granting of consultative status to non-governmental organizations needed to be taken in strict conformity with the Charter of the United Nations. Consequently, his delegation could not favour the recommendations set out in the report of the Committee on Non-Governmental Organizations on its 2021 session, granting consultative status to the so-called International Association for the Development of the Abaza-Abkhaz Ethnos “Alashara”, and therefore fully supported the request made by Georgia to return the application of that organization to the Committee. The organization under consideration had deliberately used incorrect terminology with regard to the Abkhazia region of Georgia, questioning the territorial integrity of the country in direct contradiction with the Charter of the United Nations and Security Council and General Assembly resolutions. In addition, “Alashara” was a Russia-based non-governmental organization that carried out its activities and maintained its office in the Russian-occupied Abkhazia region of Georgia. Given that the organization in question had failed to comply with the provisions of resolution 1996/31, Ukraine called on all Council members to vote in favour of the draft decision.

68. During its previous session, the Committee had deferred the applications of several Ukrainian charitable

organizations in a more than questionable manner. His delegation therefore strongly supported the need to improve the Committee’s working methods so that it could effectively fulfil its role in an inclusive, fair and transparent manner.

69. **Ms. Ozolina** (Latvia) said that although her delegation firmly supported the participation of civil society organizations in the work of the United Nations, it supported the request made by Georgia to return the application of “Alashara” to the Committee on Non-Governmental Organizations. Her delegation had been made aware that the organization in question had lobbied for the so-called independence of the Abkhazia region of Georgia in what was a clear attempt to violate the territorial integrity of Georgia within its internationally recognized borders. She therefore invited all Council members to support the draft decision.

70. **Mr. Varganov** (Russian Federation) said that it was not clear on what basis the delegation of Georgia was proposing that the Committee on Non-Governmental Organizations reconsider its approval of the Russian non-governmental organization International Association for the Development of the Abaza-Abkhaz Ethnos “Alashara”. The organization was registered and operated predominantly in the Russian Federation, with its headquarters in Saint Petersburg, and the offices that had been referred to did not exist. Members of the Abaza-Abkhaz ethnos had been living for centuries in the Russian Federation, Turkey, Georgia and other countries. His delegation could not understand why members of that ethnos living in the Russian Federation should be deprived of their rights at the request of Georgia. The main aim of the “Alashara” association was to support the development of the Abaza-Abkhaz people and promote inter-ethnic dialogue and cooperation. Its work was fully in conformity with the purposes and principles of the Charter of the United Nations and Economic and Social Council resolution 1996/31. The delegation of Georgia had not put forward any reasoned arguments or provided any evidence to support its claims.

71. Even if “Alashara” were not a Russian organization, his delegation would still have voted against the draft resolution as a matter of principle, because the recommendations of the Committee should be upheld and not reconsidered during sessions of the Council. Before making recommendations, the Committee always examined the applications in detail, analysing the projects, organizational structure and budget of the organizations and their compliance with the Charter, the goals and objectives of the Council and Council resolution 1996/31. Decisions to reconsider the

recommendations of the Committee undermined trust in the Committee's work, and his delegation was not prepared to follow such an approach. The actions of Georgia could be explained only as an attempt to settle political scores. All members of the Council should vote against the draft decision.

72. **Mr. Mack** (United States of America) said that his delegation strongly supported the participation of civil society in the work of the United Nations and, as a member of the Committee on Non-Governmental Organizations, underscored the importance of the work of the Committee. Given the additional information that had come to light, his delegation would vote in favour of the draft decision.

73. **Ms. Stewart** (United Kingdom) said that, given the additional information provided, including the questions raised by the delegation of Georgia, her delegation supported the draft decision to return the application of the non-governmental organization to the Committee for proper review.

74. *A recorded vote was taken on the proposal to return the application of the non-governmental organization "Alashara" to the Committee on Non-Governmental Organizations, as contained in draft decision E/2021/L.25.*

*In favour:*

Australia, Austria, Bulgaria, Canada, Finland, France, Germany, Guatemala, Jamaica, Japan, Latvia, Luxembourg, Mexico, Montenegro, Netherlands, Norway, Portugal, Republic of Korea, Ukraine, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, United States of America.

*Against:*

Botswana, China, Ethiopia, Iran (Islamic Republic of), Nicaragua, Russian Federation, Zimbabwe.

*Abstaining:*

Angola, Argentina, Bangladesh, Bolivia (Plurinational State of), Brazil, Colombia, Egypt, Indonesia, Kenya, Madagascar, Mali, Niger, Pakistan, Panama, Paraguay, Switzerland, Thailand.

75. *Draft decision E/2021/L.25 was adopted by 21 votes to 7, with 17 abstentions.*

*Action on the recommendations contained in chapter I of the report of the Committee on Non-Governmental Organizations on its 2021 regular session (E/2021/32 (Part I))*

*Draft decision I: Applications for consultative status, requests for reclassification, requests for a change of name and quadrennial reports received from non-governmental organizations*

76. *Draft decision I, as amended, was adopted.*

*Draft decision II: Report of the Committee on Non-Governmental Organizations on its 2021 regular session*

77. *Draft decision II was adopted.*

**Agenda item 14: 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 (continued) (A/76/68; E/2021/8; E/2021/L.31)**

*Draft resolution E/2021/L.31: Support to Non-Self-Governing Territories by the specialized agencies and international institutions associated with the United Nations*

78. **The President** said that the draft resolution had no programme budget implications.

79. **Ms. McGuire** (Observer for Grenada), Chair of the Special Committee on the Situation with regard to the Implementation of the Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples, introducing the report of the Secretary-General on the implementation of the Declaration by the specialized agencies and the international institutions associated with the United Nations (A/76/68), said that the report contained a list of specialized agencies and international institutions associated with the United Nations to which the provisions of General Assembly resolution 75/104 applied.

80. Introducing the report of the President of the Economic and Social Council on information submitted by the specialized agencies and other organizations of the United Nations system on their activities with regard to the implementation of the Declaration (E/2021/8), she said that the report contained information from seven United Nations system entities and one international organization regarding the support given to various Non-Self-Governing Territories, including on actions undertaken by some entities in response to the COVID-19 pandemic. The United Nations agencies, funds, programmes and regional organizations that had

provided support to the Territories were encouraged to continue to give assistance, provide information, in particular on pandemic-related assistance, and participate in the activities of the Special Committee, specifically in the annual regional seminar on decolonization.

81. Introducing the draft resolution (E/2021/L.31), she said that the text of the draft resolution echoed the concerns expressed by the General Assembly regarding the unprecedented negative health, economic and social impact of the COVID-19 pandemic, as well as the need for a united and coordinated response, and reaffirmed that the specialized agencies and other organizations and institutions of the United Nations system should continue to be guided by the relevant resolutions of the United Nations in their efforts to contribute to the implementation of the Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples and all other relevant resolutions of the General Assembly. In the draft resolution, the Council requested entities of the United Nations system and regional organizations to strengthen existing measures of support and to formulate appropriate programmes of assistance to the remaining Non-Self-Governing Territories on a case-by-case basis, within the framework of their respective mandates, in order to accelerate progress in the economic and social sectors of those Territories. Such assistance and support were even more crucial considering the challenges posed by the fragile economies and vulnerability of the Territories, which were compounded by the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic.

82. **Ms. Herity** (Secretary of the Council) said that Botswana and Suriname had become sponsors of the draft resolution. She then noted that Jamaica also wished to become a sponsor.

83. **Mr. Mack** (United States of America), speaking in explanation of vote before the voting, said that his country agreed in principle that United Nations funds, programmes and specialized agencies could provide useful support to territories that were not members of the Organization. However, the domestic laws and policies of a territory's administering Power determined whether such support was allowed, and the language in the draft resolution was inconsistent with the Constitution of the United States of America, which gave the Federal Government sole authority for the conduct of foreign relations. Consequently, his delegation could not support the draft resolution as it currently stood and had abstained from voting.

84. *A recorded vote was taken on draft resolution E/2021/L.31.*

*In favour:*

Angola, Bolivia (Plurinational State of), Botswana, China, Egypt, Ethiopia, Guatemala, Indonesia, Iran (Islamic Republic of), Jamaica, Libya, Mexico, Nicaragua, Nigeria, Pakistan, Panama, Paraguay, Thailand, Zimbabwe.

*Against:*

None.

*Abstaining:*

Argentina, Armenia, Australia, Austria, Brazil, Bulgaria, Canada, Colombia, Finland, Germany, Japan, Kenya, Latvia, Luxembourg, Madagascar, Mali, Montenegro, Netherlands, Norway, Portugal, Republic of Korea, Russian Federation, Switzerland, Ukraine, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, United States of America.

85. *The draft resolution was adopted by 19 votes to none, with 26 abstentions.*

86. **Mr. Gennady Kuzmin** (Russian Federation) said that his country actively supported the work of the Council and the Special Committee on the Situation with regard to the Implementation of the Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples, and had always been in favour of the effective realization of the rights of the peoples of the Non-Self-Governing Territories to self-determination, independence and development. However, consideration of that purely political issue by the Council was a distraction from its main function, which was to coordinate the social and economic work of the United Nations. For that reason, his delegation had traditionally abstained from voting under the current agenda item.

87. **Mr. Alvarez** (Argentina) said that the draft resolution should be applied in conformity with the relevant resolutions and decisions of the United Nations, including the resolutions and decisions of the General Assembly and the Special Committee on specific Territories.

**Agenda item 16: 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 (continued) (A/76/94-E/2021/73)**

88. **Mr. Alami** (Director, Emerging and Conflict-related Issues Division, Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia (ESCWA)), introducing the note of 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 (A/76/94-E/2021/73), said that, given that the report covered the period from 1 April 2020 to 31 March 2021, it did not cover the developments of April and May 2021, including the Gaza military escalation.

89. Israel had continued its measures to consolidate its control over the Occupied Palestinian Territory, resulting in increased territorial fragmentation and systematic limitation to development. During the reporting period, despite the COVID-19 pandemic, discriminatory policies and practices had persisted, especially with regard to the application of law, including service provision and planning and zoning policies that prevented Palestinian construction in Area C and East Jerusalem; the excessive use of force by Israeli authorities, including unwarranted force amounting to arbitrary deprivation of life, coupled with a lack of accountability; the failure to protect Palestinians from settler violence or to hold perpetrators accountable; and the arrest, incarceration and arbitrary detention of thousands of Palestinian men, women and children, including the excessive use of administrative detention without charge or trial, and documented cases of torture and ill-treatment of detainees, including children. Those policies and practices were combined with others in Area C and East Jerusalem to create a coercive environment that compelled Palestinians to leave their homes in what could amount to forcible transfer.

90. The policy of Israel to encourage settlement growth amounted to the transfer of its population into an occupied territory in violation of international humanitarian law. The year 2020 had seen the highest number of demolitions and resulting displacement in recent years, often in relation to settlement expansion plans. Moreover, the ability of Palestinians to legally challenge demolition orders against their property had been further limited. The policy continued of punitive home demolitions and confiscation of property with respect to the families and neighbours of Palestinians suspected of carrying out attacks, amounting to collective punishment. Restrictions on the movement of Palestinians within and between regions of the Occupied Palestinian Territory destroyed social networks, disrupted livelihoods and denied access to health care, including in life-saving situations. Such restrictions had effectively fragmented the West Bank into more than 100 cantons, and included the Wall, closed military areas and 40 km of roads for Israelis only. The 14-year blockade of the Gaza Strip amounted to the collective

punishment of more than 2 million Palestinians and impeded reconstruction and development, as well as efforts to combat the COVID-19 pandemic.

91. Israel unilaterally enforced “access-restricted areas” along the Gaza border fence with Israel, undermining livelihoods and conducting arrest and seizure operations. Israeli restrictions prevented Palestinians from using more than half of the agricultural area in the West Bank, as well as 35 per cent of the farmland in Gaza, which had also been damaged by the Israeli practice of aerial spraying with herbicides. Israeli settlements received high-quality, potable water, whereas Israeli policies and restrictions resulted in inadequate access to water for Palestinians. In Gaza, 96 per cent of water resources were unfit for human consumption, and only 10 per cent of Gazans had access to safe drinking water through the public network. Power shortages and poor infrastructure had led to untreated wastewater being pumped into the sea every day.

92. Approximately 2.45 million Palestinians, including three quarters of the population of Gaza, required some form of humanitarian assistance, a situation that had been exacerbated by the COVID-19 pandemic and a decline in external funding. Even before the May 2021 escalation, the situation in Gaza had been deteriorating, exacerbating the protracted humanitarian crisis. After three years of economic slowdown and decline in real GDP per capita, 2020 had been one of the worst years for the Palestinian economy since 2002. GDP per capita in 2020 remained below its 1994 levels, and unemployment in the Occupied Palestinian Territory was 26 per cent, with hyper-unemployment in Gaza, at 46.6 per cent. Women’s employment had been severely impacted in the context of the pandemic. As a result, 1.4 million persons in Gaza suffered from food insecurity, and malnutrition plagued pregnant women, lactating mothers and children.

93. The capacity of the Palestinian health-care system to cope with the COVID-19 pandemic had been severely impaired, while the health infrastructure in Gaza was on the verge of collapse, owing to the blockade and recurrent military operations. Despite Israel ranking first globally in per capita vaccinations, Palestinians’ access to COVID-19 vaccines had been limited.

94. Annexation by Israel of the occupied Syrian Golan, and its active support of settlement activity in that area, violated international law. Syrians in the occupied Syrian Golan suffered from discriminatory policies designed to benefit Israeli settlers at their expense, particularly in land and water allocation, planning and zoning, and demining efforts. Those

policies resulted in harsh economic and social conditions, which were expected to worsen as a result of new Israeli projects and plans.

95. The protracted Israeli occupation was detrimental to the living conditions of Palestinians and Syrians. Under those conditions, it would be almost impossible to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals. Israel continued to employ policies contrary to international law, including policies that were discriminatory and others that might amount to forcible transfer and collective punishment. The COVID-19 crisis continued to heighten the vulnerability of Palestinians, particularly the population of Gaza. Adherence to international law was an absolute imperative for ensuring that no party enjoyed impunity and for securing justice and peace for the inhabitants of the region.

96. **Mr. Mack** (United States of America) said that his delegation remained very concerned about the pronounced anti-Israel bias that continued to exist within the United Nations, as shown in the one-sided and biased report and its recommendations, which did nothing to advance a more peaceful, secure and prosperous future for Palestinians and Israelis alike. The report was unbalanced, and unfairly singled out Israel in a forum that was not intended to be politicized. The United States shared with many members of the international community the same goal of a lasting and comprehensive peace between Israel and the Palestinians. The United States, which remained committed to a two-State solution and the idea that Israelis and Palestinians deserved equal measures of security, prosperity and dignity, would continue to work towards a more peaceful, secure and prosperous future for the people of the Middle East. Reports like the one presented were so consistently biased and counterproductive as to be a distraction to the critical work that the Council should be doing. They did nothing to promote the cause of peace or to improve the situation on the ground for the Israeli and Palestinian people.

97. **Ms. Fisher-Tsin** (Observer for Israel) said that the ESCWA report was founded on the principle of bias against Israel. Her delegation had disputed and refuted each point made in the report, yet the same false claims appeared again every year. Two months previously, Hamas had begun launching rockets from Gaza aimed at Israeli cities and towns. Between 10 and 21 May 2021, a total of 4,360 rockets had been launched into Israel, killing 12 civilians, including a 5-year-old, and injuring 357 people. While Israel devoted its resources to adopting measures to protect its civilians, Hamas invested its resources in the manufacture of deadly rockets.

98. In the report, positive examples of meaningful cooperation, as well as Palestinian responsibility for halting that cooperation, were deliberately downplayed. For example, during the COVID-19 pandemic, Israel had worked with the Palestinian authority and the United Nations to mitigate the effects of the virus. Although the highly successful cooperation, which had kept the number of cases low in the Palestinian areas, had been lauded by United Nations officials, the Palestinian authority had decided to end it. Once again, policy was governed by optics and politics, rather than the well-being of the Palestinian people, and once again the report presented a biased view, ignoring facts that did not fit its agenda. In addition to vaccinating Israeli citizens – Jewish, Muslim and Christian – Israel had vaccinated 120,000 Palestinians working in Israel, donated vaccines to Palestinian medical teams and facilitated the entry of vaccines donated by various States into the Palestinian territory.

99. In the section on gender, Israel had been blamed for the problems of Palestinian women and girls. The reality was that Palestinian women faced oppressive internal conditions imposed by patriarchal Palestinian society, including domestic and gender-based violence, discrimination and low participation in the labour force. However, the blame had almost completely been placed on Israel, revealing once again that the true motivation for the report was political and that there was no intent to solve the problems that Palestinians faced.

100. Her delegation was dismayed by the reliance of ESCWA on so-called reports issued by the Syrian regime concerning Israeli infrastructure and building projects in the Golan. Syria was neither an international news service nor a non-governmental organization concerned with human rights. In the interest of producing the most biased account possible, the report contained information provided by a murderous regime. The report helped Palestinian leaders to avoid taking responsibility for their missteps, demonizing one party to a conflict. Constructive discussion and engagement and non-biased reports were the only way forward.

101. **Mr. Nayyal** (Observer for the Syrian Arab Republic) said that the ESCWA report had once again affirmed the adverse effects of the long-term occupation of the Occupied Palestinian and Syrian Arab territories on the economic and social development and living conditions of their Syrian and Palestinian inhabitants. According to the report, Israel, the occupying Power, persisted in carrying out policies that contravened the relevant General Assembly resolutions, international humanitarian law and international human rights law.

102. As part of a systematic policy of uprooting the inhabitants of the occupied Syrian Golan, the occupying Israeli authorities had recently granted the Israeli company Energex permits to build dozens of wind turbines on more than 6,000 dunums of occupied Syrian agricultural land. The project, which the inhabitants of the occupied Syrian Golan had consistently turned out in large numbers to protest, would restrict the expansion of occupied villages and confining their inhabitants to smaller and more densely populated areas, causing significant harm to their health, environment and livelihoods.

103. His Government repudiated the pressure placed by Israel on Syrian students pursuing courses of study abroad by imposing Israeli nationality on them when they returned home and threatening them, should they refuse, with barring them from travel to complete their studies abroad. Changes in education curricula were introduced with the aim of alienating students from their Syrian identity, forcing a new, alien ideology on them and facilitating their assimilation into Israeli society. In addition, the occupying Israeli authority pressured the inhabitants of occupied Syrian villages to accept documents issued by the so-called Israeli land registration office instead of their original land registration documents and hand over the latter, which attested to their ownership of land inherited from their forefathers, threatening to confiscate the land from its actual owners and grant it to Israeli settlers if they refused to do so.

104. The United Nations must compel Israel, the occupying Power, to halt its discriminatory and racist practices against the Syrian inhabitants of the occupied Syrian Golan and improve their health situation, redress the paucity of medical services, in particular in the context of the spread of the COVID-19 pandemic, and comply with international law, the Geneva Convention relative to the Protection of Civilians in Time of War and the relevant United Nations resolutions.

105. **Mr. Shawesh** (Observer for the State of Palestine) said that the report comprehensively documented the many serious economic and social repercussions of the brutal, illegitimate occupation on the Occupied Palestinian Territory and reflected the vast suffering endured by the Palestinian people as a result of the ongoing violation by Israel of international law. However, the report contained terminology that was not in compliance with the position and resolutions of the United Nations, defending Israel as an occupying Power. For example, it was unacceptable to use such terms as “security forces” when referring to the occupying forces and “security prisoners” when referring to Palestinian political prisoners.

106. The Palestinian people in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, had been coping with the COVID-19 pandemic. However, their situation under the occupation had added multiple layers to the challenges caused by the pandemic, given the serious health, social, economic and security impact of the virus. The pandemic had deepened the vulnerability of Palestinians under occupation, which had led to an existential and unsustainable crisis. The illegal Israeli occupation violated all principles of international law and entailed intentional acts such as the killing and injury of innocent children, women, men and elderly people; theft and colonization of another people’s land; construction and expansion of illegal settlements; destruction of homes and properties; forced displacement and dispossession of thousands of civilians; imprisonment and detention of more than 5,000 Palestinians, including women and children under inhumane conditions; destruction of livelihoods; desecration and vandalism of holy sites, particularly in occupied East Jerusalem; exploitation of natural resources; and segregation, isolation and obstruction of Palestinian movement through numerous measures, including annexation, an apartheid wall, hundreds of checkpoints and the systematic collective punishment of the entire civilian Palestinian population.

107. The matter of accountability was imperative for bringing an end to the prolonged Israeli occupation and for achieving the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people, including the right to development. His delegation appealed to the international community, including the United Nations through its relevant bodies, to act immediately and collectively, enforcing practical measures to hold Israel accountable. In that regard, the banning of entry to the international market of products produced in illegal settlements and made using natural resources illegally exploited from Palestinian land was a basic and minimal request, as was the obligation to ensure that agreements signed between any State and the State of Israel did not include the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem. It was essential to enable Palestine to pursue genuine development, in line with the Sustainable Development Goals, and to ensure viable economic and social conditions for the Palestinian people, goals which could never be achieved under the occupation.

108. His delegation was deeply grateful for the solidarity and assistance extended from around the world to the Palestinian people. The support reinforced their resilience and conviction in the possibility of a just peace and the realization of their inalienable right to live with dignity in their independent State of Palestine, with East Jerusalem as its capital, living side by side with

Israel, within a framework based on the pre-1967 borders.

**Agenda item 15: Regional cooperation** (*continued*)  
([E/2021/15](#) and [E/2021/15/Add.1](#))

109. **Ms. Malango** (Director of the Regional Commissions New York Office), introducing the report of the Secretary-General on regional cooperation in the economic, social and related fields ([E/2021/15](#)), said that the report provided an update on regional perspectives on critical global issues and an overview of the work undertaken by the regional commissions. The first part of the report illustrated how regional action was effectively supporting COVID-19 response and recovery, while reigniting the implementation of the 2030 Agenda. Although the pandemic had significantly hampered progress in achieving the Sustainable Development Goals in all regions, reversing gains in many nations, the report introduced key levers of change, including financing for development, green recovery, bridging the digital divide and regional cooperation, which held transformative potential to put countries on the path towards achieving the Goals. The regional commissions were promoting innovative approaches, including through joint work on illicit financial flows in support of the Initiative on Financing for Development in the Era of COVID-19 and Beyond, and interregional cooperation on the role of the extractive industries as an engine for sustainable development.

110. The second part of the report provided an update on the repositioning of the United Nations development system in the regions and on cooperation among the regional commissions, including updates on the establishment of the regional collaborative platforms and knowledge management hubs and on the first system-wide results reports of the United Nations development system.

111. The addendum to the report ([E/2021/15/Add.1](#)) contained information on the resolutions and decisions adopted by the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean, the Economic Commission for Africa, the Economic Commission for Europe and the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific. Two decisions of the Economic Commission for Europe called for action by the Economic and Social Council: a draft decision on best practice guidance for effective methane recovery and use from abandoned coal mines, and a draft decision on the updated United Nations Framework Classification for Resources. The regional commissions were listening to the requests of Member States, including calls for improved coordination and coherent and impactful delivery of

work; value-added partnerships with the private sector, international financial institutions and regional development banks; strengthened collaboration with the regional United Nations development system to lend support to country-level United Nations action; and wide and accessible dissemination of the regional commissions' knowledge products.

*Action on the recommendations contained in chapter I of the report of the Secretary-General on regional cooperation in the economic, social and related fields* ([E/2021/15/Add.1](#))

*Draft decision I: Best Practice Guidance for Effective Methane Recovery and Use from Abandoned Coal Mines*

112. *Draft decision I was adopted.*

*Draft decision II: Updated United Nations Framework Classification for Resources*

113. *Draft decision II was adopted.*

*Draft resolution [E/2021/L.23/Rev.1](#): Follow-up to the Regional Agreement on Access to Information, Public Participation and Justice in Environmental Matters in Latin America and the Caribbean*

**Agenda item 19: Social and human rights questions** (*continued*)

**(f) Human rights** (*continued*) ([A/76/55](#))

114. **Mr. Mokhiber** (Director, New York Office of the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights), introducing the report of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights on economic, social and cultural rights ([A/76/55](#)), said that the report focused on the recent work of the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights and operationalized the call made in 2020 by the Secretary-General for a new social contract and a new global deal to address the inequalities that had been further deepened by the COVID-19 pandemic.

115. In late 2019, the High Commissioner for Human Rights had launched the Surge Initiative in response to galloping inequalities, slow-paced implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals and an outbreak of social protests around the world. The aim of the Initiative had been to step up the provision of country-focused operational advice on economic and social rights to United Nations country teams. The Initiative had contributed to better linking human rights with economics by translating United Nations human rights standards and recommendations into advice tailored to the country context for COVID-19 emergency measures

and long-term socioeconomic recovery. Since its inception, the Initiative had contributed rights-based macroeconomic policy analysis to United Nations advocacy, planning and programming processes, as well as to United Nations socioeconomic impact assessments and COVID-19 response plans.

116. In Cambodia, where poverty had doubled during the pandemic, the Initiative had supported human rights staff on the ground in advocating for a human rights-based social protection system. In Ecuador, it had supported the United Nations country team in analysing and advising on the Government's COVID-19 draft emergency law and had helped to assess the barriers that prevented four vulnerable groups – indigenous peoples, persons with disabilities, persons deprived of their liberty and Afro-Ecuadorians – from benefiting from the COVID-19 socioeconomic measures adopted by the Government. In Lebanon, the Office had worked with country teams and national partners to raise concerns about the impact of the economic crisis, the pandemic and the Beirut port explosion on people's ability to meet their basic needs. In Madagascar, the Initiative had provided support in conducting an impact assessment of the mining sector on economic and social rights. In Serbia, as the pandemic had gathered pace, the Initiative had assisted in establishing partnerships between human rights advisors and United Nations entities, government agencies and civil society to undertake urgent outreach to Roma residents of informal settlements across the country. The experience of the Initiative had demonstrated the value of the human rights framework in guiding national policies and efforts to strengthen social justice and to foster a transformative and human rights-based economy that addressed pre-existing inequalities and avoided creating new ones.

**Agenda item 11: Implementation of and follow-up to major United Nations conferences and summits**  
(continued)

**(b) Review and coordination of the implementation of the Programme of Action for the Least Developed Countries for the Decade 2011–2020** (continued) (E/2021/L.28)

*Draft resolution E/2021/L.28: Programme of Action for the Least Developed Countries for the Decade 2011–2020*

117. **The President** said that the draft resolution had no programme budget implications.

118. *Draft resolution E/2021/L.28 was adopted.*

*The meeting rose at 1.10 p.m.*