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President: Ms. Narváez Ojeda (Vice-President) (Chile)

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In the absence of Ms. Stoeva (Bulgaria), Ms. Narváez Ojeda (Chile), Vice-President, took the Chair.

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

Agenda item 18: Economic and environmental questions

(c) Statistics (E/2023/24)

1. **Mr. Ulrich** (Vice-Chair of the Statistical Commission), speaking via video link, introducing the report of the Statistical Commission on its fifty-fourth session (E/2023/24), said that there was an ongoing discussion on how to ensure that the Commission was inclusive and reflective of the current world in 2023. Over the past 70 years, the breadth and scope of the topics covered by the Commission had expanded to include such emerging issues as sustainable development, climate change, well-being, the handling of diverse new information systems, data protection and privacy and technological innovations, which addressed all facets of the global development agenda. The larger focus, reflected in Council resolution 2022/3, encompassed the shift from solely focusing on statistics to addressing the growing demands for data and statistics.

2. The Commission had been identified as the primary body for the coordination of the statistical programmes of the United Nations system. As such, it sought to strengthen coordination of the various statistical programmes of the United Nations organs and agencies to increase synergies and provide reliable statistics and data for the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. With that in mind, the Commission valued the commitment of the organs and agencies on the topic of data and was ready to make an active professional contribution to such initiatives as the Data Strategy of the Secretary-General for Action by Everyone, Everywhere.

3. The fifty-fourth session of the Commission had been attended by some 500 delegates from 98 countries and around 40 international agencies and non-governmental organizations. The high level of attendance reflected a strong professional commitment to supporting the Commission's important role in global data and statistics. Over 300 written comments had been submitted and uploaded to the Commission's website on all agenda items. In addition, there had been 28 virtual and 58 in-person side events held at the margins of the session, which had been successfully concluded with 23 technical decisions that would guide the global statistical system and the future work of the Statistics

Division of the Department of Economic and Social Affairs.

4. The Commission appreciated the rapidly progressing work on the Sustainable Development Goal indicator methodologies and data sources, which had allowed the indicator coverage to increase from 115 indicators out of a total of 231 in *The Sustainable Development Goals Report 2016* to 219 indicators in *The Sustainable Development Goals Report 2023*. The Commission had requested the Inter-Agency and Expert Group on Sustainable Development Goal Indicators to conduct a stocktaking exercise on data availability at the national level before the 2025 comprehensive review of the global indicator framework for the Goals and targets of the 2030 Agenda. The Group worked in close cooperation with the Statistics Division of the Department of Economic and Social Affairs and was well placed to conduct the final review in 2025, as mandated by the General Assembly.

5. The Commission had welcomed the ongoing advanced work on the revision of the System of National Accounts, to be released in 2025. In that context, a high-level forum had discussed ways to measure the economy that went beyond gross domestic product (GDP).

6. The members of the Commission had shared a number of examples where countries had already developed interesting tools for measuring well-being, progress and sustainability. The Commission stood ready to technically support a political process that defined ways to measure the economy beyond GDP.

7. The Fundamental Principles of Official Statistics were a code of ethics shared by the professional community. In the coming intersessional period, the Commission would celebrate the thirtieth anniversary of the Principles, assess their continued relevance and promote the production and dissemination of relevant, impartial, objective and reliable official statistics in a changing data ecosystem.

8. The Commission had endorsed the establishment of a Friends of the Chair group on social and demographic statistics, which had launched a comprehensive review of social and demographic statistics programmes at the national and international levels to see whether they were fit for purpose, responsive to new policy needs, integrated with other pillars, such as the economic and environmental pillars, and well-coordinated at the global level. The Commission was focusing on the review of the status quo and ways to strengthen those programmes.

9. Also included in the report of the Commission under consideration were decisions on relevant cross-

cutting topics, including international statistical classifications, data stewardship and the integration of statistical and geospatial information. Moreover, there were also decisions on such important topics as household surveys, economic statistics, environmental-economic accounting, statelessness statistics and crime statistics.

10. **Ms. Mendoza Elguea** (Mexico) said that her country welcomed the decisions taken by the Statistical Commission at its fifty-fourth session, in particular the decision to establish the Friends of the Chair group on social and demographic statistics, which would analyse critically the current landscape of issues and expert groups in order to contribute to a more comprehensive and robust conceptual framework in those areas. Mexico further welcomed the work of the Committee of Experts on International Statistical Classifications to integrate various classification systems in a number of domains, and of the United Nations Committee of Experts on Global Geospatial Information Management to continue efforts to integrate statistical and geographic information and to expand the use and applications of geospatial information. Furthermore, her country highlighted the Commission's request for greater collaboration, including between the statistical and biodiversity communities to strengthen national monitoring systems, and for monitoring and reporting on the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework. Increased cooperation was also needed with the International Monetary Fund's Data Gaps Initiative in order to provide common frameworks for monitoring climate change.

11. With regard to the enlargement of the membership of the Commission, Mexico was awaiting the results of a broader and more comprehensive process of deliberation within the Commission's Bureau in the intersessional period that would result in a note on options, including an impact assessment and a proposed resolution, which could be submitted for consultation among Member States as of December 2023.

Draft decision: Report of the Statistical Commission on its fifty-fourth session and provisional agenda and dates of the fifty-fifth session of the Commission

12. **The President** drew attention to the draft decision entitled "Report of the Statistical Commission on its fifty-fourth session and provisional agenda and dates of the fifty-fifth session of the Commission", contained in chapter I of the report of the Statistical Commission on its fifty-fourth session (E/2023/24).

13. *The draft decision was adopted.*

(a) Sustainable development (E/2023/33; E/2023/L.14)

14. **Ms. Fukuda-Parr** (Chair of the Committee for Development Policy), speaking via video link, introducing the report of the Committee for Development Policy on its twenty-fifth session (E/2023/33), said that, in the context of the Council's annual theme for 2023 of accelerating the recovery from the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) and the full implementation of the 2030 Agenda, the Committee's analysis had focused on three urgent issues: a just transition to environmentally sustainable economies, the debt crisis and the effectiveness of the voluntary national review mechanism for the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals.

15. The concept of a just transition was gaining momentum and expanding beyond labour to other affected communities and stakeholders and to different concepts of justice, including procedural justice. A just transition was an important integrated strategy for the achievement of the Goals through a unified agenda; for example, in harnessing opportunities for increasing the participation of women in labour markets, protecting ecosystems and biodiversity and investing in renewable energies for more equitable urban mobility.

16. In its report, the Committee recommended that the Council encourage Member States to pursue strategies that would secure climate action, environmental sustainability and resilience-building in a way that facilitated the achievement of all the Goals. In its report and recommendations, the Committee drew particular attention to the global dimensions of just transition strategies and to the historical context of global responsibilities.

17. Strategies needed to consider the consequences of national policies on people and countries beyond national borders and to avoid transferring the burden of transition onto other countries, especially developing ones. Developing countries required policy space to strengthen their productive capacities, new intellectual property frameworks and scaled-up international cooperation. In line with those considerations, the Committee had made nine specific recommendations in its report related to the participation of developing countries in emerging value chains in the clean technology economy; the promotion of technology co-development; international agreements and industrial policy; the financing of sustainable infrastructure; the funding priorities of multilateral development banks; regulated markets; capitalization of the loss and damage finance facility; financing for investment in resilience-building, and the establishment

of effective international mechanisms of payments for ecosystem services.

18. In its report, the Committee also recommended that the Council call on Member States and the international community to urgently improve the method, process and speed of debt relief to developing countries. Moreover, it proposed that the Council call for an efficient allocation of different financing sources, including compensation for losses and damage and the provision of concessional financing for both climate adaptation and mitigation.

19. Voluntary national reviews were a central mechanism for peer learning to accelerate the achievement of the Goals. That was a critical challenge in view of the disturbing reversals in their achievement and the call by the Secretary-General to “rescue the Goals” with deeper and bolder policy strategies. In 2023, the Committee had synthesized the lessons learned from its annual analyses of the voluntary national reviews presented from 2017 to 2021 and had developed a consolidated set of findings and recommendations. While the Committee welcomed the considerable improvements made in the reports over the past several years, the potential of the reviews as a tool for reflection on effective approaches was far from being reached. In its report, the Committee therefore recommended launching a new generation of reviews to help “rescue the Goals”. The “voluntary national reviews – version 2” should refocus the reports away from descriptive narratives towards more in-depth analysis of successes and failures, policy insights and the identification of structural obstacles.

20. With regard to external debt, the Committee had addressed the escalating external debt crisis that had emerged from the confluence of the economic consequences of the COVID-19 pandemic, the war in Ukraine, high food and energy prices, rising international interest rates and currency depreciation. Some 36 out of 69 low-income countries and a large number of middle-income countries were currently either in debt distress or at high risk of debt distress. Those conditions posed a singular threat to the achievement of the Goals and highlighted the inadequacy of existing arrangements. There was an urgent need for short-term solutions, including multilateral financing and debt renegotiations, but also for a longer-term comprehensive financing and debt resolution mechanism, in addition to a mechanism for the payment of historical carbon debt.

21. During its twenty-fifth plenary meeting, the Committee had reviewed its criteria for the identification of the least developed countries and had

introduced refinements to the composition of the criteria and their application procedures, while confirming their structure and principles for the upcoming 2024 triennial review of the list of least developed countries.

22. In its enhanced monitoring of the countries that were graduating or had graduated from the least developed category, the Committee had reviewed the development progress of one recently graduated country and seven graduating countries. The Committee had expressed its concern at the limited national capacity of those countries to address diverse challenges, originating from multiple crises, including the socioeconomic impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic, global crises in food, fuel and finance, disasters and the war in Ukraine. Sustainable graduation from the least developed country category during the current challenging times required stepped-up support from development and trading partners. The Committee had urged countries to continue reporting to it on their progress in preparing and implementing smooth transition strategies.

23. The Committee had noted that the least developed country category had been useful in attracting political support for such countries but had, to a much lesser extent, led to explicit assistance from the United Nations development system. In line with its past reviews, the Committee had urged the United Nations development system organizations to expand the use of the least developed country category in their programming and budgeting.

24. Lastly, the Committee had considered the findings of the review of the Council subsidiary bodies and had evaluated the Committee’s thematic analyses and working methods against the Council’s recommendations, finding that the Committee’s programme of work was well aligned with the recommendations. The Committee proposed to continue holding its current interaction with the Council during its plenary session and separate Council briefings, which had been welcomed and well received by Member States.

25. **Mr. Rubio** (Observer for Angola) said that, although his country was scheduled to complete its graduation process in February 2024, its macroeconomic situation had experienced a new setback, with high oil prices and currency depreciation having led to a slow economic recovery, and with macroeconomic and structural challenges continuing to hamper economic and social development. Moreover, the gross national income per capita had fallen below the graduation threshold. As Angola had not sufficiently improved in the other two least developed country criteria, it would no longer be eligible to be

recommended for graduation. As an immediate response, the Angolan Government had activated the enhanced monitoring mechanism under paragraph 284 of the Doha Programme of Action for the Least Developed Countries. Consultations between the Committee for Development Policy and the Angolan Government had already begun, and both sides were working on the best path forward.

26. In closing, he thanked the Committee for its follow-up and for the work being developed with his Government and said that Angola would be pleased to communicate the results of the consultations to the Council as soon as they were completed.

27. **Mr. Kaspar** (Representative of the European Union, in its capacity as observer) said that the European Union and its member States appreciated the commitment by Council members to keep the draft resolution on the report of the Committee for Development Policy focused and targeted on the Committee's key contributions, namely, the monitoring and support of least developed country graduation.

28. The European Union considered the most important function of the Committee to be the provision of expert advice on least developed country graduation to the Council. The European Union supported and stood in solidarity with the least developed countries and had a long tradition of prioritizing its partnerships with them. In that context, the least developed countries were the litmus test for the international community's ability to make good on its promise to leave no one behind.

29. The European Union welcomed the adoption of the Doha Programme of Action for the Least Developed Countries and looked forward to the robust implementation of the Programme, including enhanced monitoring of areas in which the Committee played a particular role.

30. Given the particular importance of addressing the specific needs and context of each least developed country, the European Union welcomed the finding of the Committee regarding the benefits of updating the existing General Assembly resolutions on a smooth transition and the need to clarify the necessary procedures for enhanced monitoring and for taking action when monitoring revealed challenges or showed that a least developed country was off track for graduating as scheduled.

31. The European Union would continue to support the work of the Committee within its mandate, in particular in relation to its monitoring of the least developed country category. Moreover, it looked

forward to keeping the draft resolution up to date, including in its next iteration, by updating and aligning language and support to the least developed countries and efforts towards climate adaption and mitigation with related developments in the Conferences of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change.

32. Lastly, the European Union would continue to stand with the least developed countries, extend its support and solidarity and actively work to strengthen its partnerships with such countries and called on all Member States to do the same.

Draft resolution E/2023/L.14: Report of the Committee for Development Policy on its twenty-fifth session

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

34. *Draft resolution E/2023/L.14 was adopted.*

35. **Mr. Murillo Ferrer** (Colombia) said that the work of the Committee for Development Policy was important in addressing the challenges faced by all developing countries, regardless of their income categories. The recommendations included in the Committee's report were of the highest relevance, in particular for advancing the just energy transition and strengthening the monitoring and implementation of the 2030 Agenda through voluntary national reporting. The Committee had expertise in developing multidimensional vulnerability indices that should be used to inform such relevant processes as the establishment of measures that went beyond GDP to inform access to finance for development. The role and potential of the Committee should be harnessed and enhanced with an inclusive approach to the Global South by effectively addressing the difficulties faced by countries in special circumstances, in particular least developed countries, and recognizing the mounting challenges confronting other developing countries, such as middle-income countries.

36. **Ms. Marks** (United States of America) said that her country was pleased to have joined the consensus on the draft resolution. The United States of America attached exceptional importance to its relationship with, and the needs and priorities of, its least developed country partners and friends and was committed to working together to advance progress on the Sustainable Development Goals. While graduation from least developed country status was a sign of progress, it did not mean that development challenges had come to an end. In that regard, her country continued to support developing countries that had graduated from least

developed country status or that had never qualified as a least developed country.

37. The United States of America strongly disagreed with several of the recommendations in the report of the Committee for Development Policy, which went beyond its mandate, and noted that consensus on the draft resolution did not imply support for the report. Her country reinforced the need for guidance on the application process and criteria for approving the postponement of graduation from least developed country status towards more systematic and consistent processes and outcomes. Furthermore, trade language negotiated or adopted by or under the auspices of the General Assembly and the Council did not have relevance for the trade policy of the United States or for the agenda of the World Trade Organization (WTO). While the United Nations and the WTO shared common interests, they had different roles, rules and memberships.

38. In closing, she reaffirmed her country's commitment to advancing the 2030 Agenda and the achievement of the Goals.

Agenda item 12: Coordination, programme and other questions

(c) Mainstreaming a gender perspective into all policies and programmes in the United Nations system (E/2023/82; E/2023/L.16)

Agenda item 18: Economic and environmental questions

(j) Women and development

Agenda item 19: Social and human rights questions

(a) Advancement of women (*continued*) (A/78/38 and E/2023/27)

39. **Ms. Mehrotra** (Director of the United Nations System Coordination Division, United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN-Women)), speaking via video link and introducing the report of the Secretary-General on mainstreaming a gender perspective into all policies and programmes in the United Nations system (E/2023/82), said that the report provided information on the United Nations system's efforts to implement and strengthen gender mainstreaming, including in relation to the 2030 Agenda, in operational activities and through the implementation of the gender mainstreaming accountability frameworks, namely, the United Nations System-wide Action Plan on Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women at the entity level and the United Nations country team System-wide Action Plan

on Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women, its country-team level equivalent.

40. The reversal of gender equality gains and the slowing of progress in that area were one of the multiple challenges that had defined humanity's recent past. Accordingly, the United Nations system had made efforts to mainstream gender perspectives into its work on multiple fronts in support of the 2030 Agenda, including through the development of an annual "gender snapshot" publication; the issuance of guidance on gender analysis in such technical areas as climate and disaster risk and finance insurance, energy infrastructure and digital inclusion; and the adoption of the United Nations gender equality marker as a financial standard, which introduced a common methodology and format for tracking the contribution of United Nations activities to gender equality and women's empowerment. Moreover, the United Nations system worked to ensure that women and girls were placed at the centre of the implementation of Our Common Agenda. To that end, UN-Women had participated in 11 system-wide task teams working on its implementation. Notwithstanding those developments, more efforts were needed to ensure that the standards were universally adopted and properly implemented across the United Nations system.

41. Progress had been made in the area of gender mainstreaming in operational activities, with 58 per cent of the United Nations country teams that had developed a United Nations Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework in 2022 having reported that they had also mainstreamed gender equality considerations into all their outcomes. In addition, 50 per cent of them had included a dedicated stand-alone gender equality outcome. Eighty-nine per cent of country teams had reported having a Gender Theme Group or an equivalent coordination mechanism to support gender mainstreaming in joint planning and programming. The Gender Theme Groups and their working methods were being standardized in order to enhance their capacities and ensure that gender equality results were more strategically situated in Sustainable Development Cooperation Frameworks, joint work plans and joint programmes. Furthermore, efforts were being made to strengthen gender analysis and gender mainstreaming in humanitarian planning and programming at the country level – an area that was growing in importance. Concerted efforts were also being made by United Nations entities to bolster capacity for gender analysis data collection in conflict countries, including Afghanistan, Ukraine and Haiti.

42. Progress had also been made in relation to the United Nations System-wide Action Plan on Gender

Equality and the Empowerment of Women and its country team equivalent. In 2022, 73 entities had implemented the United Nations System-wide Action Plan, and 67 per cent of all ratings for the indicators had met or exceeded requirements. Some strategic indicators had shown notable progress, with 48 entities having included gender equality in their strategic plans and with 58 entities having put in place a gender policy. In contrast, however, progress on financial allocations and on gender parity remained slow. Seventy-six country teams had implemented the United Nations country team System-wide Action Plan in 2022, 19 of which had prepared a comprehensive report designed to align with the Sustainable Development Cooperation Frameworks. The progress made illustrated the potential of the Cooperation Frameworks to drive mainstreaming of gender perspectives in the work of the United Nations entities and the country teams using a harmonized and common method and with results that could be aggregated. Accountability frameworks were only as good as the support provided to them, however.

43. Despite those achievements, gaps remained, and progress needed to be accelerated. Accordingly, the report of the Secretary-General contained several recommendations directed at the United Nations entities and country teams, namely: to include gender equality as a high-level result in their strategic plans so as to effectively implement gender equality perspectives in all aspects of the work of each organization; to increase investment in capacity development for gender equality and gender mainstreaming, with particular attention to strengthening the capacity to undertake gender analysis in technical, non-technical and emerging areas of work; and to fully implement the gender theme group standards and procedures, which strengthened the work of country teams on gender mainstreaming; and implement the United Nations gender equality marker across United Nations entities, inter-agency pooled funds and country teams. Given the importance of the gender equality marker, which was a financial tracking tool, its implementation should be strongly supported. UN-Women looked forward to the full and rigorous implementation of the United Nations System-wide Action Plan on Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women and its country team equivalent and to the continuing engagement of United Nations entities and country teams in both frameworks well into the future.

44. While progress had been made, enhanced gender mainstreaming capacities and outcomes were still needed everywhere. All United Nations system entities must therefore sharpen their focus and strengthen their efforts to systematically mainstream a gender perspective in their respective areas of work. In that

context, the Council played an essential role in repeatedly calling on the United Nations system as a whole to accelerate action on gender mainstreaming.

45. **Ms. Joyini** (Chair of the Commission on the Status of Women), introducing the report of the Commission on the Status of Women on its sixty-seventh session (E/2023/27), said that the session had been very productive, with active engagement from delegations, civil society and youth. It had provided opportunities to share experiences and lessons learned and to recommend the way forward.

46. The priority theme of the session was “Innovation and technological change, and education in the digital age for achieving gender equality and the empowerment of all women and girls”. In the true spirit of intergovernmental collaboration, the Commission had worked tirelessly to reach consensus on its outcome – the agreed conclusions – which offered a clear road map on policies and actions that Governments and other stakeholders should undertake in eight thematic areas, namely: prioritizing digital equity to close the gender digital divide; leveraging financing for inclusive digital transformation and innovation towards achieving gender equality and the empowerment of all women and girls; fostering gender-responsive digital and science and technology education in the digital age; promoting the full, equal and meaningful participation and leadership, as well as full employment of, women in technology and innovation; adopting gender-responsive technology design, development and deployment; strengthening fairness, transparency and accountability in the digital age; enhancing data science to achieve gender equality and the empowerment of all women and girls; and preventing and eliminating all forms of violence, including gender-based violence that occurred through or was amplified by the use of technologies.

47. The agreed conclusions emphasized the importance of the full, effective and accelerated implementation of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action and the gender-responsive implementation of the 2030 Agenda. That outcome was the result of a shared commitment and was a significant milestone in a subject that had timely and crucial relevance for the entire world. Moreover, the actions presented in the agreed conclusions aligned with many of the Sustainable Development Goals. As such, the agreed conclusions provided an important input to the work of the Council and the high-level political forum on sustainable development.

48. The first fully in-person session under the Commission’s new methods of work had not disappointed. Over 7,500 participants from

Governments, intergovernmental organizations, the United Nations system, civil society and youth had been present in New York. Three Heads of State, one Head of Government, two Vice-Presidents and 111 Ministers had taken part in the general discussion during the ministerial segment, all of whom had expressed their strong commitment to promoting gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls. Eighty-seven ministers and senior officials from around the world had exchanged experiences in four ministerial round tables. Furthermore, the participation of stakeholders in an expert panel had provided an opportunity for an in-depth discussion on the priority theme. For the first time, an interactive dialogue among youth representatives had been included as an official component of the Commission's programme of work.

49. As in other years, the Commission had succeeded in building on its past work. In 2023, it had reviewed progress on the agreed conclusions from its sixty-second session on "Challenges and opportunities in achieving gender equality and the empowerment of rural women and girls". Seven Member States from different regions had made voluntary presentations on how they had implemented the agreed conclusions from the sixty-second session. The review had given good insight into targeted national efforts to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals so as to leave no woman or girl behind.

50. In addition to the priority and review themes, the Commission had also considered "Getting back on track: achieving gender equality in a context of overlapping emergencies" as an emerging issue, paying particular attention to the threats posed by the COVID-19 pandemic, higher poverty rates, the global cost-of-living crisis coupled with the climate crisis and conflicts. Those overlapping emergencies had affected the achievement of the Goals and the implementation of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action and had dramatically reversed the course of progress on gender equality.

51. In 2024, the Commission's priority theme would be "Accelerating the achievement of gender equality and the empowerment of all women and girls by addressing poverty and strengthening institutions and financing with a gender perspective". The Commission would review progress on the implementation of the agreed conclusions from the sixty-third session on social protection systems, access to public services and sustainable infrastructure for gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls.

52. There was no doubt that the Council and its members would continue to provide support and

guidance to the Commission's Bureau in preparation for and during the upcoming sixty-eighth session. The Commission counted on the Council's leadership to ensure that the agreed conclusions were taken fully into account and inspired the Council's work and that of the high-level political forum on sustainable development.

Draft decision: Report of the Commission on the Status of Women on its sixty-seventh session and provisional agenda and documentation for the sixty-eighth session of the Commission

53. **The President** drew attention to the draft proposal contained in chapter I, section B of the report of the Commission on the Status of Women on its sixty-seventh session (E/2023/27). As it had not been possible for the Secretariat to provide advice on any potential programme budget implications on the agreed conclusions of the Commission on the Status of Women at the time of their adoption, the Secretariat had advised that it would provide advice to the Council before its consideration of the report of the Commission. The Council had subsequently been informed that the agreed conclusions contained no programme budget implications.

54. *The draft decision was adopted.*

55. **The President** drew attention to the report of the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women on its eighty-second, eighty-third and eighty-fourth sessions (A/78/38) and suggested that the Council should take note of it.

56. *It was so decided.*

Draft resolution entitled "Mainstreaming a gender perspective into all policies and programmes in the United Nations system" (E/2023/L.16)

57. **The President** drew attention to draft resolution E/2023/L.16, entitled "Mainstreaming a gender perspective into all policies and programmes in the United Nations system", and said that it had no programme budget implications.

58. *The draft resolution was adopted.*

(b) Social development (A/78/61-E/2023/7, A/77/309-E/2023/5 and E/2023/26)

59. **Mr. Wilmoth** (Officer-in-Charge of the Division for Inclusive Social Development, Department of Economic and Social Affairs), introducing the report of the Secretary-General entitled "Preparations for and observance of the thirtieth anniversary of the International Year of the Family" (A/78/61-E/2023/7), said that, as part of the preparations for the thirtieth anniversary of the International Year of the Family in

2024, the report analysed urbanization and migration trends and their impacts on families. In his report the Secretary-General noted that, with some regional variations, family was a major driver of contemporary migration, hence the importance of facilitating family reunification for migrants through measures promoting the right to family life and the best interests of the child. Furthermore, migrants and their families needed many forms of support in addition to economic assistance, including quality education, health-care services and housing. As transnational motherhood had become a global phenomenon, policies supporting migrant women and facilitating reunification with their children should have high priority as well.

60. Migration fuelled rapid urbanization in much of the world, which could improve the lives of individuals and families when it was a sustainable process with a family perspective. When cities were well-planned and managed, they could help to lift families out of poverty, provide quality education for children, support for older persons, accessible spaces for persons with disabilities and a welcoming environment for migrants and thus contribute to social cohesion. Moreover, it was important for family-oriented urban policies to target vulnerable families, especially those in precarious housing situations for whom cash and in-kind transfers and subsidies had proven to be effective. It was equally important to invest in urban public spaces, adopt mixed-use planning methods and involve a wide range of stakeholders in municipal planning and budgeting, including low-income households, youth, older persons, persons with disabilities and homeless and other socially marginalized populations. The recommendations in the report included investing in sustainable urbanization through the provision of adequate infrastructure, accessible transportation, affordable housing and intergenerational living arrangements.

61. Lastly, the report described the status of the preparations for the thirtieth anniversary of the International Year of the Family at the national, regional and international levels and noted a number of good practices at the national level, regional initiatives and research and advocacy at the international level, including expert group meetings, side events, international day observance and civil society initiatives. As part of the anniversary preparations, the report recommended supporting research, awareness-raising activities and policy actions at the national, regional and global levels. It highlighted the impact on families of contemporary megatrends, including technological changes, urbanization, migration and other demographic trends, and climate change.

62. **Ms. Kunugi** (Director, Public Partnerships Division, United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF)), introducing the report of the Secretary-General on the follow-up to the outcome of the special session of the General Assembly on children ([A/77/309-E/2023/5](#)), said that, over two decades since the adoption of the Declaration and Plan of Action entitled "A world fit for children", the current state of the world was not fit for children, and progress towards the Sustainable Development Goals and towards the full realization of the rights of all children was lagging. The COVID-19 pandemic, climate change and a multitude of conflicts and other humanitarian crises had all set back progress. As a result, children, who were already the most marginalized and vulnerable group, had been pushed further behind. Building back better required a targeted and effective child-rights approach, with data for and about children, policies and planning that were evidence-based, cross-sectoral and supported by public-private partnerships, and engagement directly with children.

63. Approximately 1 billion children were living in multidimensional poverty, more than 5 million children had lost a parent or caregiver to COVID-19, nearly 170 million children were engaged in child labour and 5 million children under 5 years old were being lost every year, mostly to preventable and curable diseases. As a consequence of pandemic-related school closures and a lack of learning opportunities, the total number of children who did not meet the minimum reading proficiency standard had risen by 100 million to 600 million. Moreover, pre-existing gender inequalities had deepened and the risk of child, early and forced marriage had increased, with the potential for 10 million more child marriages before the end of the decade.

64. The international community could harness its collective efforts to get the world back on track to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals, but only if it took urgent action to ensure that countries made greater investments in primary health care, especially at the community level, tackled the learning crisis by getting children back into school, supported multisectoral early childhood development packages, including responsive caregiving, addressed mental health concerns for children and adolescents, invested in universal social protection and developed comprehensive legislation and policies. Furthermore, social protection measures introduced during the COVID-19 pandemic must be preserved, advanced and strengthened, especially those aimed at expanding finance for human capital and ensuring that Government spending and tax systems directly benefited children and their communities.

65. The report highlighted that the crises of climate change, nature and biodiversity loss, and pollution and

waste had been identified by children as the defining task of the twenty-first century that needed to be collectively and urgently addressed. A child-rights approach was critical to the achievement of the Goals and the pledge to leave no one behind. To that end, children's rights and well-being needed to be placed at the centre of discussions around accelerating progress towards the Goals. Children themselves were demanding transformative change, the protection of their rights, equitable recovery and intergenerational justice. The international community must therefore include them in its deliberations and open up civic space for them. As rights holders under international law, children must be at the heart of solutions to the world's challenges, including at the Sustainable Development Goals Summit in 2023 and the Summit of the Future in 2024. Only through deliberate action, joint commitment, partnerships and follow-up would it be possible to create a world fit for children.

66. **Ms. Al-Thani** (Chair of the Commission for Social Development), introducing the report of the Commission for Social Development on its sixty-first session (E/2023/26), said that the priority theme of the session had been "Creating full and productive employment and decent work for all as a way of overcoming inequalities to accelerate the recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic and the full implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development". The theme of the panel discussion on emerging issues had been "Addressing the social impacts of multi-faceted crisis to accelerate recovery from the lingering effects of the pandemic through the full implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development". Countries had presented the policies and programmes that they had instituted to address the key social and economic challenges and multiple crises currently facing the world and had identified those policies and measures that had proven effective. The promotion of decent work and universal social protection programmes, actions to foster a just transition to greener and more equal societies, the championing of transformative gender policies and the incorporation of a gender perspective in all programmes had been highlighted. In addition, Member States had emphasized the need for strong financing of global public goods and the importance of reforming the international financing architecture so that it could fund actions for sustainable development.

67. The Commission had held a high-level panel discussion and a ministerial forum on the priority theme, a high-level panel discussion on the fourth review and appraisal of the Madrid International Plan of Action on Ageing, a panel discussion on emerging issues, a multi-stakeholder forum and an interactive dialogue

with senior officials of the United Nations system on the priority theme. A total of 26 ministers and 4 vice-ministers had participated in the general discussion. The President of the Council had attended the opening session, where she had stressed that Governments must put people first and support those regions, industries and workers that faced the greatest challenges to ensure a fair and inclusive transition to a green economy.

68. Four draft resolutions had been adopted. In the first, on the future organization and methods of work of the Commission for Social Development, the Economic and Social Council had decided that the priority theme for the sixty-second session of the Commission would be "Fostering social development and social justice through social policies to accelerate progress on the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and to achieve the overarching goal of poverty eradication". The second draft resolution covered the social dimensions of the New Partnership for Africa's Development, the third was on the aforementioned priority theme and the fourth covered the fourth review and appraisal of the Madrid International Plan of Action on Ageing. The Commission had also adopted a draft resolution on policies and programmes involving youth.

Action on recommendations contained in the report of the Commission for Social Development on its sixty-first session (E/2023/26)

69. **The President** drew attention to the draft proposals contained in chapter I, sections A, B and C of the report.

Section A

Draft resolution I: Future organization and methods of work of the Commission for Social Development

Draft resolution II: Social dimensions of the New Partnership for Africa's Development

Draft resolution II: Creating full and productive employment and decent work for all as a way of overcoming inequalities to accelerate the recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic and the full implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development

Draft resolution IV: Fourth review and appraisal of the Madrid International Plan of Action on Ageing, 2002

70. *Draft resolutions I, II, III and IV were adopted.*

Section B

Draft decision I: Report of the Commission for Social Development on its sixty-first session and provisional agenda and documentation for the sixty-second session

71. *Draft decision I was adopted.*

Section C

Draft decision 61/101: Nomination of members of the Board of the United Nations Research Institute for Social Development

72. *Draft decision 61/101 was adopted.*

Agenda item 12: Coordination, programme and other questions

(a) Reports of coordination bodies (E/2023/51)

73. **Ms. Jansen** (Director of the United Nations System Chief Executives Board for Coordination), introducing the annual overview report of the United Nations System Chief Executives Board for Coordination for 2022 (E/2023/51), said that the Board remained a driver of integration and policy coherence in support of Member States. It served as an internal “think tank”, bringing together expertise from across the United Nations system as a whole to provide forward-looking solutions in response to mandates from the governing bodies of its 31 member organizations. It strove to foster systemic transformation and enhance performance through results orientation; better data, analysis, and communications; innovation and digital solutions; strategic foresight; and a work culture that reduced unnecessary bureaucracy and amplified collaboration.

74. In 2022, the world had faced compound crises that had placed extraordinary stresses on the international community and had rolled back development gains, requiring concerted global responses and action at scale. In particular, Board members had reflected on the challenges to global economic recovery and on accelerating efforts to deliver on the Sustainable Development Goals and supporting the vision set out in the report of the Secretary-General entitled “Our Common Agenda”. Moreover, they had underscored that, in the context of multiple crises, the United Nations system would continue to support Member States across mandates, pillars, functions and geography, including in such areas as financing for sustainable development, digitalization, reducing inequalities, and the delivery of COVID-19 vaccines.

75. As part of the efforts towards rescuing the Goals, the Board had explored two tracks proposed in Our

Common Agenda. The first track was the New Agenda for Peace, with members having observed that the United Nations needed to change its perspective on operations related to peace and prevention, including by taking a comprehensive and interdisciplinary approach to peace, development and human rights. They had stressed that prevention could be an enabler and accelerator of the implementation of the 2030 Agenda. The Board had further underscored the importance of bolstering the Organization’s strategic foresight capabilities and investing in national capacities for prevention. With regard to the second track – reclaiming the digital commons – the Board had noted that technological transformation had been affecting the work of the United Nations system across all pillars. Members had seen both enormous potential and risks in digital technologies and had discussed opportunities to leverage them for sustainable development. The Board had agreed on the importance of having the right capacities and architecture to enable and support Member States in effectively using and governing the digital commons, and that the United Nations system should further promote the alignment of the digital commons to accelerate the implementation of the 2030 Agenda.

76. Building on the Board’s discussions in 2021 on identifying measures of progress that complemented GDP, the High-level Committee on Programmes had produced, at the Board’s request, a report entitled “Valuing What Counts: United Nations System-wide Contribution on Progress beyond Gross Domestic Product”. The report supported the implementation of the 2030 Agenda, in particular target 17.19, which aimed, by 2030, to build on existing initiatives to develop measurements of progress on sustainable development that complement GDP, and support statistical capacity-building in developing countries. In addition, the report, which was based on expertise and analysis from across the entire United Nations system and informed by the deliberations of the High-level Committee on Programmes, contained analysis on why the international community needed to go beyond GDP, a proposed framework and recommendations for the United Nations system, Member States and other stakeholders. “Valuing What Counts” formed the substantive basis for the policy brief on “beyond GDP” recently issued by the Secretary-General.

77. As the growth in the capabilities and the adoption of artificial intelligence accelerated, the High-level Committee on Programmes had developed and adopted a set of principles for the ethical use of such intelligence in the United Nations system. Grounded in international law, human rights and ethics, the principles aimed to guide the system’s use of artificial intelligence across

the technology's life cycle, including development, procurement, implementation, monitoring and evaluation.

78. In terms of fostering policy coherence in response to intergovernmental mandates, the Board and the High-level Committee on Programmes had been invited to support the system-wide coordination and follow-up of the implementation of the Doha Programme of Action for the Least Developed Countries. Moreover, the High-level Committee on Programmes had taken decisions to help bolster the United Nations system's support to Member States in the promotion, protection and realization of the rights of Indigenous Peoples, in line with the outcome of the 2014 World Conference on Indigenous Peoples, and to strengthen the system's contribution to the implementation of the New Urban Agenda. Moreover, the High-level Committee on Programmes had launched new thematic workstreams grounded in the objectives of the 2030 Agenda and supportive of Our Common Agenda regarding duties to the future, new global public goods, specifically international data governance, and networked and inclusive governance.

79. The reliability and timely availability of United Nations system data for strengthening the capacity of staff to address complex challenges and for improving working methods had remained a priority throughout 2022. The key reference documents in that regard were the System-wide Road Map for Innovating United Nations Data and Statistics and the Data Strategy of the Secretary-General for Action by Everyone, Everywhere. The High-Level Committee on Management continued its commitment to promoting access to high-quality, timely and reliable data with the highest standards of privacy and security, and supported multiple initiatives in such key areas as data protection and privacy, transparency, standards, data and information security, information management and improved accessibility to documents and information.

80. The Board continued to advance the United Nations system common approach to addressing sexual harassment. In pursuit of its objective of promoting a safe, equal and inclusive working environment, the task force on addressing sexual harassment within the organizations of the United Nations system had embarked on its third phase of work in four ambitious areas: prevention and behavioural science; victim engagement and support; data and results; and enhancing cooperation. Furthermore, the task force advanced its work to institute a victim-centred approach to sexual harassment by assisting in the development of a training module on the rights and dignity of victims. Through its Chair, the task force had also engaged in strategic dialogues with Members States.

Agenda item 11: Implementation and follow-up to major United Nations conferences and summits

(a) Follow-up to the International Conference on Financing for Development (A/78/93-E/2023/90 and E/FFDF/2023/3)

81. **The President** drew attention to the draft proposal contained in chapter I of the report of the Economic and Social Council forum on financing for development follow-up (E/FFDF/2023/3). She took it that the Council wished to transmit the intergovernmentally agreed conclusions and recommendations of the forum on financing for development follow-up to the high-level political forum on sustainable development, convened under the auspices of the Council.

82. *It was so decided.*

Agenda item 19: Social and human rights questions

(e) United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (continued)

83. **Ms. Menikdiwela** (Director, New York Office, Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR)), presenting an oral report on behalf of the High Commissioner, said that, globally, over 100 million people had been forced to flee, the highest number on record. Instability and conflict in such countries as Afghanistan, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Haiti, the Sudan and Ukraine had led to a breakdown of protections systems, which impacted women and girls in particular. Food insecurity, exacerbated by climate change and conflict, especially affected the poorest and the most vulnerable and also led to displacement and spiralling protection challenges. Moreover, the combined effects of the Ukraine war, climate change and the slow recovery from COVID-19 had contributed to severe food insecurity among the displaced.

84. Funding shortfalls had constrained both humanitarian and development programmes. In September 2022, UNHCR had issued the *Underfunded Report* to mobilize funding for operations that received the least. The report analysed the situation in 12 countries and showed that displaced and stateless persons who had previously been self-reliant had had their reserves sapped by the COVID-19 pandemic, which had added to their marginalization and had increased the risk of dropping out of school, being forced into early marriage or suffering gender-based violence. The increase in the global numbers of forcibly displaced and stateless persons had pushed the needs-based budget of UNHCR above \$10 billion for the very first time. In line with its coordination role and as

emphasized in the global compact on refugees, UNHCR assisted host States by facilitating the inter-agency response to refugee crises. In 2022, UNHCR had led the development of seven regional refugee response plans, covering the inter-agency response in 53 countries that hosted refugees. Those response plans had mobilized 1,180 partners to support the protection and assistance of some 26.6 million displaced persons and 9.3 million host community members, with more than \$5 billion having been mobilized against appeals amounting to nearly \$13 billion. Refugee response plans, underpinned by the refugee coordination model, provided a transparent, predictable and inclusive platform to develop comprehensive solutions-driven responses to emergencies and protracted situations.

85. Through the Inter-Agency Standing Committee, UNHCR led or co-led three clusters: protection, emergency shelter, and camp coordination and camp management. Those clusters had been active in 33 countries in 2022 and had allowed UNHCR to help coordinate the response of over 300 partners. Under the Grand Bargain, a new cash coordination model had been adopted in which UNHCR co-led the Global Cash Advisory Group, which sought to ensure the use of standardized protocols, market assessments and cash delivery in humanitarian settings. Together with other United Nations agencies, UNHCR was a member of the steering group that supported the Special Adviser on Solutions to Internal Displacement. In addition, UNHCR led the workstream on protection, contributing to the Secretary-General's Action Agenda on Internal Displacement, and was supporting the Inter-Agency Standing Committee's Independent Review of Humanitarian Response to Internal Displacement.

86. The UNHCR Strategic Directions 2022–2026 reflected the commitment of UNHCR to attaining the Sustainable Development Goals. While it was firmly dedicated to its humanitarian mandate, UNHCR was trying to align its humanitarian programmes with those of development actors and the Sustainable Development Cooperation Frameworks. In 2022, the engagement rate of UNHCR in Cooperation Frameworks had been 100 per cent. Moreover, it had continued to contribute to the cost-sharing agreement in support of the resident coordinator system. The engagement of UNHCR with international financial institutions had resulted in significant allocations to refugee-hosting countries through development funds. For example, \$3.6 billion had been invested in 60 projects in 16 low-income refugee-hosting countries since 2017 under the UNHCR-World Bank Group partnership, and approximately \$755 million had been allocated in grants to secure over \$6.1 billion in concessional loans for

development projects targeting refugees and host communities in five middle-income countries. Collaboration with the International Finance Corporation had helped to mobilize the private sector to ensure financial inclusion and access to labour markets for refugees and host communities. Moreover, UNHCR had framework agreements with regional financial institutions, including the Global Islamic Fund for Refugees, launched with the Islamic Development Bank in 2022 to support displaced persons in member States of the Organisation of Islamic Cooperation.

87. UNHCR partnerships within the United Nations family remained strong; since its June 2022 update, UNHCR had signed new collaboration frameworks with the International Organization for Migration (IOM), UNICEF and the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and had created a more streamlined approach to new emergencies with the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs. Recent examples of such approaches had been the Ukraine and Sudan appeals. Through its cooperation with UNICEF, UNHCR aimed to ensure the inclusion of refugees in national plans, budgets and service delivery systems, with a focus on child protection and education, among others. The new UNHCR global joint initiative with UNDP sought to enhance collaboration, inter alia, in livelihoods, conflict prevention and peacebuilding, and UNHCR worked closely with IOM on mixed movements of migrants and refugees.

88. In mid-2022, together with the International Council of Voluntary Agencies, UNHCR had co-led global non-governmental organization consultations on localization and climate action, in which, for the first time ever, local actors had outnumbered international participants. A targeted, simplified grant agreement had been rolled out, which permitted direct funding to refugee-led organizations for the first time. In addition, UNHCR had launched the Refugee-led Innovation Fund, a holistic support mechanism that provided financial resources, mentoring and technical expertise to refugee-led organizations, and had leveraged new and existing partnerships in sport so as to reach a wider audience, combat xenophobia and racism and raise awareness about the positive contribution that refugees made to societies. In that context, UNHCR had adopted its first sports strategy, called "More than a game", to enable refugees to access sport and compete on par with others, and had signed new partnerships with umbrella organizations, including the Union of European Football Associations, the Olympic Refugee Foundation and the Special Olympics. Moreover, through partnerships with such football clubs as FC Barcelona and Nottingham

Forest FC, UNHCR had launched sports projects in Colombia, Libya, Malaysia, Uganda and Türkiye.

89. Lastly, UNHCR, the Development Coordination Office and the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs were co-leading the process of developing the United Nations Common Pledge 2.0, which would reflect measurable commitments by 20 United Nations entities and some 30 United Nations country teams to support refugee-hosting countries at the second Global Refugee Forum, to be held in December 2023. A civil society pledge on localization and a pledge on sports championed by a Member State were foreseen, and multi-stakeholder pledges on specific themes, such as education, were proposed. UNHCR was relying on the six co-conveners, namely, Colombia, France, Jordan, the Niger, Japan and Uganda, to ensure a successful event.

(h) Comprehensive implementation of the Durban Declaration and Programme of Action

90. **The President** said that the General Assembly, in its resolution [62/220](#), had decided that the Assembly, the Economic and Social Council and the Human Rights Council would constitute a three-tiered intergovernmental process for the comprehensive implementation of and follow-up to the Durban Declaration and Programme of Action. She informed the Council that no advance documentation had been submitted under agenda item 19 (h) and that no draft proposal was before the Council.

Agenda item 4: Elections, nominations, confirmations and appointments (continued)

91. **The President**, drawing attention to the list of candidates for election to a number of subsidiary bodies, dated 6 June 2023, which had been circulated to the delegations, said that the elections were being held in accordance with the Council's relevant rules of procedure on elections and voting, namely, rules 63, 68, 69 and 70.

Commission on Population and Development

92. **The President** said that Burundi had been endorsed by the Group of African States to fill an outstanding vacancy on the Commission on Population and Development. She took it that the Council wished to elect Burundi, by acclamation, to the Commission on Population and Development for a four-year term beginning at the first meeting of the Commission's fifty-eighth session in 2024 and expiring at the close of the Commission's sixty-first session in 2028.

93. *It was so decided.*

94. *Burundi was elected a member of the Commission on Population and Development by acclamation.*

Commission on the Status of Women

95. **The President** said that Rwanda had been endorsed by the Group of African States to fill an outstanding vacancy on the Commission on the Status of Women. She took it that the Council wished to elect Rwanda, by acclamation, to the Commission on the Status of Women for a four-year term beginning at the first meeting of the Commission's sixty-ninth session in 2024 and expiring at the close of the Commission's seventy-second session in 2028.

96. *It was so decided.*

97. *Rwanda was elected a member of the Commission on the Status of Women by acclamation.*

Commission on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice

98. **The President** said that Egypt and Morocco had been endorsed by the Group of African States to fill outstanding vacancies on the Committee on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice. She took it that the Council wished to elect Egypt and Morocco, by acclamation, to the Commission on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice for a three-year term beginning on 1 January 2024.

99. *It was so decided.*

100. *Egypt and Morocco were elected members of the Commission on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice by acclamation.*

Committee for Programme and Coordination

101. **The President** said that Poland had submitted its candidature to fill an outstanding vacancy on the Committee for Programme and Coordination from the Eastern European States. She took it that the Council wished to nominate Poland, by acclamation, for election by the General Assembly to the Committee for Programme and Coordination for a three-year term beginning on 1 January 2024.

102. *It was so decided.*

103. *Poland was nominated for election by the General Assembly to the Committee for Programme and Coordination by acclamation.*

*Executive Board of the United Nations Development
Programme/United Nations Population Fund/
United Nations Office for Project Services*

104. **The President** said that Bangladesh had submitted its candidature to fill an outstanding vacancy on the Executive Board of the United Nations Development Programme/United Nations Population Fund/United Nations Office for Project Services from the Asia-Pacific States. She took it that the Council wished to elect Bangladesh, by acclamation, to the Executive Board for a three-year term beginning on 1 January 2024.

105. *It was so decided.*

106. *Bangladesh was elected a member of the Executive Board of the United Nations Development Programme/United Nations Population Fund/United Nations Office for Project Services by acclamation.*

*Programme Coordinating Board of the Joint
United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS (UNAIDS)*

107. **The President** said that Switzerland had resigned from the Programme Coordinating Board of the Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS with effect from 6 June 2023 and that Sweden had been endorsed by the Group of Western European and Other States to assume the resigned seat. She took it that the Council wished to elect Sweden, by acclamation, to complete the term of Switzerland, beginning on 7 June 2023 and expiring on 31 December 2023.

108. *It was so decided.*

109. *Sweden was elected a member of the Programme Coordinating Board of the Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS (UNAIDS) by acclamation.*

The meeting rose at 5 p.m.