



General Assembly

Sixty-eighth session

50th plenary meeting
Monday, 11 November 2013, 10 a.m.
New York

Official Records

President: Mr. Ashe (Antigua and Barbuda)

The meeting was called to order at 10 a.m.

Typhoon in the Philippines

The President: Before proceeding to the items on the agenda, I would like, on behalf of the General Assembly, to extend our deepest sympathy and heartfelt condolences to the Government and the people of the Philippines for the tragic loss of life and damage that have resulted from the recent typhoon. Today's solemn gathering reiterates the outpouring of condolences and solidarity of the international community with the Philippines in its hour of grief.

I now invite representatives to stand and observe a minute of silence in tribute to the memory of those who lost their lives.

The members of the General Assembly observed a minute of silence.

Agenda items 9 and 14 (continued)

Report of the Economic and Social Council

Report of the Economic and Social Council (A/68/3)

Note by the Secretary-General (A/68/229)

Integrated and coordinated implementation of and follow-up to the outcomes of the major United Nations conferences and summits in the economic, social and related fields

Report of the Secretary-General (A/67/736)

The President: I recall that, pursuant to resolution 58/316, of 1 July 2004, the Assembly, on the

recommendation of the General Committee, decided at its 1st plenary meeting, on 18 September 2013, to consider agenda item 9 in its entirety in plenary, on the understanding that the administrative, programme and budgetary aspects should be dealt with by the Fifth Committee. At the same meeting, the Assembly took note of the clarification that, in implementing resolution 58/316 to consider agenda item 9 in its entirety in plenary, the relevant parts of Chapter I of the report that are deal with agenda items already allocated to the Main Committees will be considered by the Committee concerned for final action by the General Assembly.

In connection with agenda item 14, members will recall that, pursuant to General Assembly resolution 57/270 B, the Assembly decided to consider, under the item, the chapters of the annual report of the Economic and Social Council relevant to the integrated and coordinated implementation of and follow-up to the outcomes of the major United Nations conferences and summits, including through the participation in its discussions of the President of the Council.

Under agenda item 9, the Assembly has before it the report of the Economic and Social Council circulated in document A/68/3. Under the same item, the Assembly also has before it a note by the Secretary-General, circulated in document A/68/229, transmitting the report of the Executive Director of the United Nations Population Fund on the United Nations Population Award. Under agenda item 14, the Assembly has before it a report by the Secretary-General circulated in document A/67/736.

Permit me now to make a brief statement.

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It is my pleasure to once again welcome the President of the Economic and Social Council to introduce the 2013 report of the Economic and Social Council, which will serve as a complement to last week's informal briefing on the strengthening of that body. During that briefing, many delegations shared their observations and perspectives, and my team and I have taken due note. In the sixty-eighth session, we will seek to reinforce cooperation and coordination between the presidencies of the General Assembly and the Economic and Social Council in accordance with resolution 68/1 on the strengthening of the Economic and Social Council and resolution 67/290 on the format and organizational arrangements of the High-level Political Forum.

The report that will be introduced today closes an important cycle in the work of the Council, which will undergo significant changes next year as a result of the aforementioned resolution 68/1. During the 2013 session, the Council realized significant accomplishments through its high-level coordination, operational, humanitarian and general segments, as well as through the work and outcomes of its subsidiary bodies.

The 2013 Economic and Social Council report provides information on a wide number of topics that either call for action by the General Assembly or are simply brought to its attention. I invite all Member States, United Nations system organizations and observers to carefully analyse, take stock of and subsequently implement those outcomes. Specifically, I would like to highlight the results of the Council's 2013 substantive session, which was held in Geneva last July. That session included a high-level segment focused on how science, technology, innovation and culture can contribute to achieving the Millennium Development Goals and sustainable development in general.

Two new noteworthy elements from that ministerial segment were the national voluntary presentations and the thematic debate on the Millennium Development Goals and the post-2015 development agenda. Those informative discussions and exchanges provided insights into the preparations for and discussions during the General Assembly's special event to follow up on efforts made towards achieving the Millennium Development Goals, which was held this past September.

It is worth underscoring three key messages drawn from the 2013 session and the Economic and Social

Council's work in reviewing the implementation of the Millennium Development Goals. They are, first, that the "silo" approach in implementing the environment and development agendas needs to be addressed. That idea was fully incorporated into the proceedings of the inaugural meeting of the High-level Political Forum and in the outcome document of the special event. Secondly, the global partnership for development must be renewed in order to support the post-2015 development agenda, and that requires effective accountability and monitoring at all levels. Thirdly, an integrated development agenda requires coherent and responsive institutions at all levels. Ensuring integrated and coordinated follow-up and review of the implementation of the outcomes from the major United Nations conferences in the economic, social, environmental and related fields will be a central challenge for the success of the post-2015 development agenda.

As the Assembly is aware, the theme for the forthcoming session of the Economic and Social Council will focus on the comprehensive assessment of the Millennium Development Goals. That theme, together with the 2014 meeting of the High-level Political Forum, will provide an excellent opportunity for all relevant stakeholders to engage in collectively forging the post-2015 development agenda. Resolution 68/1, which calls for the most far-reaching reform of the Council since 1991, will strengthen the Economic and Social Council's contributions to the new agenda, and the General Assembly stands ready to support its speedy and full implementation.

I look forward to continued collaboration between the Assembly and the Council throughout the current session, and my hope and expectation is that by enhancing our work together we will produce more meaningful outcomes.

I now give the floor to the President of the Economic and Social Council, His Excellency Mr. Néstor Osorio, to introduce the report of the Economic and Social Council.

Mr. Osorio (Colombia), President of the Economic and Social Council (*spoke in Spanish*): Allow me at the outset to align myself with the President's words and the General Assembly's sentiments concerning the terrible tragedy that has struck the Philippines in recent days, with immense human and physical damage, and to express on my own behalf and of that of the Economic and Social Council our most heartfelt condolences.

It is an honour and a pleasure for me to address the General Assembly to introduce the report of the Economic and Social Council for 2013 (A/68/3).

The year 2013 has been an important one for the Economic and Social Council. The General Assembly's consideration of resolution 61/16, on strengthening the Economic and Social Council, established a framework for the Council's work over the year. The special ministerial meeting of the Economic and Social Council, held in September 2012, provided substantive guidance to that strategic redesign. Those efforts culminated in the adoption of resolution 68/1, which has led to the most sweeping reform of the Council since 1991. The implementation of that resolution's provisions is a top priority for the Council, which continues to strive to further strengthen the Council and its functioning.

In this context, in 2013, the Council addressed several ways to improve its contribution to development. In particular, the Council focused on how it conceptualizes its role and on its contribution to the post-2015 framework, including its possible role in implementation monitoring and supervision. The Council also focused on how to better fulfil its functions in service to its purpose by improving its working methods and supervision of subsidiary bodies. It also worked to improve its interaction with the Peacebuilding Commission and the Second and Third Committees of the General Assembly.

The Council will continue to focus on substantive issues within the framework of sustainable development, as was the case with the annual ministerial review of science, technology and innovation, the potential of culture, productive capacity, employment and decent work. The Council will also continue to deepen its dialogue on international cooperation to promote greater accountability.

I would now like to briefly highlight the Council's main advances and overall achievements.

The 2013 high-level segment of the Council, held in July in Geneva, enjoyed significant participation. The annual ministerial review brought together a wide range of stakeholders and helped to expand the United Nations development programme. The review focused on science, technology and innovation, and the potential of culture, for promoting sustainable development and achieving the Millennium Development Goals. I wish to commend in particular the Governments of France, Nigeria, Peru and Viet Nam for their invaluable

voluntary national presentations. They provided valuable information on their success factors and lessons learned. The voluntary national presentations have become a vital platform for the exchange of best practices and lessons learned at the national level.

I note that the ministerial declaration that was to be the outcome of the work of the high-level segment in July was subject to a sensible and detailed analysis and negotiating process, in which conclusions and recommendations of great significance were reached. However, I must inform the Assembly that the negotiations have not yet been concluded, and member States have asked me for a few additional days to attempt to smooth over the differences that persist on certain aspects of the ministerial declaration. I ask for the Assembly's indulgence and patience, and I hope that within two or three weeks the President of the Assembly will grant me a brief pause in the Assembly's work to announce the final developments on this issue, which I hope will be positive.

During the coordination segment, we were reminded that international agreements should be subject to effective monitoring in order to assess their implementation in terms of promoting sustainable development. As part of these efforts, we focused on monitoring last year's ministerial declaration on productive capacity, employment and decent work, and on financing for development.

This year's operational activities segment gave Member States the opportunity to engage in a dialogue about the changing nature of the commitments to promote development and pending changes in the way that the activities of the United Nations system are carried out. The United Nations must help in the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals and in the elaboration of a post-2015 development framework.

Although in general participants were encouraged by the progress made in the implementation of resolution 67/226, on the quadrennial comprehensive policy review of 2012, Member States expressed their wish that the United Nations system step up measures in several areas, including the following: first, the strengthening of national institutions and capacities; secondly, the simplification and harmonization of business practices and the publication of reports; thirdly, the full implementation of the "Delivering as one" initiative; fourthly, reducing unnecessary competition

for funds at the national level; and fifthly, reviewing the role of United Nations resident coordinators.

In the 2013 humanitarian affairs segment, we examined how the United Nations, Governments, the private sector, affected communities and other new agents such as the volunteer community, can, acting collectively, adapt and better respond to the changing humanitarian environment. That helped to promote dialogue for the World Humanitarian Summit to be held in 2015.

The general segment this year allowed us to better appreciate various important issues, such as the implementation of the 10-year framework of programmes on sustainable consumption and production patterns, provided for at the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development, which reaffirmed the Council's role in issues related to sustainable development.

Regarding the link between peace and security, the Council considered the experience gained from the transition of some African countries that had emerged from conflict, based on the lessons learned in various cases, including that of South Sudan. Haiti continued to occupy a central place in our activities. We examined the tangible progress and the obstacles that still exist there and extended the mandate of the Ad Hoc Advisory Group on Haiti. In so doing, the Council identified the necessary scope for deepening its relationship with the Peacebuilding Commission, and we will soon hold a joint meeting to review those agenda items.

During the thematic debate of the Council, and as a contribution of the Council to the special event to follow up on efforts made towards achieving the Millennium Development Goals and the development agenda post-2015, which was organized by the President of the General Assembly in September, the general opinion was that this agenda should be based on the Millennium Development Goals and focused on sustainable development. That effort would need to consist in part in promoting the integration between environmental and socioeconomic development issues instead of viewing them as separate categories.

The Council also stressed that the global partnership for development should be renewed to support the new development agenda and needs to be accompanied by sufficient financial support. It sent a clear message on the need for effective accountability and an effective monitoring framework at all levels in order to ensure that

the post-2015 agenda will lead to tangible and concrete results. To support the new post-2015 development agenda effectively, the United Nations as a whole needs to ensure that it is fit to accomplish the work.

The United Nations will need to continue to strengthen its role in improving global dialogue and policymaking. It will be necessary to streamline the work of the United Nations system, both vertically and horizontally, especially in setting new global norms and standards. The Organization will need to deepen its operational oversight role and the linkages between the normative and operational aspects of development.

I believe that with the reform adopted by the Assembly, the Council is prepared to assume its responsibilities to fulfil those roles. The Council also welcomes the decision to convene the High-level Political Forum on Sustainable Development, recently established under the auspices of the Economic and Social Council, to advance sustainable development and to deepen the Council's role as a platform for sustainable development and in integrating its three dimensions. With the new intergovernmental structure, the General Assembly, the Economic and Social Council, and the High-level Political Forum are well positioned to contribute to monitoring and global accountability in the post-2015 era.

The implementation of the provisions of the recently adopted resolution 68/1 will be a priority for the Economic and Social Council as it continues to address progress towards the the Millennium Development Goals, to shape the post-2015 agenda, and to play its fundamental role in addressing the problems and concerns of countries in special situations. The Council remains fully committed to that work.

To conclude, allow me to affirm that our collective relevance and ability to guide the international community and States on a path to development that is more balanced and more inclusive is a historic undertaking that requires us to act consistently and in coordination at the multilateral level. We have a historic opportunity of immense dimensions, which we must assume by agreeing policies that will lead to the sustainable development that we advocate so that our planet will be better preserved and humankind can live in better conditions.

The President: I thank the President of the Economic and Social Council for his briefing.

Mr. Thomson (Fiji): On behalf of the Group of 77 and China, I wish to thank the Secretary-General for the report contained in document A/67/736 and to welcome the report of the Economic and Social Council for 2013, contained in document A/68/3. At the outset, the Group would like to recognize the dynamic leadership of the President of the Council, Ambassador Néstor Osorio, and his Bureau in guiding the work of the Council in 2013. Our gratitude also goes to the Secretariat staff for their hard work, as well as to all the facilitators of draft resolutions for their tireless efforts.

We would also like to acknowledge the various meetings held under the auspices of the Council, including the special high-level meeting of the Economic and Social Council with the Bretton Woods institutions, the World Trade Organization and the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development; the special meeting on external debt sustainability and development; and the special meeting on international cooperation in tax matters. Those meetings have provided us with the opportunity to review and strengthen the relationship between the Council and other stakeholders through constructive debates on important global development issues.

While the Group welcomes the report of the President of Economic and Social Council, we note with concern that work is still pending on the Council's substantive session. We regret that, three and half months after its July session, we are still not in a position to adopt the coordination segment resolution or the 2012 ministerial declaration. The Group considers the ministerial declaration to be a significant document, especially in the light of the importance of science, technology, innovation and culture as both enablers and drivers for promoting sustainable development and achieving the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). We urge the President of the Economic and Social Council to continue his leadership to guide members towards achieving a consensual outcome as soon as possible.

With reference to the report of the Secretary-General on the implementation of resolution 61/16, on the strengthening of the Economic and Social Council, the Group of 77 and China concurs with its recommendation that the Council needs to transform itself into an issues-oriented, knowledge-based, stakeholder-friendly intergovernmental body. We believe that the Council should play a pivotal role in the United Nations, especially in view of the need to accelerate the achievement of the MDGs and to

elaborate the development goals of the post-2015 development agenda.

The Group holds the view that the interrelated challenges of poverty eradication and sustainable development are at the heart of the Council's mandate. The strengthening of the Economic and Social Council should be aimed at making the Council a more relevant and responsive multilateral intergovernmental body to follow up on the outcomes of all United Nations conferences, including the political commitments renewed at the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development, with increased international cooperation.

In that regard, the Group of 77 urges the Council, in accordance with resolution 61/16, to strengthen its relations with other intergovernmental bodies, especially the newly established High-level Political Forum on Sustainable Development, the regional commissions, the Bretton Woods institutions, the subsidiary bodies of the Economic and Social Council, and other relevant stakeholders. Such strengthening should bring greater coherence to the work of the Council system, making it an effective and relevant United Nations body that not only follows up on the agreed development goals, but also responds to new and emerging global challenges.

Mr. Antony (India): It is my distinct honour to make a statement in today's important joint debate. The United Nations embodies humankind's faith in multilateralism to solve global problems. Over the decades, it has rendered great service to humankind.

India aligns itself with the statement made by the representative of Fiji on behalf of the Group of 77 and China.

India attaches great importance to the work of the Economic and Social Council. The Council has an acknowledged role as a principal body for coordination, policy review, policy dialogue and recommendations on issues of economic and social development.

Global cooperation on sustainable development is today at an important crossroads. The work on accelerating the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), negotiating a set of sustainable development goals, formulating a strategy for financing sustainable development and arriving at a post-2015 development agenda will be the key priorities of the international community over the next two years. The Economic and Social Council has an important role to play in that endeavour.

The vision of a strengthened Economic and Social Council has been realized through resolution 68/1, adopted in September this year. We deeply appreciate the efforts of the Permanent Representatives of Guyana and Belgium for leading the inclusive process of consultations that led to the resolution's adoption. We believe that the strengthened structure of the Economic and Social Council will assist it in better discharging its role as a principal body for coordination, policy review and dialogue and recommendations on issues of economic and social development.

The High-level Political Forum on Sustainable Development that we have created must be seen as a forum for action-oriented collaboration. The Forum should address sustainable development challenges from the perspective of poverty eradication as its overarching objective. The Council and the Forum will together play a key role in the articulation of global priorities in the post-2015 period. India believes that poverty eradication must be pursued with renewed vigour and determination. Other human development imperatives enshrined in the MDGs remain equally important and must be carried forward.

Only economic growth can ensure the eradication of poverty. To achieve that, we must strengthen the partnership between developed and developing countries and make it more meaningful and genuine. The post-2015 development agenda must remain an agenda for development. Its focal point must be a more equitable distribution of resources and wealth among the nations and within them. It must also promote an international system conducive to development.

India has followed a path of inclusive growth, with the aim of making all sections of society stakeholders in the development of the country. Robust economic growth over the past decade, supported by proactive and targeted interventions by the Government, has enabled us to move millions of our people out of poverty.

We have taken several unique trailblazing initiatives. The recently enacted Food Security Act will ensure food security for the Indian people. A law that guarantees at least a hundred days of work for the country's rural poor has also been enacted. The Right to Education Act ensures universal access to quality education for our people. The Right to Information Act has empowered people by enhancing openness and transparency in governance. We have empowered women by reserving seats for them in local bodies. We have strengthened the law dealing with offences

against women in order to ensure greater safety and security for them. A Government of India initiative to provide unique identification (ID) to all Indian citizens is perhaps the world's largest ID scheme. More than 520 million Indians have already been enrolled. Sustainable development is one of the primary goals of our twelfth five-year plan. We have been fortunate to have leaders who have fully recognized the need for harmony with nature. In fact, our late Prime Minister, Mrs. Indira Gandhi, was the only head of Government to attend the United Nations Conference on the Human Environment in Stockholm in 1972.

India's development experience has shown that human development indicators can be improved even with low per capita incomes. Kerala, my state of origin, has managed to reduce infant mortality rates to levels not achieved by many rich countries. We have created a programme called the Zero Landless Project, through which all families in Kerala state are provided with land on which they can build a house of their own. Kerala has also undertaken pioneering initiatives in public health, such as by producing generic medicines and cutting-edge treatments and surgery available at affordable rates. The mass contact programme of the state government has been recognized by the United Nations.

India is fully committed to playing a constructive role in fashioning an ambitious, equitable and comprehensive post-2015 development agenda. We believe that with our collaborative efforts and collective will, we can create a better world for ourselves and future generations. In that quest, we must take inspiration from the words of the "Father of the Indian Nation", Mahatma Gandhi, who said:

"Whenever you are in doubt ... recall the face of the poorest and weakest person you may have seen and ask yourself if the step you contemplate is going to be of any use to her. Will she gain anything by it? Will it restore her to control over her own life and destiny? ... Then you will find your doubts ... melting away".

Mr. Yaroshevich (Belarus) (*spoke in Russian*): The delegation of the Republic of Belarus welcomes the results of the negotiations on strengthening the Economic and Social Council, which led to the adoption of resolution 68/1.

The Economic and Social Council, under whose auspices meetings of the High-level Political Forum on

Sustainable Development will be held each year, should be the main forum for reviewing the economic, social and environmental aspects of development issues. Both the Council and the Forum are already being called upon to systematize various processes in the socioeconomic area and give them centripetal force. That is particularly relevant in the short period that remains before the key deadline, namely, the approval of a new post-2015 global agenda for sustainable development.

The outcomes of that process will enable us once again to look at the topic of strengthening global economic management. In that regard, we would like to see more active interaction between the Economic and Social Council, the Group of 20 and the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development, as they are among the key international institutions in the economic sphere. In addition, we need, in our view, to continue thinking about implementing in practice the oft-repeated proposal of establishing a body on financing for development as a subsidiary body of the Economic and Social Council.

We also support continuing the practice of holding high-level meetings of the Economic and Social Council on the most relevant issues of the world economy and finance, in which the leaders of the Bretton Woods institutions, the World Trade Organization, the International Labour Organization, the United Nations Industrial Development Organization and others would participate. We also urge that those meetings seek to develop practical steps aimed at ensuring the sustainability of the world economy as a whole and national economies in particular.

Another area that the Council and the High-level Political Forum could focus on extensively is to monitoring of the implementation of commitments in the area of financing for development. We propose that the modalities for that aspect of the Forum's work should be determined at the Forum session to be convened under the auspices of the Economic and Social Council.

Belarus believes that the Economic and Social Council can and should become a structure that is able to develop concrete steps to implement the many declarations adopted on various topics in the social, economic and environmental spheres. In that regard, we commend the exchange of views that took place in the margins of the substantive session of the Economic and Social Council in 2013 on issues of cooperation with middle-income level countries; without their participation we cannot begin talking about the success

of the international efforts on the global transition to sustainable development.

At the 2013 substantive session of the Economic and Social Council, it became clear that it would not be possible to adopt the ministerial declaration by consensus, and we think that it is unacceptable that individual States, acting out of sheer political ambition, can block the results of a negotiating process. We believe that blocking a declaration, which is a type of road map for the economic dimension of the United Nations, should be viewed as an action that impedes the full implementation of the United Nations mandate.

A priority task of the Council should, we believe, remain — in future as well — the implementation of mutually beneficial cooperation between the United Nations and international financial and trade institutions, the private sector and non-governmental organizations for the purposes of ensuring the effective implementation of the international agenda for development. Belarus is prepared to engage in constructive cooperation with all partners in the interests of a further practical strengthening of the Economic and Social Council so as to bring it in line with its true role and the functions and to coordinate socioeconomic activity, which is part of its mandate as set by the international community. In addition to improvements in the forms and working methods of the Economic and Social Council, we also expect smoother and more accurate work from the Secretariat. A decision to hold the substantive session of the Council in one place would contribute to the organization of its work at a stable, high level.

Mr. Maksimych (Russian Federation) (*spoke in Russian*): I would first like to thank the President of the Economic and Social Council for his introduction of the Council's report (A/68/3). We would also like to express our gratitude to the Secretariat for its support of the Council's work in the current year.

The Russian delegation greatly appreciates the intensive dialogue on multilateral cooperation in the areas of science, technology, innovation and culture that took place within the framework of the high-level segment of the substantive session of the Economic and Social Council. The annual ministerial review of progress towards achieving the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) helped to strengthen multilateral cooperation in those areas and made a significant contribution to the post-2015 global social and economic agenda. Most importantly, the members

of the Economic and Social Council called unanimously for agreement on a single programme of action based on the concept of sustainable development with a limited set of goals, targets and indicators.

Discussions in the framework of the Economic and Social Council emphasized convincingly that building scientific, technological and cultural potential should be considered a priority and a key prerequisite for overcoming the legacy of the global financial and economic crisis and for implementing international development goals as quickly as possible. We believe that the Council has succeeded in creating a good foundation for initiating multilateral scientific, technological and cultural cooperation and in establishing the right guidelines for further efforts, at every level, to encourage the effective use of science, technology, innovation and culture in achieving the MDGs. We look forward to seeing a speedy conclusion to the drafting of a ministerial declaration and its adoption during the resumed substantive session in December. We support the efforts of the President of the Economic and Social Council to achieve consensus on the remaining unresolved issue.

The annual ministerial reviews within the Economic and Social Council have demonstrated the Council's unique potential for effective monitoring and control of the comprehensive and coordinated implementation of the decisions of the major United Nations socioeconomic forums. It will therefore be essential to set up the work of the High-level Political Forum on Sustainable Development, which as of 2016 will replace the ministerial reviews, by taking into account the successes of the annual ministerial review experience, which include the open nature of discussions, a clear thematic focus and reliance on the expertise of relevant United Nations entities, academia, non-governmental organizations and the private sector.

The Economic and Social Council has made a major contribution to achieving the policy orientations outlined in General Assembly resolution 67/226, on the quadrennial comprehensive policy review of United Nations operational activities. We are convinced that improving operational efficiency should remain a priority for the Council, which is mandated to monitor progress in implementing the relevant Assembly decisions. In that context, ensuring that the analytical reporting of the agencies concerned is of the appropriate quality is extremely important, and we urge that particular attention be paid to the issue.

In 2013, the Economic and Social Council solidified its key role in the intergovernmental financing-for-development follow-up process to the outcome of the International Conference on Financing for Development. We welcome the results of the special high-level meeting of the Council with the Bretton Woods institutions, the World Trade Organization and the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development. We particularly value the efforts of the President and the Bureau of the Council to establish working relationships with the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank. We consider it one of the Council's primary strategic objectives to build mutually beneficial cooperation between the United Nations and the international financial and trade institutions, the private sector and non-governmental organizations in the interests of effectively realizing the international development agenda.

The Economic and Social Council also remains an important forum for the discussion of current problems of international cooperation in the area of health care, including combating non-communicable diseases. On Russia's initiative, the Council adopted resolution 2013/12, on forming a United Nations Interagency Task force on the Prevention and Control of Non-communicable Diseases, which brings the work of the United Nations system in that area to a qualitatively new level and makes an important contribution to implementing the General Assembly's Political Declaration on the Prevention and Control of Non-communicable Diseases (resolution 66/2) and the related Global Action Plan. We are grateful to all the delegations that supported the draft resolution, particularly in the capacity of co-sponsors.

Russia has consistently advocated for strengthening the coordinating role of the Economic and Social Council in the United Nations development system. The Council remains a key United Nations forum for developing collective approaches to solving urgent social and economic problems. We participated actively in the agreement on General Assembly resolutions 67/290 and 68/1, which defined new parameters for the Council's work, taking into account the tasks outlined in the outcome document of the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development (resolution 66/288, annex) on the balanced integration of the economic, social and environmental pillars of sustainable development. We are awaiting substantive proposals from the Council's Bureau and the United Nations Secretariat on the organization of the Council's work in the new format.

We urge that priority be given to ensuring the uninterrupted functioning of the Economic and Social Council's subsidiary bodies, particularly during the so-called transitional period. We also presume that, in preparing their proposals, the Bureau and the Secretariat will take full account of resolution 67/290, which clearly defines the modalities of the High-level Political Forum on Sustainable Development under the auspices of the Economic and Social Council. We affirm the understanding reached during the consultations that the Forum will meet within the framework of the substantive session of the Council for eight consecutive days, including three days at the ministerial level. We also believe that it is exceedingly important to avoid competition between the annual ministerial review and the High-level Political Forum during the transitional period. The outcome of the high-level segment of the Council's substantive session should be expressed in a single ministerial declaration.

We note that changes will soon have to be made in the Economic and Social Council's rules of procedure in accordance with the provisions of resolution 68/1. We also consider it important to continue to work on optimizing the Council's agenda and its modalities of working with non-governmental organizations and the private sector while maintaining the Council's inter-State nature. In that regard, we would like to emphasize that decisions on those and other issues are the exclusive prerogative of Member States.

The Russian delegation has an interest in ensuring the efficient functioning of the Economic and Social Council, which is mandated to play an important role in coordinating and implementing the new priorities of the post-2015 social and economic agenda. We believe that the Council should take its rightful place in creating the emerging global architecture for international development cooperation, and we are ready to contribute in every possible way to a constructive dialogue with all our partners.

Mr. Niyazaliev (Kyrgyzstan) (*spoke in Russian*): I would like to thank the President of the Economic and Social Council for his thorough introduction of the report on the work of the Council for the preceding period (A/68/3). My delegation welcomes the report and greatly appreciates the skilful leadership of the Council by Mr. Néstor Osorio, the Ambassador of Colombia. I would also like to thank the members of the Bureau of the Council — the Ambassadors of Austria, Albania,

Pakistan and the Sudan — and the Secretariat for their hard and fruitful work.

In 2013, the Republic of Kyrgyzstan participated in the activities of the Economic and Social Council as a full member for the first time. My country's decision to stand for election to the Council was the result of a desire to take part in multilateral efforts to find ways to achieve sustainable development while taking into account the specifics of our socioeconomic makeup, the potential of our natural resources, and our geographic features. We also considered it essential to consolidate the efforts of all countries aimed at developing concrete recommendations to solve problems of socioeconomic development on the basis of an objective and fair consideration of their interests and needs.

The Kyrgyz Republic considers the Economic and Social Council to be an important platform for multilateral political dialogue that enables its participants to present their national achievements, exchange valuable experiences, discuss existing and emerging issues and jointly develop ideas for the global development agenda. In that regard, we welcome the results of the work of the Economic and Social Council in 2013.

We note the Council's many important and innovative endeavours aimed at coordinating United Nations activities in the economic, social, environmental and other related areas, and we welcome the holding of the special joint meeting of the Council and the Second Committee of the General Assembly at its sixty-seventh session, which allowed us to engage in wide-ranging discussions on the issues of food security and nutrition. The discussion at the special high-level meeting of the Council with the Bretton Woods institutions, the World Trade Organization and the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development was also fruitful for reviewing the current situation and the outlook for the future. The First Deputy Prime Minister of the Kyrgyz Republic spoke at that high-level meeting on the global economic situation.

The debt-burden problem is one of the main reasons why many developing countries will be unable to achieve the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) on schedule. We therefore support the idea of holding a special meeting on external debt sustainability and development. We also found fruitful the discussion of coordination, operational activities and humanitarian issues at the 2013 substantive session of the Economic and Social Council in Geneva.

The Kyrgyz Republic welcomes the Assembly's adoption on 20 September of resolution 68/1, aimed at strengthening the role and effectiveness of the Economic and Social Council. The adoption of that resolution was the result of strenuous joint efforts on the part of delegations, under the able leadership of the representatives of Belgium and Guyana as co-facilitators of the review of the implementation of resolution 61/16 on the strengthening of the Economic and Social Council. We hope that resolution 68/1 will increase the effectiveness, focus and coherence of the work of the Economic and Social Council, the principal organ responsible for coordination, policy review and dialogue on issues of economic and social development, as well as for the achievement of the international development goals. We are confident that the Council will be able to ensure a coordinated follow-up to the major international conferences and high-level meetings and to facilitate a balanced integration of all three components of sustainable development.

In that connection, we welcome the adoption of resolution 67/290, entitled "Format and organizational aspects of the high-level political forum on sustainable development". It is an additional contribution to efforts to strengthen the role of the Economic and Social Council as one of the main tools for the effective implementation of the decisions of the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development. We hope that the strengthened Council will be an important mechanism in implementing the post-2015 development agenda and will continue to serve as an important platform for multilateral political dialogue on global issues of social and economic development.

Allow me to emphasize the crucial importance of strengthening the coordination and interaction between the General Assembly and the Economic and Social Council. We need to undertake joint efforts to ensure that the efforts of those two main United Nations organs are mutually beneficial and reinforcing and avoid duplication. That will increase the effectiveness of the United Nations in ensuring a more secure, equitable and prosperous future.

The Kyrgyz Republic supports the thematic approach adopted by the Economic and Social Council in its work. However, the themes chosen must be cross-cutting and appropriately reflected in the work of the subsidiary bodies of the Council. In accordance with resolution 68/1, we are anxiously awaiting the proposals of the President of the Economic and Social Council

on the theme for the year, which should be issued in consultation with the subsidiary bodies and Member States.

We believe that the annual theme of the Economic and Social Council should reflect the ongoing process of defining the post-2015 sustainable development goals. We are ready to actively participate in those efforts. We are carrying out national consultations on the priority issues of the development agenda: the eradication of poverty, access to education and health care, ensuring a sustainable economy and employment, the development of agriculture, food security, energy, governance, peace and stability.

We also believe that particular attention must be paid to the specific needs of States that have a special geographical situation, especially those which are the most economically vulnerable, such as developing countries, landlocked developing countries, small island developing countries and mountainous countries. There are a few landlocked mountainous countries, which have specific developmental needs, including transport infrastructure, energy vulnerability, issues of climate change and the melting of glaciers. We believe that those specific needs should be taken into account in the work of Economic and Social Council.

In conclusion, allow me to emphasize that the Kyrgyz Republic attaches great importance to the activities of the Economic and Social Council and is determined to ensure the implementation of its resolutions, as well as the decisions of its subordinate bodies, with a view to strengthening coordination and cooperation aimed at achieving development goals.

Mr. Haniff (Malaysia): At the outset, I wish to convey my condolences to the Government of the Philippines over the tragic event brought on by Typhoon Haiyan.

I wish to thank you, Mr. President, for holding this joint debate. I also would like to express our appreciation to the Secretary-General for the reports submitted under these agenda items (A/67/736, A/68/3 and A/68/229).

Improving the quality of life of a growing population in a sustainable manner remains the most urgent development priority for the international community. However, pursuing poverty eradication and sustainable development together is a formidable challenge, both for national Governments and for the multilateral system. The world is changing rapidly and

is confronted by economic, social and environmental challenges that cannot be addressed effectively without enhanced international cooperation. As recognized by world leaders at the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development (Rio+20), there is a need for effective multilateralism and efficient intergovernmental arrangements, including a strengthened Economic and Social Council.

In the outcome document of the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development (Rio+20), entitled "The future we want" (resolution 66/288, annex), world leaders envisioned an enhanced multilateral system that could better address the global challenges of sustainable development. Within the framework of the review of the implementation of resolution 61/16, Member States deliberated extensively, through a series of consultations, on how to make the Economic and Social Council more relevant and came up with specific recommendations, which were captured in the Secretary-General's report (A/67/736).

In line with the recommendations in the report, on 20 September the General Assembly adopted resolution 68/1, containing the most far-reaching reforms of Economic and Social Council since 1991. Malaysia believes that that reform process will make the Economic and Social Council a stronger, more issues-oriented body, responsive to the mounting global economic, social and environmental pressures. The Economic and Social Council can be either a bystander or an active intergovernmental body that engages Member States and other stakeholders in deliberating and contributing to an effective and timely multilateral response addressing immediate demands and longer-term development needs.

Strengthening the Economic and Social Council will require a significant transformation and an overhaul of its working methods. The expected emphasis of the post-2015 development agenda on sustainable development, which will be universally applied, will have a significant bearing on how the global partnership for development should be reoriented. The principle of common but differentiated responsibilities should be upheld by all Member States and the United Nations system in implementing the post-2015 development agenda. Ensuring that an internationally agreed post-2015 development agenda is followed by effective action will require international institutions to adapt to the increasingly global, multidimensional and interconnected nature of development challenges.

Institutional coherence depends to a large degree on the quality of interaction among intergovernmental bodies. The activities of the High-Level Political Forum on Sustainable Development, established in accordance with the Rio+20 outcome document, should complement the work of the Economic and Social Council. The Forum should benefit from the strengths of the Economic and Social Council, as decided in paragraph 84 of the outcome document, which states that the Forum "should avoid overlap with existing structures, bodies and entities in a cost-effective manner". There should also be coherence between the themes addressed by the Economic and Social Council and those addressed by the High-Level Political Forum.

The ongoing global financial and economic crisis reversed much of the world's economic growth and badly affected much-needed development, particularly in the developing countries. The crisis has threatened the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) by 2015. Against that backdrop, Malaysia has, at the national level, adopted forward-looking macroeconomic policies through the tenth Malaysia Plan, which is aimed at delivering high economic growth in a sustained, inclusive and equitable manner in order to ensure that Malaysia is on track to become a high-income nation by 2020.

At the global level, Malaysia will continue to share its knowledge and experience in economic and social development with other countries, especially the least-developed countries, through capacity-building initiatives conducted under the Malaysian Technical Cooperation Programme and other similar initiatives, in conjunction with development partners, including the United Nations.

Malaysia is also of the view that efforts to eradicate extreme poverty should form the overarching goal of the post-2015 development agenda. That must be complemented by improved access to basic infrastructure. In addition, equal priority should be given to improving access to basic services. Towards that end, our partners from the developed countries can continue to assist in poverty-eradication efforts in the developing world by continuing to fulfil their official development assistance (ODA) commitments. While we recognize that our partners might be facing economic difficulties back home, we are confident that such difficulties will not hinder them from fulfilling their ODA commitments, as agreed in many United Nations forums.

The 2010 MDG review showed that Malaysia has achieved or is on track to attain the MDGs at the aggregate level by 2015. The latest figures show that the poverty rate in Malaysia has decreased to 1.7 per cent. Just last year, 63,147 poor households were elevated under the 1AZAM programme, a hard-core poverty-eradication programme of the Malaysian Government.

In order to plan, implement and monitor poverty-eradication programmes, Malaysia introduced a monitoring system called e-Kasih in November 2007. E-Kasih was awarded first prize in the 2012 United Nations Public Service Awards, in recognition of its significant contribution to poverty eradication. The e-Kasih database system was created at the national level to collect data on poor families in Malaysia. The database allows for the fair distribution of assistance and avoiding overlaps in aid programmes carried out by multiple Government agencies.

I would like to conclude by reaffirming Malaysia's commitment to implementing the outcomes of the major United Nations conferences in the economic, social and related fields by pursuing a development policy framework focused on high growth through sustained, inclusive and equitable economic, social and environmental policies and guided by the principles and objectives of sustainable development.

Mr. Tsymbaliuk (Ukraine): The strengthening of the Economic and Social Council is clearly interlinked with the overall reform of the United Nations sustainable development architecture. We must therefore take a consistent approach to the implementation of resolution 68/1, on the strengthening of the Economic and Social Council, and of resolution 67/290, on the format and organizational aspects of the high-level political forum on sustainable development, as they represent major steps forward in the implementation of the commitments made at the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development.

There is a need for synergy among the High-Level Political Forum on Sustainable Development, the Economic and Social Council and the General Assembly, so as to enable an integrated consideration of sustainable development in the run-up to 2015. In that regard, we encourage close collaboration between the President of the Economic and Social Council and the Bureau of the Second and Third Committees. Ukraine recognizes the enhanced status of the High-Level Political Forum on Sustainable Development,

which will meet under the auspices of both the General Assembly and the Economic and Social Council. That will enable greater prominence and political visibility of the sustainable development issue on the United Nations agenda. We view the Forum as a high-level platform for the implementation and monitoring of the sustainable development goals.

We are pleased that the Economic and Social Council reform package endorsed the Council's key role in achieving balanced integration among all three dimensions of sustainable development. An integration segment will help to coordinate the activities of Member States and all United Nations bodies with the aim of achieving the goal of improving cooperation and coordination throughout the United Nations system.

We also wish to stress the importance of the Economic and Social Council in supervising operational activities related to development. Through the operational activities segment, the Council should continue to provide overall coordination and guidance for operational development funds and programmes and assist them in their preparations for the quadrennial policy review of operational activities at the General Assembly.

The delegation of Ukraine would like to underscore the enhanced relevance of the humanitarian affairs segment of the Economic and Social Council, which has made an important contribution to the improved coordination and effectiveness of the United Nations humanitarian assistance effort.

The Economic and Social Council reform package acknowledges the importance of the regional dimension of sustainable development and the enhanced role of United Nations regional commissions. In that regard, we would like to highlight the outcome of the review of the reform of the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE), which was endorsed by the Economic and Social Council at the substantive session in July. The results of the review suggest that the Commission met the expectations of its member States and proved its ability to keep pace with the times and address the challenges facing the UNECE region.

While stressing the various valuable achievements, we must not forget to proceed with unfinished business, in particular in such areas as the Council's working modalities, final agenda and main themes. In the run-up to 2015, it is essential to ensure that the transition period in the Council's work does not take up much

time. It is therefore crucial that we act with a sense of urgency.

Of no less importance to the smooth working of the strengthened Economic and Social Council is ensuring that it is adequately assisted by the Secretariat. In that regard, we look forward to the proposals from the Secretary-General on measures to enable the Department of Economic and Social Affairs to better support the unified development agenda and the Council.

As we enter the implementation phase, it is up to Member States to successfully translate into practice the provisions of resolutions 67/290 and 68/1. In so doing, we must not lose sight of the ultimate goal of the reform of the Economic and Social Council, namely, to ensure that the Council remains a principal body with sufficient authority to make decisions on global social and economic affairs and to improve its ability to fulfil the tasks assigned to it under the Charter of the United Nations.

For its part, Ukraine has always attached great importance to strengthening the Economic and Social Council. Commitment to an effective, efficient and transparent Council was a cornerstone of Ukraine's tenure in that body from 2010 to 2012. It is in that spirit that we intend to serve on the Council again, if elected to its membership for the 2019-2021 term.

Mr. Al-Adwani (Kuwait) (*spoke in Arabic*): At the outset, I would like to emphasize the keen interest of our delegation in participating in the consideration of one of the most important items on the agenda of the General Assembly, "Report of the Economic and Social Council". I would also like to express my gratitude and appreciation to all Member States for their support of the candidacy of Kuwait in the Economic and Social Council elections of November 2012, which resulted in our obtaining the honour of membership on the Council for 2013-2015, a crowning achievement of our efforts in the economic, social and environmental arenas. We also express our gratitude to the States members of the Economic and Social Council for their efforts and contributions in overcoming the main obstacles in order to achieve effective engagement and participation by the Economic and Social Council throughout the previous session.

Here we would particularly like to commend the adoption in September of resolution 68/1, concerning reform of the Economic and Social Council. The

steps and measures indicated in the resolution should promote the role of the Economic and Social Council as the central mechanism in coordinating the activities of the United Nations system and its specialized agencies and in overseeing the subsidiary bodies in economic, social and environmental fields in order to promote the work of the Council and allow it to achieve its goals and fulfil its responsibilities.

The obstacles and challenges confronting the international community are preventing developing countries from attaining the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), and that makes us care more deeply about supporting the work of the Economic and Social Council as the primary international instrument concerned with socioeconomic development in order to provide a life in conditions of dignity, which is exemplified above all by guaranteeing the well-being and welfare of nations, raising living standards, combating abject poverty and hunger, and promoting efforts to reduce poverty in developing countries as a main pillar of the basic values of the United Nations

We would like to highlight the difficulties of the coming phase, which will require all of us to work harder to implement the outcome of the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development and turn it into concrete reality, especially in terms of sustainable development, the environment, climate change and an integrated economic vision for achieving the Millennium Development Goals. We would like to emphasize the need to develop and promote partnership among all the main bodies of the United Nations, in particular between the Economic and Social Council and the General Assembly.

The attainment of development in its three pillars of economic growth, social development and the protection of the environment and its natural resources requires a holistic vision for devising strategies for sustainable development that focus closely on all three pillars without shortchanging future generations. To that end, we must uphold solidarity among generations and between Government and non-Government organizations. In that context, the State of Kuwait established a reserve fund for future generations in 1976 and has set aside 10 per cent of its oil and other revenues for that purpose. Recently, a decision was made to increase that set-aside to 25 per cent, so that the reserve fund could achieve the necessary balance between preserving State revenues and creating a development strategy for current and future generations.

The assistance provided over five decades by the State of Kuwait via the Kuwait Development Fund has been linked to economic and social development and has increased standards of living and employment opportunities in beneficiary States. The most important aspect of that assistance is that it is provided on easy terms, without conditions, and that its purpose is to assist others in ensuring their own welfare. It is also a chance to promote friendship and common interests between Kuwait and recipient countries, which currently number more than 100 States, with a total assistance of more than \$18 billion.

The State of Kuwait has also continued to promote initiatives calling for the creation of special funds covering various regions in the world and addressing environmental, economic, educational, health and development issues, with the aim of resolving the problems of unemployment, food security and other challenges facing the peoples of the developing world. Those funds include the Fund for a Decent Life, the Fund for Small and Medium-Sized Enterprises and the Special Fund for Asian States, which was created at the suggestion of His Highness the Amir of Kuwait, Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, and is sponsored by him in the context of the Asian Cooperation Dialogue, through which the State of Kuwait has contributed \$300 million to the Fund.

The State of Kuwait was eager to support efforts aimed at achieving sustainable development, overcoming poverty and making use of the accumulated international experience and expertise in order to identify its priorities and scope in the economic social and environmental fields. The State of Kuwait is therefore fully committed to the implementation of the resolutions and policies adopted by the Economic

and Social Council and its subsidiary bodies. We also pay special attention to the activities of the Economic and Social Council in order to promote economic cooperation with a view to accelerating development and achieving our common goals of combating poverty, eliminating serious and infectious diseases, and achieving sustainable development. We also continue to support international and regional institutions working in the area of development in order to enable them to carry out their tasks and pursue their efforts, thereby supporting and assisting developing and less-developed countries to achieve the MDGs.

To conclude, we look forward to submitting our voluntary national report at the coming substantive session of the Economic and Social Council, to be held in New York next year, which will cover the progress achieved by Kuwait in reaching the MDGs.

The President: We have heard the last speaker in the debate on agenda items 9 and 14. The Assembly has thus concluded this stage of its consideration of those agenda items.

Agenda item 118 (*continued*)

Follow-up to the outcome of the Millennium Development Goals Summit

Specific meeting focused on development

The President: I have been informed that no Member State has requested to take the floor under that item.

The Assembly has thus concluded this stage of its consideration of agenda item 118.

The meeting rose at 11.20 a.m.