



# General Assembly

Seventy-third session

**33<sup>rd</sup>** plenary meeting

Monday, 5 November 2018, 10 a.m.  
New York

Official Records

*President:* Ms. Espinosa Garcés. . . . . (Ecuador)

*In the absence of the President, Mr. Bessho (Japan),  
Vice-President, took the Chair.*

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

## Agenda items 9 and 14 (continued)

### Report of the Economic and Social Council

#### Report of the Economic and Social Council (A/73/3)

#### Note by the Secretary-General (A/73/275)

#### 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

**The Acting President:** In connection with agenda item 9, I would like to recall that, pursuant to resolution 58/316, of 1 July 2004, the Assembly, on the recommendation of the General Committee, decided, at its 33rd plenary meeting on 21 September, 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 item 9 in its entirety in plenary, the relevant parts of chapter I of the report (A/73/3) that are under 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 resolution 57/270 B, of 23 June 2003, 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 of the President of the Council in its discussions.

I now give the floor to the President of the Economic and Social Council for the 2018 session, Her Excellency Mrs. Marie Chatardová, to introduce the report of the Council.

**Mrs. Chatardová** (Czech Republic): I have the honour of introducing to the General Assembly the 2018 report of the Economic and Social Council (A/73/3).

In 2018, the Economic and Social Council stepped up its focus on delivering the ambitious 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the Addis Ababa Action Agenda. The various segments and the High-level Political Forum on Sustainable Development under the auspices of the Council helped us to see clearly that we have made some significant progress, yet we still have a long road to travel in order to realize sustainable and resilient societies while leaving no one behind. The Economic and Social Council contributed in many ways to bringing us closer to achieving these goals. Allow me to briefly outline some of the highlights of the 2018 session.

Under the auspices of the Economic and Social Council, the 2018 High-level Political Forum allowed

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us to take a step back and reflect on where we stand on the road towards fulfilling the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and in which areas we need to accelerate progress. The Forum played its role as the central platform for follow-up and review of progress of the 2030 Agenda through its theme “Transformation towards sustainable and resilient societies” and through its review of six of the SDGs: water and sanitation; sustainable and modern energy; cities and human settlements; sustainable consumption and production patterns; life on land; and global partnership.

Some 46 countries presented voluntary national reviews. We broke new ground not only in terms of the number of reviews but also in terms of their analytical nature and robustness. The voluntary national reviews showed that many countries have made great strides in aligning their policies with the SDGs, in mobilizing and organizing institutions and in undertaking actions to reach the targets. They also provided unique insight into the challenges countries face, notably in conducting integrated policies or mobilizing financing or data. The Forum also broke new ground in terms of the proactive engagement of stakeholders in the discussions.

The Development Cooperation Forum allowed us to look at the SDGs from the perspective of development cooperation. We explored the role that development cooperation can play in helping to address poverty or reverse negative trends in inequality or climate change. The Development Cooperation Forum sounded a wake-up call — in order to meet the deadlines and expectations set out in the 2030 Agenda, development cooperation needs to change more radically and much faster. I trust that the Economic and Social Council will continue to reflect on this transformation in the coming year.

The 2018 high-level segment of the Economic and Social Council represented the culmination of the Council’s cycle on its main theme, “From global to local: supporting sustainable and resilient societies in urban and rural communities”. We championed a new approach to the high-level segment. The meeting looked to the long term and analysed the tremendous future impacts that phenomena such as economic, demographic and technological change will have on different aspects of society. We also examined long-term trends and scenarios to offer evidence-based projections for the future achievement of the SDGs. This forward-looking approach was endorsed by the General Assembly in its

recent resolution on the strengthening of the Economic and Social Council (resolution 72/305).

The segments and forums, functional commissions and expert bodies of the Economic and Social Council delivered a range of integrated policy options and recommendations related to the SDGs. We brought together the Chairs of all subsidiary bodies to make their work more coherent and supportive of the Economic and Social Council and the High-level Political Forum.

The Committee for Development Policy’s session was unusual this year. For the first time, it took an in-depth look at policies to leave no one behind and ensure integrated approaches in all countries having conducted voluntary national reviews since the outset of the High-level Political Forum. It was also able to deliver good news on the number of least developed countries reaching graduation levels.

The 2018 Economic and Social Council Forum on Financing for Development Follow-up sent a message of support on the centrality of multilateralism and constructive engagement for financing the 2030 Agenda. The outcome of the Forum agreed among the participating Governments achieved important progress in the areas of building resilience, adapting to digitalization and mainstreaming gender equality, as well as in blended finance, innovative debt instruments and incentives for the private sector. It also helped to build understanding on some issues on which a range of views exist. The inaugural SDG Investment Fair, held immediately before the Financing for Development Follow-up Forum, responded to the large and growing needs for additional investments in the SDGs, especially in the poorest and most vulnerable countries.

The Economic and Social Council also convened its annual special meeting on international cooperation in tax matters. The special meeting served as an important opportunity to discuss emerging tax policy and administration issues, including relevant challenges resulting from the digitalization of the economy. Overall, the Economic and Social Council showed that, together, we can find solutions to keep the 2030 Agenda on track towards our shared goals.

The Economic and Social Council continued to strengthen its leadership role in identifying new frontiers in sustainable development and promoting reflection, open dialogue and innovative and integrated thinking. It broke new ground in the reflection on technologies and the SDGs. The joint meeting of

the Economic and Social Council and the Second Committee of the General Assembly, whose theme was “The future of everything — sustainable development in the age of rapid technological change”, was a moment to dive deep into the implications of artificial intelligence and other new technological trends that are shaping our future. The 2018 Multi-stakeholder Forum on Science, Technology and Innovation for the SDGs addressed global trends and cross-cutting issues, including the impact of rapid technological change on the achievement of the SDGs; local and indigenous knowledge and innovations for the achievement of the SDGs; and next steps for the Technology Facilitation Mechanism. For its part, the integration segment addressed the topic of technological change from the angle of building innovative communities and sustainable and resilient societies.

Next, the engagement of stakeholders through the Economic and Social Council and the United Nations development system continued to intensify. The role of the Economic and Social Council as a platform for multi-stakeholder participation is unrivalled and was highlighted by the granting during the 2018 session of consultative status to some 433 non-governmental organizations.

The Economic and Social Council Youth Forum sent a strong call for engaging young people in building sustainable and resilient urban and rural communities. We had an unprecedented number of young people and Government ministers, who brought a unique energy and enthusiasm to the room. We heard young people talk about the solutions they can bring to the table and their desire to be more engaged in the work of the United Nations and in the governance of their countries. The 2018 Partnership Forum demonstrated how the inclusion targets in the SDGs could be translated into tangible business goals and make positive impacts in the lives of women, young people and vulnerable populations.

The priority of my presidency was to focus on the theme “Towards sustainable, resilient and inclusive societies through participation of all”. It led to a special meeting of the President of the Economic and Social Council, which brought together a range of actors to highlight the benefits of participatory and inclusive approaches to implementing the 2030 Agenda. The meeting culminated an extensive process that engaged various groups of actors, such as local governments, businesses, non-governmental organizations and academia, and included a preparatory meeting

in Prague. I worked closely with major groups and other stakeholders in organizing the session and the high-level political forum. Each group of stakeholders was able to hold side events and identify speakers for the forum. Major groups were also able to take charge of organizing one session. Lastly, the Economic and Social Council continued to support the adjustments needed to enable the United Nations development system to achieve better results in the changing development landscape.

The 2018 operational activities for development segment was the first opportunity for Member States to consider in depth the proposals of the Secretary-General to reposition the United Nations development system. The deliberations in the Economic and Social Council built common ground for support to the Secretary-General’s reform proposals to reinvigorate the resident coordinator system and to put in place a better funding architecture that improves the quality of funding and accountability.

The 2018 humanitarian affairs segment placed an unprecedented focus on the poorest and most vulnerable. It focused on the theme “Restoring humanity, respecting human dignity and leaving no one behind: working together to reduce people’s humanitarian need, risk and vulnerability”. It shared experiences, innovations and best practices from across regions and sectors to strengthen coordination of the humanitarian response.

Following the devastating hurricanes in the Caribbean last year, as President I convened a special meeting on the theme “Aftermath of recent hurricanes: achieving a risk-informed and resilient 2030 Agenda”. To take stock of progress on the actions contained in my presidential statement, the Council is convening a follow-up meeting on “Pathways to resilience in climate-affected SIDS” on 13 November.

The comprehensive report presents all those items and others in greater detail. In 2019, the high-level political forum will meet not only in July under the auspices of the Economic and Social Council but also in September at the summit level under the auspices of the General Assembly at its seventy-fourth session, where it will review the entire 2030 Agenda. In preparation for that landmark summit, I invite Members to draw upon the work of the high-level political forum under the auspices of the Economic and Social Council and the work of the Economic and Social

Council as a whole in support of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

**The Acting President:** May I take it that the General Assembly takes note of the report of the Economic and Social Council, contained in document A/73/3?

*It was so decided.*

**The Acting President:** The General Assembly has thus concluded this stage of its consideration of agenda items 9 and 14.

*The meeting rose at 10.25 a.m.*