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Chair: Ms. Würtz (Vice-Chairperson) (Hungary)

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In the absence of Ms. Ochir (Mongolia), Ms. Würtz (Hungary), Vice-Chairperson, took the Chair.

The meeting was called to order at 10.10 a.m.

Agenda item 20: Sustainable development (A/65/88, A/65/275, A/65/278 and A/65/485)

- (a) **Implementation of Agenda 21, the Programme for the Further Implementation of Agenda 21 and the outcomes of the World Summit on Sustainable Development** (A/65/229, A/65/297 and A/65/298)
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- (e) **Implementation of the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification in Those Countries Experiencing Serious Drought and/or Desertification, Particularly in Africa** (A/65/294)
- (f) **Convention on Biological Diversity** (A/65/294)
- (g) **Report of the Governing Council of the United Nations Environment Programme on its eleventh special session** (A/65/25 and A/65/383)
- (h) **United Nations Decade of Education for Sustainable Development** (A/65/279)
- (i) **Harmony with Nature** (A/65/314)

1. **Mr. Stelzer** (Assistant Secretary-General for Policy Coordination and Inter-agency Affairs) observed that, according to available evidence, another 64 million people would fall into extreme poverty by the end of 2010. Hunger remained a reality for many in developing countries and great disparities in access to resources and opportunities persisted between rich and poor countries. Only an integrated approach to sustainable development, which would transcend divisions and build bridges, could help address the multiple and interrelated crises facing the world.

2. Introducing the report of the Secretary-General on the Implementation of Agenda 21, the Programme for the Further Implementation of Agenda 21 and the outcomes of the World Summit on Sustainable Development (A/65/298), he said that there was a lack of political commitment to sustainable development. The report pointed out three important mismatches: the first was the mismatch between sustainable development and the economic framework that informed the actions of finance ministries or budgetary decisions; the second was an institutional mismatch, in that sustainable development must be implemented horizontally across administrative departments, ministries and agencies, while traditional decision-making and political authority was organized vertically; and the third was the mismatch between the needs, especially in developing countries, and the resources available. The report argued that sustainable development required at once a development transition, a resource transition — to decouple human welfare from increased resource use — and a demographic transition. It also reflected the preparations for the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development, the 20-year review of the 1992 Earth Summit.

3. Turning to the report of the Secretary-General on the midterm comprehensive review of the implementation of the International Decade for Action, “Water for Life”, 2005-2015 (A/65/297), he said that the report took stock of progress in implementing various activities related to the Decade and made recommendations to Member States on the way forward.

4. Introducing the report of the Secretary-General on the sustainable development of the Caribbean Sea for present and future generations (A/65/301), he said that the report detailed the activities undertaken during the previous two years at the national and regional levels in the areas of marine pollution, living and non-living coastal and marine resource management, and disaster management. It outlined the possible legal and financial implications of the concept of the Caribbean Sea as a special area for sustainable development, including its designation as such without prejudice to relevant international law.

5. Lastly, introducing the report of the Secretary-General entitled “harmony with Nature” (A/65/314), he said that it reflected how humankind had viewed its relationship with Nature through the

course of time. A key message of the report was that human health and the health of the planet were inextricably linked. It recommended launching a public awareness and environmental education campaign for sustainable development and changing consumption and production patterns to reverse the damage caused to the Earth and its ecosystems.

6. The 20-year review Conference to be held in 2012 would offer a fresh opportunity to secure a political commitment for sustainable development, assess progress and remaining gaps in the implementation of the outcomes of the major summits on sustainable development, and address new challenges. Everyone had a shared responsibility to provide solutions that ensured the economic and social well-being of peoples and preserved the natural environment. Participatory action was crucial: civil society and the private sector must work together with local and indigenous communities to address the full range of sustainable development challenges.

7. **Ms. Wahlström** (Assistant Secretary-General for Disaster Risk Reduction and Special Representative of the Secretary-General for the implementation of the Hyogo Framework for Action), introducing the report of the Secretary-General on the implementation of the International Strategy for Disaster Reduction (A/65/388), said that the report provided an overview of progress on implementing disaster risk reduction and the Hyogo Framework for Action at the national, regional and international levels over the previous year. It also included an update on the progress made on international cooperation to reduce the impact of the El Niño phenomenon, and on natural disasters and vulnerability.

8. Given the large number of devastating disasters that had occurred in the previous 10 months, it was timely to reflect on the challenges and opportunities associated with the implementation of the Hyogo Framework. One major challenge was to reduce the vulnerability of local communities. Much progress had been made over the past years at the policy level globally, regionally and nationally, but the benefits had yet to be felt locally. That was especially true of dedicated budget and technical capacity allocation for local implementation. Another challenge was in the area of investing for disaster risk reduction. Most funding was directed towards disaster response and preparedness, while investment in preventative and disaster risk reduction measures remained insufficient.

Further integration with funding and programming for development and climate change adaptation would also be crucial to achieving sustainable and resilient economies and societies.

9. Development investment was expected to increase as countries raced to achieve the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) by 2015. Such investment could, however, put millions of people at risk unless a risk-sensitive approach was adopted. For example, collapsing schools were the number one killer of children in earthquakes, while damaged hospitals killed staff and patients and were unable to deliver services to the affected community. The aim must be to go beyond a silo approach in order to “connect the dots”. If properly incorporated into national development plans and accountability frameworks, disaster risk reduction could help accelerate the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals, assist in climate change adaptation and reduce the economic and social impact of natural disasters.

10. The main focus of the International Strategy for Disaster Reduction (ISDR) over the previous year had been coordination at the global, regional and national levels to develop safer cities, schools and hospitals. The mobilization of specific stakeholders groups, such as parliamentarians, mayors and local authorities, had significantly raised the profile of disaster risk reduction in the development sphere and community planning. As the United Nations system focal point for disaster risk reduction, the ISDR secretariat coordinated world disaster reduction campaigns and the *Global Assessment Report on Disaster Risk Reduction* and provided strategic information for policy development.

11. The Global Platform for Disaster Risk Reduction had witnessed an important increase in political will to reduce disaster risk and had strengthened its role as a unique global platform that united stakeholders. The main themes of the next session of the Global Platform would be reconstruction after disasters, investment for disaster risk reduction and links with climate change adaptation. ISDR continued to work closely with the World Bank, United Nations agencies, Red Cross and Red Crescent societies, community groups, the private sector and other partners.

12. Disaster risk reduction had been integrated into the agendas of many regional organizations. Through joint efforts by ISDR system partners, regional platforms and ministerial meetings had been

established in all regions as main forums for learning through information exchange and the promotion of implementation action plans. Over the previous year, ministerial meetings had adopted declarations of commitments in Africa and Asia as well as time-bound action plans for implementing regional priorities.

13. In response to the disaster risks linked to urbanization and the need to mobilize local leadership and capacities, ISDR had launched the World Disaster Reduction Campaign 2010-2011, entitled “Making Cities Resilient: My city is getting ready”. Global and regional launches had begun in May 2010 and 130 cities had now joined the campaign. Building on previous campaigns on safe schools and hospitals, it urged leaders and local governments to commit to a checklist of “ten essentials” that would make cities resilient. To achieve real results, civil society, the private sector and Government must work together.

14. Much had changed since the establishment of ISDR 10 years earlier. The Hyogo Framework for Action had been adopted in 2005 and Governments had become fully engaged in implementation and planning. Progress had been made on a number of fronts and more stakeholders were now involved. That engagement had also created more demands on the ISDR secretariat, which was still entirely funded from voluntary contributions. The secretariat had made considerable efforts to address the lack of predictable funding by strengthening its management practices and reviewing its financing methods. Against that background, and given the requests of the General Assembly in its resolutions 62/192, 63/216 and 64/200 and the results of the audit by the Office of Internal Oversight Services, the Secretary-General made an important recommendation in paragraph 56 of the report regarding an allocation from the assessed budget to fund the secretariat’s core and recurrent activities.

15. There would be a number of opportunities in the months ahead to make the disaster risk reduction agenda an integral part of the business processes of development sectors, planning ministries and financial institutions, including the one-day thematic debate on disaster risk reduction to be held in February 2011; the Secretary-General’s High-level Panel on Global Sustainability, which would address the issue in the context of increasing countries’ resilience for sustainable development; and the preparations for the 2012 Conference on Sustainable Development. Together with the 2011 *Global Assessment Report*, the

Mid-Term Review of the Hyogo Framework for Action and the Global Platform 2011, they would provide important opportunities to galvanize support for reducing disaster risk. Strengthened political resolve and leadership were required if the goals of the Hyogo Framework for Action were to be achieved by 2015.

16. **Ms. Figueres** (Executive Secretary of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change), speaking by video link from Bonn, introduced the report on the United Nations Climate Change Conference, Copenhagen, 2009, and its follow-up (A/65/294, Chap. I). The report provided an overview of the outcomes of the fifteenth session of the Conference of the Parties and the fifth session of the Conference of the Parties serving as the Meeting of the Parties to the Kyoto Protocol. It also included updates on the work of the Ad Hoc Working Group on Long-term Cooperative Action under the Convention and the Ad Hoc Working Group on Further Commitments for Annex I Parties under the Kyoto Protocol.

17. The Copenhagen Climate Change Conference had shown that climate change had become an issue at the highest political level. More than 100 Heads of State or Government had attended the Conference and had evinced unprecedented political determination to combat climate change. Nonetheless, the outcome had responded only partially to the high expectations for the Conference and had demonstrated that a “silver bullet” solution was not an option. Instead, progress must be made one step at a time.

18. The Conference outcome had been an important milestone on the path towards effective climate change action. Significant advances had been achieved in the negotiations on the infrastructure needed for well-functioning, global climate change cooperation, including improvements to the Kyoto Protocol’s clean development mechanism. Negotiations on a package on adaptation, a new technology mechanism, a capacity-building framework and a governance structure for finance had almost reached agreement. The conclusion of those negotiations would put in place an operational architecture for long-term global cooperation on climate change.

19. The Conference had also produced the Copenhagen Accord. While the Accord had merely been noted by the Conference, it represented a letter of political intent to constrain carbon and respond to climate change in the short and long terms. The Accord

included a temperature limit of below 2° Celsius and a provision to review the limit by 2015 in the light of the Convention's ultimate objective of preventing dangerous interference with the climate system. It also included a commitment by industrialized countries to provide \$30 billion in short-term finance for developing countries, with a balanced allocation between adaptation and mitigation. To date, developed countries had announced pledges totalling \$28 billion and many were now making information available on the disbursement of those funds. Industrialized countries must fulfil their commitment in a transparent and timely manner.

20. On long-term finance, industrialized countries had agreed to mobilize \$100 billion per year by 2020. The Secretary-General had established a high-level advisory panel to identify ways of achieving that. Lastly, the Accord invited Parties to submit information on their mitigation intentions. All developed countries had submitted their targets for emission reductions by 2020. Forty-three developing countries had communicated information on their mitigation plans.

21. Preparations were under way for the Cancún Climate Change Conference to be held from 29 November to 10 December. The Ad Hoc Working Group on Long-term Cooperative Action had made important progress by integrating the Copenhagen outcomes into a party-driven text for negotiations, while the Ad Hoc Working Group on Further Commitments for Annex I Parties under the Kyoto Protocol had agreed on a comprehensive text to facilitate the preparations for negotiations.

22. The parties had broadly converged on the view that a politically balanced package of decisions, carefully poised between and within both negotiating tracks, could be an achievable outcome in Cancún. At the last negotiating session, the parties had moved forward on which issues could be included in such a politically balanced package. Items that would operationalize action on climate change in the areas of adaptation, technology cooperation, capacity-building and reducing emissions from deforestation and forest degradation in developing countries, and on the establishment of a fund for long-term climate finance, were incorporated.

23. While the progress was encouraging, a number of politically charged issues must be part of the package

to achieve the necessary balance, namely, the question of how mitigation targets and actions could be formalized; accountability and transparency provisions for the implementation of targets and actions; the accountable provision of predictable and sufficient long-term finance; and a satisfactory means of addressing the impacts of response measures on vulnerable countries. Despite those critical issues, there was a strong sense that Cancún could achieve a meaningful outcome, which was necessary to restore the credibility of the climate change process and faith in multilateralism. By making linkages to other important issues before the General Assembly, Member States could ensure an integrated and effective response to climate change.

24. **Mr. Gnacadja** (Executive Secretary of the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification Secretariat) said that land degradation, global warming and the loss of biodiversity were closely related issues that must be accorded the highest priority in the pursuit of sustainable development. Although challenges remained, progress had been achieved globally in recent years in combating land degradation, particularly in drylands, mainly as a result of ecosystem services provided by the poor and backed at the policy level by the commitment of Governments to tackle the problem.

25. Introducing the report of the Secretary-General on the implementation of General Assembly resolution 64/202 and the implementation of the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification in Those Countries Experiencing Serious Drought and/or Desertification, Particularly in Africa (A/65/294, chap. II), he said that the report described action taken at the ninth session of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention, held from 21 September to 2 October, including decisions to enhance the work of the Committee for the Review of the Implementation of the Convention and the Committee on Science and Technology and to improve the mechanisms for monitoring and assessing progress in implementation. The use of the agreed indicators would also provide a globally agreed framework for enhanced monitoring of the contribution of sustainable land management and land reclamation in the context of the implementation of the Convention on Biological Diversity and climate change adaptation and mitigation.

26. Information was also provided in the report on action taken by the Global Environment Facility at its

Fourth Assembly to increase its support for the implementation of the Convention, including with respect to financing. He pointed out that additional funding would still be needed for that purpose.

27. The report provided details regarding a variety of partnerships the Convention secretariat was actively pursuing with its counterparts at the specialized agencies of the United Nations and the secretariats of the other Rio Conventions, namely the Convention on Biological Diversity and the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change. He drew attention in that connection to the collaboration between the Desertification Convention secretariat and the United Nations Development Programme on a publication entitled “The Forgotten Billion: MDG Achievement in the Drylands”, which had been previewed at a side event during the High-level Plenary Meeting of the General Assembly on the Millennium Development Goals in September.

28. At a time when the international community had pledged to achieve the Millennium Development Goals, more than 1 billion people experienced chronic food insecurity and more than 250,000 people died every day from hunger or related illness. Failure to address land degradation and desertification exacerbated the impact of natural disasters, led to environmentally induced migration and increased the likelihood of conflict triggered by competition over scarce natural resources. In light of those dire consequences, he urged the Committee to endorse the proposal in the report that the General Assembly should consider convening a one-day high-level event on desertification, land degradation and drought in the context of global sustainability on the eve of the general debate of its sixty-sixth session, comparable to those organized on climate change and biodiversity. Such an event would raise awareness of the challenges of drylands and of their potential to generate global benefits.

29. **Mr. Djoghla** (Executive Secretary of the Convention on Biological Diversity) said that the tenth session of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity, held in Nagoya, had achieved its strategic objectives and would be noted for the establishment of a global alliance to protect life on Earth. He also drew attention to the Nagoya Protocol on Access to Genetic Resources and the Fair and Equitable Sharing of Benefits Arising from their Utilization, which was one of the most

important legal instruments in the history of the environmental movement, and one designed to achieve the sustainable development agenda, fulfil the Millennium Development Goals, and, in particular, alleviate poverty. The Protocol also established the foundation of a new international economic and ecological order based on respect for nature and for human beings. Thanks to the financial support pledged by the Global Environment Facility, the financial mechanism of the Convention had become a responsive institution at the service of biodiversity. The Strategic Plan for the Convention for the period 2011-2020 was designed to address the underlying causes of biodiversity loss, reduce pressures on biodiversity, safeguard biodiversity, increase its benefits and provide for capacity-building. Its 20 ambitious targets included covering 17 per cent of terrestrial and 10 per cent of marine and coastal zones in protected areas.

30. Joint activities between the secretariats of the three Rio Conventions were essential for the successful implementation of the new Strategic Plan. The importance of better integration of biodiversity, climate change and land degradation had been highlighted in the programme of the Rio Conventions’ Ecosystems Pavilion, which had featured more than 500 events attended by 1,000 participants. The new Strategic Plan had been adopted as the global coordinated framework on biodiversity, and the entire United Nations system, with the support of civil society, would assist the 193 parties to the Convention in translating the Aichi targets into national biodiversity and action plans within two years. A midterm evaluation would be held in 2015.

31. To support the Aichi targets, a multi-year plan of action on cities and biodiversity had established a partnership between local and municipal authorities and government representatives. An urban biodiversity index had also been prepared. One hundred twenty-two legislators from 60 countries had agreed to endorse the targets and supported the early entry into force of the Nagoya protocol.

32. To implement the Aichi targets, the Group of 77 and China had adopted a Multi-year Plan of Action for South-South Cooperation on Biodiversity for Development. More than 16 memorandums of understanding had been signed between the Secretariat and partner organizations in support of implementation of the targets. In addition, the representatives of 34 bilateral and multilateral donor

agencies had agreed to incorporate the message of the Nagoya Declaration on Biodiversity in Development Cooperation into their respective development cooperation priorities. Under a resource mobilization strategy for the implementation of the targets, parties to the Convention would work to define the targets and mechanisms through which financial resources could be identified, unleashed and channelled. He welcomed the generous financial contribution of Japan, in the form of a fund that would organize workshops to assist parties in revising their national strategies and action plans and to adopt rules and regulations on biodiversity consistent with the Declaration. Additional financial resources had been pledged by France, the European Union and Norway in support of projects to enhance the protected-area agenda.

33. Saudi Arabia had declared its intention to help raise public awareness in the Arab world for the implementation of the targets. Raising awareness was among the strategic objectives of the biodiversity vision. The Committee had before it a recommendation that the General Assembly proclaim 2011 to 2020 the United Nations Decade on Biodiversity.

34. He welcomed various initiatives — from the Midori Prize to the planned Sedna IV expedition on biodiversity — to ensure the important engagement of people at large, and youth in particular.

35. As the 2015 midterm review drew nearer, the support of the United Nations, and the Second Committee in particular, had to be mobilized in order to implement the Aichi Strategic Plan. He therefore welcomed the fact that biodiversity would be a new agenda item at the next meeting of the Chief Executives Board.

36. **Mr. Zinsou** (Benin) expressed appreciation for the work of the Secretariats of the United Nations Conventions, particularly the scientific studies on drylands conducted by the Executive Secretariat of the Convention to Combat Desertification. Currently, two thirds of his country was under water following heavy rainfall; close to half a million of his people were without shelter and in need of help. The international community had been mobilized but further efforts were required. Consensual solutions must be found to the problems generated by climate change and desertification.

37. **Mr. Benmehidi** (Algeria) stressed the usefulness of the reports presented by the Executive Secretaries, which his country fully supported. In a year of key

importance for issues of environment and sustainable development, the recent Nagoya Biodiversity Summit had restored hope for achieving progress in accordance with the road map leading to the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development, to be held in Rio de Janeiro in 2012. His delegation welcomed the proposal for a high-level meeting on desertification to be held during the sixty-sixth session of the General Assembly and looked forward to contributing to the debates on the subject in the Second Committee.

38. **Ms. McAlpine** (Director of the United Nations Forum on Forests Secretariat), accompanying her statement with a computerized slide presentation, introduced the report of the Secretary-General on preparations for the International Year of Forests, 2011 (A/65/229). Under General Assembly resolution 61/193, proclaiming the Year on the initiative of Croatia, the United Nations Forum on Forests had been requested to serve as focal point for its implementation.

39. Over 120 requests had been received to date for use of the official logo for the Year; designed in the shape of a tree, it incorporated symbols of fruit and food, housing, climate change, forests, biodiversity, medicine, rivers and streams, thus highlighting the various functions of forests, with people at the centre. Annex II to the report provided guidelines for its use; Annex III contained a waiver of liability form.

40. The report provided updates on activities and events being organized for the occasion worldwide, as well as recommendations for follow-up action. The Year was intended to serve as a platform and as a catalyst for the celebration by Member States, non-governmental organizations (NGOs), industry and other partners of all aspects of forests. Under the main theme of “Forests for People”, its four global objectives were to reverse loss of forest cover; enhance the economic, social and environmental benefits of forests; increase the area of sustainably managed forests; and mobilize increased financial resources. Its key messages were that forests had a significant role to play in achieving the internationally agreed development goals, including the MDGs, and that forests, which accounted for one third of the earth’s surface cover, were inherently cross-sectoral.

41. The International Year was not designed to be a stand-alone event but would run on naturally from the 2010 International Year of Biodiversity. Special

importance was being given to films relating to the themes of the Year, which would be screened at environmental film festivals as well as at United Nations facilities and other locations. In that connection and for all matters relating to the celebration of the Year in general, she referred delegations to the International Year of Forests, 2011 website.

42. The International Year would be launched in New York, in cooperation with the City of New York, during the high-level segment of the ninth session of the United Nations Forum on Forests on 2 and 3 February 2011, culminating in the adoption of a ministerial declaration. Member States were invited to provide building blocks for the messages that would be the backbone of the declaration.

43. **Ms. Castaño** (Director of the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) New York Office) introduced, on behalf of the Executive Director of UNEP, the report of the Governing Council/Global Ministerial Environment Forum on the work of its eleventh special session (A/65/25) and the report of the third ad hoc intergovernmental and multi-stakeholder meeting on an intergovernmental science-policy platform on biodiversity and ecosystem services (A/65/383).

44. She wished to acknowledge the significant successes in September of the High-level Plenary Meeting of the General Assembly on the Millennium Development Goals, the High-level Review Meeting on the implementation of the Mauritius Strategy for the Further Implementation of the Programme of Action for the Sustainable Development of Small Island Developing States and the High-level meeting of the General Assembly as a contribution to the International Year of Biodiversity. The last-mentioned meeting had set the stage for the successful tenth meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity, which had concluded the preceding week with the adoption of the Nagoya Protocol on Access to Genetic Resources and the Fair and Equitable Sharing of Benefits Arising from their Utilization, and action on the ten-year Strategic Plan for the Convention and the resource mobilization strategy in support of the achievement of the Convention's three objectives.

45. The year 2010 had been a major milestone in terms of the relationship between environmental issues

and sustainable development. The Global Ministerial Environment Forum, established 10 years earlier, could rightfully be expected to continue ensuring the effective and efficient functioning of the governance mechanisms of UNEP. In February the Council/Forum had adopted the Nusa Dua Declaration, a key policy document which had already contributed to the preparatory process for the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development to be convened in 2012. In the Declaration the Council/Forum had underscored the leading role of UNEP in setting the global environmental agenda; had committed to further efforts to make the current international environmental architecture more effective; and had addressed the benefits of the concept of a green economy in the context of sustainable development and poverty eradication and the leading role of UNEP in that connection.

46. She also drew attention to the decisions adopted by the Council/Forum on international environmental governance, UNEP support for Haiti, enhanced coordination across the United Nations system, including the Environment Management Group, and the consultative process on financing options for chemicals and wastes.

47. Another milestone had been the convening, just prior to the Governing Council/Global Ministerial Environment Forum, of simultaneous extraordinary meetings of the conferences of the Parties to the Basel Convention on the Control of Transboundary Movements of Hazardous Wastes and Their Disposal, the Rotterdam Convention on the Prior Informed Consent Procedure for Certain Hazardous Chemicals and Pesticides in International Trade and the Stockholm Convention on Persistent Organic Pollutants. Those events had demonstrated the determination of the international community to streamline and harmonize administrative functions and strengthen the capacity-building efforts of the three Conventions.

48. With regard to the report of the third ad hoc intergovernmental and multi-stakeholder meeting on an intergovernmental science-policy platform on biodiversity and ecosystem services (A/65/838), the meeting had concluded that such a platform should be established to strengthen the science-policy interface for biodiversity and ecosystem services for the conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity, long-term human well-being and

sustainable development. UNEP looked forward to working with the Committee to ensure the establishment of the platform.

49. **Mr. El-Habr** (Director of the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) Regional Office for West Asia) introduced the report of the Secretary-General on the oil slick on Lebanese shores (A/65/278), which provided an update on the progress made in the implementation of General Assembly resolutions 61/194, 62/188, 63/211 and 64/195 on the oil slick on Lebanese shores resulting from the bombing of the El-Jiyeh power plant in July 2006 and complemented the information presented in previous reports of the Secretary-General on the oil slick on Lebanese shores (A/62/343, A/63/225 and A/64/259).

50. **Mr. Richmond** (Director, Division for the Coordination of United Nations Priorities in Education, Education Sector, United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO)) introduced, on behalf of the Director-General of UNESCO, document A/65/279 containing the report on the Mid-Decade review of the United Nations Decade of Education for Sustainable Development, 2005-2014 and information on the implementation of General Assembly resolutions 57/254, 58/219 and 59/237. The report reviewed the work undertaken by UNESCO, the United Nations system, Member States, civil society organizations and other key stakeholders in implementing the Decade and enhancing education for sustainable development, including progress made, obstacles faced and needs arising, and made recommendations to maintain visibility and momentum on the subject between the midpoint and the completion of the Decade.

51. He informed the Committee that the UNESCO Strategy for the Second Half of the United Nations Decade of Education for Sustainable Development had been adopted by the Executive Board of UNESCO in October and was available on the organization's website. The challenges facing all stakeholders included, among other factors, the impact of climate change, the loss of biodiversity and the effects of unsustainable consumption patterns.

52. In conclusion, he encouraged Member States, international organizations, civil society organizations, the private sector and individuals around the world to support the Decade and integrate education for

sustainable development into all types, levels and settings of learning.

53. **Mr. Rahman** (Deputy Special Representative of the World Tourism Organization (UNWTO), New York), introducing the report of the World Tourism Organization on the implementation of the Global Code of Ethics for Tourism (A/65/275), said that since the establishment of UNWTO in 1975, tourism had evolved into a major economic and social activity in most countries. It had lately been one of the few sectors in the economies of many countries which offered the opportunity to create new jobs, especially for women and young people, for a wide range of skills at all levels, and to promote entrepreneurial capabilities through the creation of micro- and small enterprises. In many developing and least developed countries, it had become the main source of foreign exchange earnings and a key sector in terms of employment.

54. Over the past three decades, understanding of the positive and negative impacts of tourism had increased, even if the issues had not been sufficiently addressed. During that same period, Governments had increasingly come to recognize the importance of fully integrating tourism into national and local development strategies in order to ensure that it played a meaningful role in overall socio-economic development. Awareness that tourism could and should contribute to addressing some development challenges, such as the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals and the protection of the environment, had also grown.

55. Since its adoption by the General Assembly of UNWTO in 1999, the Global Code of Ethics for Tourism had served as a key instrument for advancing those objectives. The Code provided a frame of reference for the stakeholders in the tourism sector. A voluntary, non-binding instrument, its objective was to minimize the negative impact of tourism on the natural environment, cultural heritage and local communities while maximizing the benefits of tourism in promoting sustainable development, including by alleviating poverty. He emphasized that the conciliation services provided by the World Committee on Tourism Ethics, which monitored, evaluated and guided the implementation of the Code, did not constitute an arbitration process.

56. After providing further information concerning the content of the report, he said that UNWTO hoped

that the United Nations would continue to lend its valuable support for the continued dissemination and implementation of the Global Code and the work of the World Committee on Tourism Ethics. UNWTO also hoped that with the support of its member States and other tourism industry stakeholders the Code would prove to be an increasingly more effective tool for guiding the responsible, equitable and sustainable development of tourism worldwide.

57. **Mr. Alyemany** (Yemen), speaking on behalf of the Group of 77 and China, said that the three pillars of sustainable development — economic development, social development and environmental protection — must be taken into account in order to ensure a coordinated, integrated and balanced approach to its implementation. He welcomed the commitment to strengthen the multilateral framework in order to address current and new global challenges more efficiently and stressed the need to ensure that the members of the High-level Panel on Global Sustainability and other organs of the United Nations system were elected according to the principle of equitable geographical representation and in consultation with the regional groups. The Group of 77 and China looked forward to an action-oriented outcome of the 2011 policy session of the Commission on Sustainable Development, based on open and inclusive negotiations.

58. The Group of 77 and China supported the convening of the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development, which should generate the political impetus needed to bridge the gaps in implementing in the outcomes of the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development and the World Summit on Sustainable Development. The goal should be to adopt action-oriented outcomes that would yield concrete results with regard to financing, access to technology and capacity-building in developing countries. Remaining tasks must be identified and discussed during the preparatory process for the Conference. In that connection, he requested the Second Committee to ensure that full support was provided for the participation of developing countries in all official meetings of the preparatory process.

59. The Group of 77 and China welcomed the adoption of a political declaration on progress in addressing the vulnerabilities of small island developing States at the High-level Review Meeting held in September and urged the international

community, in particular developed countries to honour and increase their commitments in support of the sustainable development of small island developing States. It also called upon developed countries to provide new, additional and predictable financial resources; technology transfer on favourable terms; and assistance with capacity-building to those countries. The international community should support the countries of the region in their efforts to preserve and protect the Caribbean Sea.

60. He called on the international community, and particularly the developed countries and the relevant international organizations, to increase their assistance to States affected by natural disasters, inter alia by supporting efforts to enhance their national and regional capacities for implementing preparedness, rapid response, recovery and development plans and strategies. The Group of 77 and China supported the International Strategy for Disaster Reduction in order to promote public awareness and engagement, expand networks and partnerships and create better understanding of the causes of disasters and options for risk reduction.

61. The global nature of climate change required a broad and effective international response. The United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change and its Kyoto Protocol remained the central multilateral framework for cooperation. He stressed that the process of work under it must be open, party-driven, inclusive and transparent. The Group of 77 and China also looked forward with interest to the high-level event to address desertification, land degradation and drought to be held in September 2011.

62. The Group of 77 and China welcomed the outcome of the tenth meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity, the adoption of the Access and Benefit-sharing Protocol, and the Multi-year Plan of Action for South-South Cooperation on Biodiversity for Development and the First South-South Cooperation Forum on Biodiversity, for Development recently held in Nagoya, Japan. It The Group of 77 and China also welcomed the establishment of a strategic partnership with the Secretariat of the Convention on Biological Diversity in the field of South-South cooperation and the decision on the strategy for technology transfer and resource mobilization.

63. The Group took note of the report of the Governing Council of UNEP, particularly with regard to the medium-term strategy for the period 2010-2013, the proposal for the proclamation of the International Decade for Addressing Climate Change and the Global Environment Outlook: environment for development.

64. Concrete measures should be taken to ensure the implementation of the Bali Strategic Plan for Technology Support and Capacity-building, which was intended to improve developing countries' ability to address environmental challenges. Greater efforts were also required to raise awareness of the significance of education for sustainable development.

65. **Ms. Delieux** (Belgium), speaking on behalf of the European Union; the candidate countries Croatia; the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia and Turkey; the stabilization and association process countries Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Montenegro and Serbia; and, in addition, Georgia, and the Republic of Moldova welcomed the results of the tenth meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity and the adoption of the Protocol on Access and Benefit Sharing, the new targets designed to halt the loss of biodiversity and the Strategic Plan for the Convention.

66. The European Union had agreed to the target for halting the loss of biodiversity and the degradation of the ecosystem within its territory by 2020 and would continue to promote political and public awareness of biodiversity through policy- and decision-making informed by scientific knowledge. The European Union fully supported the establishment of an Intergovernmental Science Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services. It was now up to the General Assembly to formalize the agreement reached at the third ad hoc intergovernmental and multi-stakeholder meeting on that issue, held in Busan, and to approve the establishment of the Platform.

67. The two themes of the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development were at the heart of reshaping the future. A more efficient and less fragmented institutional system, with a strong environmental component, that could respond to growing environmental challenges, and foster the preservation of the global climate and the realization of sustainable development was crucial. The European Union was looking forward to the input of the Consultative Group of Ministers or High-level

Representatives on International Environmental Governance to further address the reforms to the UNEP Governing Council and the Preparatory Committee of the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development.

68. With respect to the other theme of the Conference — the green economy in the context of sustainable development and poverty eradication — the European Union recognized the need to maintain or improve the level of human development without increasing the ecological footprint, and while respecting the carrying capacity of ecosystems. Experience should guide the way towards achieving sustainable resource-efficient growth. She called for accelerated implementation of existing policy measures, taking into account the varying contexts in developing and the developed countries.

69. The European Union would remain actively engaged in the preparatory process. It would seek to mobilize all stakeholders, especially the United Nations system, and other international organizations and groups. She stressed the important contribution of other forums, such as the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD), to the Conference themes.

70. Another milestone would be the Sixteenth Session of the Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change and the Sixth Session of the Conference of Parties serving as the Meeting of the Parties to the Kyoto Protocol in Cancún. Negotiations must be expedited in order to reach a successful outcome in Cancún, and, in that connection the European Union expressed its full support for all the necessary initiatives that might have to be taken by the incoming President of the Conference. It expected the Cancún Climate Change Conference to adopt balanced decisions that would contribute to the establishment of an international regime to protect the climate after 2010, and preferred that that should take the form of a legally binding instrument. The European Union was also willing to consider a second commitment period under the Kyoto Protocol if that were part of a wider outcome including the prospect of a global framework involving all major economies.

71. In the meantime, the European Union and its member States were providing 2.4 billion euros, evenly divided between adaptation and mitigation, with

special emphasis on the most vulnerable developing countries. The European Union and its member States had already presented a preliminary report on those commitments in June at the meeting of the Bureau of the Conference of the Parties in Bonn, would submit another comprehensive and transparent report on the implementation of its commitment at the Cancún Climate Change Conference and would report on a yearly basis thereafter. The European Union was committed to ensuring that such financing would not undermine or jeopardize the fight against poverty or further progress in implementing the MDGs.

72. The European Union welcomed the increases in the number of Second Committee resolutions on sustainable development, illustrating a renewed recognition of the central role of the General Assembly in drawing attention to sustainable development issues and the extent to which sustainability was becoming central to everyday life. It hoped that, within the limited time available, appropriate attention could be given to all those issues.

73. **Mr. Kleib** (Indonesia) speaking on behalf of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN), said that the successful conclusion of the tenth meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity and the adoption of the Protocol on Access and Benefit Sharing were encouraging. The adoption of the Strategic Plan for the Convention for the period 2011-2020 should decrease and prevent further loss of biodiversity.

74. With regard to climate change, it would be important to reach an agreement in Cancún, based on the Bali Action Plan and the Bali Road Map, and taking into account the Copenhagen Accord. Such an agreement should be legally binding and limit the increase in average global temperature to below 2 degrees Celsius above the pre-industrial level. To that end, the developed countries must make greater commitments and establish specific and binding targets to reduce greenhouse gas emissions. Developing countries' adaptation efforts and nationally appropriate mitigation actions should be supported with adequate, predictable and sustainable financial resources, technology transfer and capacity enhancement.

75. He noted the importance of the recent five-year review of the Mauritius Strategy for the Further Implementation of the Programme of Action for the Sustainable Development of Small Island Developing

States, which, despite limited resources and geographic dispersion, had made great strides and should be given more technical and financial support on a predictable basis.

76. The International Year of Forests, 2011 would create momentum to reduce the rate of deforestation and to consider the link between forests, climate change and biodiversity laws.

77. The International Decade for Action, "Water for Life", 2005-2015 was an important platform for addressing water resource challenges, which were exacerbated by rising population and increasing industrial and agricultural activities. Cooperation was needed to provide equitable access to good-quality and sufficient water.

78. The forthcoming United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development would provide an opportunity to reassess sustainable development and pave the way for groundbreaking approaches. The Conference theme on the green economy must be further elaborated within the context of sustainable development and poverty alleviation. He also called on UNEP to provide inputs on the green economy and to continue its work on improving international environmental governance.

The meeting rose at 1.00 p.m.