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SUMMARY RECORD OF THE 13th MEETING

Chairman: Mr. KHAN (Pakistan)

CONTENTS

AGENDA ITEM 89: ENVIRONMENT AND SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT:

- (a) IMPLEMENTATION OF DECISIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE UNITED NATIONS CONFERENCE ON ENVIRONMENT AND DEVELOPMENT
- (b) PROTECTION OF GLOBAL CLIMATE FOR PRESENT AND FUTURE GENERATIONS OF MANKIND
- (b) SUSTAINABLE USE AND CONSERVATION OF THE MARINE LIVING RESOURCES OF THE HIGH SEAS: UNITED NATIONS CONFERENCE ON STRADDLING FISH STOCKS AND HIGHLY MIGRATORY FISH STOCKS

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The meeting was called to order at 3.15 p.m.

AGENDA ITEM 89: ENVIRONMENT AND SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT (A/49/223-E/1994/105, A/49/204-E/1994/90, A/49/205-E/1994/91, A/49/229, A/49/256, A/49/287-S/1994/894, A/49/307-S/1994/958, A/49/381, A/49/462 and Corr.1, A/49/479)

- (a) IMPLEMENTATION OF DECISIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE UNITED NATIONS CONFERENCE ON ENVIRONMENT AND DEVELOPMENT (A/49/463)
- (b) PROTECTION OF GLOBAL CLIMATE FOR PRESENT AND FUTURE GENERATIONS OF MANKIND (A/49/485)
- (c) SUSTAINABLE USE AND CONSERVATION OF THE MARINE LIVING RESOURCES OF THE HIGH SEAS: UNITED NATIONS CONFERENCE ON STRADDLING FISH STOCKS AND HIGHLY MIGRATORY FISH STOCKS (A/49/254, A/49/522)

1. Mr. DESAI (Under-Secretary-General for Policy Coordination and Sustainable Development), introducing item 89, referred to the progress achieved in fulfilling the commitments made at the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development (UNCED) and highlighted the main developments which had taken place since the Committee's previous consideration of the item: in particular, the high level of participation and the achievements made in many spheres and the commitment of non-governmental organizations to support those efforts, demonstrated during the second session of the Commission on Sustainable Development, at which objectives related to Agenda 21 had been considered; and the work of the Inter-Agency Committee on Sustainable Development and of the High-level Advisory Board on Sustainable Development. Among the achievements since UNCED were the negotiation of the international convention to combat desertification in those countries experiencing serious drought and/or desertification, particularly in Africa, the work related to the United Nations framework Convention on Climate Change, and the convening of the Global Conference on the Sustainable Development of Small Island Developing States. Those achievements and other ongoing negotiating processes demonstrated that the momentum achieved at UNCED had not been lost, although much still remained to be done in such spheres as the transfer of resources and technology, in which it had been hoped that an increase in official development assistance would be achieved, whereas in reality there had been a 10 per cent reduction. In his view, the first problem that arose was that the supplementary measures agreed upon at UNCED were being implemented on a sectoral basis, which was contrary to the spirit of Agenda 21 in which the integral nature of the measures adopted and the need to link environmental questions with development questions had been stressed. In that context he drew attention to the important role which had been and should continue to be played by non-governmental organizations, and to the need to coordinate measures adopted at the international level with national measures and to mobilize the necessary political will to ensure the implementation of Agenda 21.

2. Mr. CORELL (Legal Counsel), introducing the report of the Secretary-General on large-scale pelagic drift-net fishing and its impact on the living marine

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resources of the world's oceans and seas (A/49/469), said that the report described additional measures taken by Member States and intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations to "ensure that a global moratorium on all large-scale pelagic drift-net fishing was fully implemented on the high seas of the world's oceans and seas, including enclosed seas and semi-enclosed seas, by 31 December 1992" in accordance with General Assembly resolution 46/215. The information submitted was based on 17 replies received from Member States, all indicating that those States were complying with the moratorium, and also replies received from intergovernmental organizations and specialized agencies which reported on the activities of their member States and associated organizations. Although in general terms the provisions of the General Assembly resolutions on the matter had been implemented, there was some evidence that large-scale drift-net fishing was still being carried out in areas such as the North-East Atlantic and the Mediterranean.

3. With regard to the report of the Secretary-General on the sustainable use and conservation of the living marine resources of the high seas: United Nations Conference on Straddling Fish Stocks and Highly Migratory Fish Stocks (A/49/522), he said that the report concentrated on the third and fourth sessions of the Conference, held at Headquarters in March and August 1994, respectively. At its third session, the Conference had considered a negotiating text prepared by the Chairman (A/CONF.164/13) which had later been revised and issued as document A/CONF.164/13/Rev.1. During its fourth session, the Conference had undertaken a section-by-section review of the revised negotiating text. On the basis of the discussions held regarding the form of the instrument that would result from the Conference, the proposals made during the review of the revised negotiating text and informal consultations, the Chairman had prepared a new revised version of the negotiating text (A/CONF.164/22). The new text was in the form of a treaty and consisted of a preamble, 13 parts and 3 annexes, and, among other things, covered mechanisms for international cooperation, responsibilities of flag States, compliance and enforcement, port State enforcement and the peaceful settlement of disputes. Although there had been no consensus on the question of the form of the instrument that would derive from the Conference, the Chairman had felt that there was a widespread view that a binding outcome of the Conference's deliberations would be essential if the Conference was to achieve the goal of effective conservation and management of the fish stocks concerned.

4. In view of the rapid decline of various fish stocks and the associated economic and social impact, the issue of fishery conservation and management was emerging as a major source of controversy and possible conflict; UNCED had therefore been correct in identifying the issue as one of the main areas in need of urgent international attention and action. In view of that situation, the Conference on Straddling Fish Stocks and Highly Migratory Fish Stocks had recommended to the General Assembly that it should convene two further sessions of the Conference in 1995.

5. Mr. AHMIA (Algeria), speaking on behalf of the Group of 77 and China, said that, although more than two years had elapsed since the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development, implementation of its decisions and

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recommendations fell short of the expectations of the developing countries, even though some measures had been adopted by the Commission on Sustainable Development.

6. The principles regarding common but differentiated responsibility and provision of new and additional resources to developing countries had yet to be put into practice, and the implementation of commitments regarding the transfer of environmentally sound technology to those countries left much to be desired. The developing countries continued to feel bound by the commitments they had undertaken in Rio de Janeiro and to believe in the relevance of the analysis and basic principles of Agenda 21, in keeping with the major political significance that the Group of 77 and China accorded to the full and effective implementation of the decisions and recommendations of the Rio Conference. Accordingly, issues of the provision of new and additional resources, transfer of environmentally sound technology and patterns of consumption and production should be priority issues on the agenda of the Commission on Sustainable Development and the High-Level Advisory Board on Sustainable Development, and the secretariat should continue its study of those questions.

7. The Group of 77 and China welcomed the entry into force of the framework Convention on Climate Change and the work of the secretariat of the Intergovernmental Negotiating Committee in preparation for the first session of the Conference of the parties to be held in Berlin early in 1995. They reaffirmed their support for the mandate of the Intergovernmental Negotiating Committee in accordance with General Assembly resolution 45/212. The Group of 77 and China were concerned by the turn taken by the deliberations in Geneva in August 1994, at the Committee's tenth session, when some developed countries had clearly showed their will to take the Committee in a direction that exceeded its mandate. The desire to amend the Framework Convention, on the pretext that the situation had evolved and that earlier commitments did not meet the current objectives, threatened the fragile consensus on which the Convention was based, in particular the essential principle of the common but differentiated responsibility of the Parties. It was important to emphasize that the Framework Convention on Climate Change was the sole international agreement concerning the environment that provided for different rights and duties for the various Parties, depending on their degree of responsibility and the damage they had caused to the environment. Therefore, given the historical responsibility of the industrialized countries in that area, the joint implementation of the commitments assumed in Rio de Janeiro should be strictly limited to those parties listed in annex I to the Convention.

8. Mr. RUNGE (Germany), speaking on behalf of the European Union, said that, two years after the Rio Summit, important progress had been made in the area of sustainable development. The Commission on Sustainable Development had begun to be a focal point for enhancing international cooperation and an instrument for rationalizing the intergovernmental decision-making process for the implementation of Agenda 21 at the national, regional and international levels, in order to achieve sustainable development in all countries. The European Union welcomed the Commission's efforts to institute an effective follow-up mechanism for its decisions, and hoped that that would lead to greater

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participation by the international community in the concrete implementation of Agenda 21. In order to achieve that, however, the Commission would have to improve its working methods, and encourage active dialogue and an integrated approach to problems. Furthermore, it would have to reach out to coordinate its efforts with other relevant organs of the United Nations, the World Trade Organization and the Bretton Woods institutions.

9. The European Union was convinced that close cooperation with non-governmental organizations and the business community was of great importance to the entire spectrum of sustainable development. Thus, the Commission must retain the political attention of members and continue to be the political motor in the area of sustainable development planning, especially through broad ministerial participation in its high-level meeting and by encouraging countries to submit annual reports on progress made.

10. As far as the Framework Convention on Climate Change and the Convention on Biological Diversity were concerned, the European Union looked forward with interest to their respective Conferences of the Parties in the Bahamas and Berlin. The replenishment of the Global Environment Facility (GEF) was a major achievement and provided a sound basis for financing activities under those Conventions. Members of the European Union had committed more than a quarter of the contributions to the core fund of GEF for the next three years, and developing countries had also made important financial contributions. The European Union further noted with great satisfaction that the processes leading to an international convention to combat desertification and the Programme of Action for the Sustainable Development of Small Island Developing States had been successfully completed within the allotted time.

11. With regard to the United Nations Conference on Straddling Fish Stocks and Highly Migratory Fish Stocks, the negotiation process was well under way. There was an urgent need for conservation and sustainable management of fish stocks in order to counter the threat to those stocks and to the fishing communities dependent on them. The European Union believed that the concepts of biological unity of the fish stocks concerned and the compatibility of conservation and management measures applicable in areas under national jurisdiction and in the adjacent high seas, as well as the promulgation of effective enforcement provisions, were crucial elements for effective protection of those fish stocks for the next generation. Adequate solutions to those questions were a prerequisite for the consensus sought by the Conference.

12. Mr. SKARPHÉDINSSON (Iceland), speaking on behalf of the Nordic countries, said that they were encouraged by the progress made in the past two years in the area of multilateral cooperation for the implementation of the results of the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development, as evidenced, inter alia, by the holding of the second session of the Commission on Sustainable Development in May 1994. They welcomed the Commission's efforts to establish an effective follow-up mechanism for its decisions, and emphasized that it must attempt to retain political attention on major issues in the area of sustainable development, especially through ministerial participation at its high-level meetings. The implementation of the Rio commitments at the local,

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national and regional level must be intensified; accordingly, capacity-building in the developing countries and in countries with economies in transition was of the utmost importance.

13. The Programme of Action of the International Conference on Population and Development concluded in Cairo a few weeks earlier provided a solid political platform for progress in sustainable development at all levels. The international community must therefore immediately step up implementation of the Rio commitments, as complemented by the Cairo Conference, and address effectively the crucial relationship between population, development and environment.

14. One of the most important means of reducing the pressure on the environment was by introducing radical changes in prevailing patterns of consumption and production. At the beginning of the year, Norway had hosted a symposium on sustainable consumption as a follow-up to which a round table on sustainable production and consumption would be held in Oslo from 6 to 10 February 1995. With the support of the Nordic Council of Ministers, Sweden would be hosting a symposium on instruments to promote sustainable production and consumption patterns.

15. The establishment of the Committee on Trade and Environment as a result of the establishment of the World Trade Organization (WTO) was an important step forward in the process of promoting sustainable development through a greater coordination of trade and environmental policies. Future work on trade and environment must be aimed at developing an agreed framework for the use of necessary legitimate, transparent and predictable measures for environmental objectives while preventing unilateral and arbitrary green protectionism. However, some types of trade must either be severely restricted or banned outright. That was why the Nordic countries had supported the ban on exports of hazardous wastes from the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) countries to non-OECD countries as of 1 January 1998, supported a tightening of the prior informed consent procedure on trade in dangerous substances and were calling for efforts to ban exports of chemicals which were prohibited or severely restricted in the country of origin, as proposed by the Government of Denmark to the Commission on Sustainable Development.

16. Concerning the first session of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity, which was to commence within a few weeks, the Nordic countries felt that it was of paramount importance that the Conference should draw up an effective medium-term programme of work, that the parties should agree on means to enhance the safety of biotechnology and the rights of farmers and indigenous peoples and that the Convention's Scientific Committee should be given a clear mandate and should resume its work as soon as possible. The preparations for the first session of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Climate Change to be held in Berlin in 1995 were well under way. However, the Nordic countries felt that the present commitments were insufficient and therefore proposed that negotiations with a view to elaborating additional commitments in a protocol to the Convention should be held at the first session of the Conference. They were encouraged by efforts

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both at national and regional levels to implement the principles regarding forests. It was worth noting in that regard the so-called Helsinki process which was aimed at promoting the implementation and development of those principles in Europe. Mention should also be made in that regard to the opening for signature of the Convention to Combat Desertification in Those Countries Experiencing Serious Drought and/or Desertification, particularly in Africa. The Nordic countries also welcomed the successful completion of the Global Conference on the Sustainable Development of Small Island Developing States.

17. The Nordic countries considered it imperative that the international community should take effective steps to increase the protection of the marine environment and the sustainable harvesting of its resources. It was now generally recognized that almost all fisheries in the world were fully exploited and that a third were depleted or heavily overexploited. Therefore, it was important to implement the provisions in that regard under Agenda 21 and the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea. The Nordic countries had been actively following the United Nations Conference on Straddling Fish Stocks and Highly Migratory Fish Stocks.

18. The degradation of the oceans by pollution was another serious problem that had not received sufficient attention. The intergovernmental Conference on the protection of the marine environment from land-based activities to be convened in Washington D.C. in November 1995 offered the opportunity to address the problem. The Nordic countries hoped that all States, including developing countries and relevant international agencies, would participate in the preparatory process for the Conference particularly the final preparatory meeting in Reykjavik in March 1995 when negotiations with respect to a world programme of action in that area would commence. In that context, particular attention should be paid to the problem of pollution by so-called persistent organic pollutants which constituted the most serious threat to the marine living resources and hence to human health. The Nordic countries were preparing an initiative for a global assessment of those pollutants which they would be presenting at the final preparatory meeting for the Intergovernmental Conference.

19. Finally, the Nordic countries wished to stress that they attached considerable importance to the implementation of the decision adopted by the United Nations Environment Programme and reaffirmed by the Commission on Sustainable Development concerning the detrimental effects of military activities on the environment.

20. Mr. ESTRADA-OYUELA (Argentina), Chairman of the Intergovernmental Negotiating Committee for a Framework Convention on Climate Change, said that while some progress had been made over the two previous years with respect to defining the measures to be taken, little progress had been made in establishing appropriate mechanisms and making available the necessary financial resources to enable developing countries to implement such measures.

21. Argentina was particularly interested in the sustainable use of the marine living resources of the high seas and the protection of the global climate since

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errors made in those areas would have a direct impact on its natural resources and, consequently, its prospects of meeting its population's future requirements. The high fish catches taken by third country fleets in the south-west Atlantic to the detriment of Argentine interests endangered the conservation of the entire region's fisheries. In a world where large numbers of people lacked basic food, the unregulated exploitation of the seas that resulted in waste and in a complete disregard for the needs for future generations was unacceptable. Therefore, the international community must soon find a solution to that problem based not on unilateral measures but on the joint elaboration of a binding international instrument that would establish an effective regime for the conservation of the living resources of the high seas that took due account of the interests of coastal States. He was sure that agreement could be reached on such an instrument at the United Nations Conference on Straddling Fish Stocks and Highly Migratory Fish Stocks.

22. Concerning the possible consequences that climate change might have should current trends in greenhouse gas emissions continue, all the indications were that the outputs of Argentina and other major temperate food-producing countries would be adversely affected. It was imperative to ensure that man did not interfere with the climate if the existing ecology was to be preserved. It was encouraging to note that 15 reports had been received from developed countries on their greenhouse gas emissions and the measures adopted to implement the Convention, the latter had been ratified by 95 States and one regional economic integration organization and had come into force on 21 March 1994. Those reports, which were required under the agreements signed at Rio in 1992, were under consideration.

23. The Secretary-General's report (A/49/485) provided an objective description of the current situation with regard to the essential question arising from the Convention itself, namely, whether the commitments which had been made were sufficient to achieve the objective of the Convention. Limitation by the developed countries of greenhouse gas emissions would not be enough to stabilize the concentration of those gases in the atmosphere, as proposed in the Convention. Accordingly, additional measures would have to be taken. The most appropriate approach was still not clear, which meant that a decision would have to be taken at the first session of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention, to be held in Berlin in March 1995, with advisory support from the Intergovernmental Negotiating Committee.

24. Policy decisions on climate had thus far been based on the scientific information and assessments provided by the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change set up by the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) and the World Meteorological Organization (WMO). It had been expected that the Intergovernmental Panel would present its findings on the matter in time for the Conference to adopt a decision. However, the Panel had postponed the corresponding seminar, and its conclusions would not appear in the report that would be submitted to the Conference. The absence of a scientific assessment might delay action that the scientists themselves considered necessary and urgent. As a solution, one group of countries had proposed an additional protocol under which the developed countries would agree to a substantial

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reduction in carbon dioxide emissions. Other Governments did not consider such general measures to be viable. According to some, the most influential developing countries should increase their participation in future efforts. There was only one quantitative commitment set out in the Convention: by the end of the century, developing countries had to bring their emissions back to 1990 levels. From that fact, some had drawn the conclusion that once that level had been achieved, emissions could start increasing again in the year 2001. That view detracted from the Convention's credibility, made it more difficult to negotiate other commitments and was conceptually incompatible with the idea that developing countries should be involved in future commitments.

25. Progress had been made in elaborating the Convention's financial mechanism and in establishing the Global Environment Facility as the interim operating entity of the mechanism, even though the total volume of resources envisaged was far from meeting initial expectations. The Conference of the Parties would also have to approve the new structure of the Facility, and the Intergovernmental Negotiating Committee had already submitted some compromise proposals for consideration dealing with certain controversial issues, such as the financing of preparatory work aimed at ensuring an adequate rate of progress in the area of climate change. According to the Instrument establishing the Global Environment Facility, global benefit should be the criterion for project selection, yet that criterion did not appear in the Framework Convention or in other conventions, nor had it been defined satisfactorily in the context of the Facility. In any event, it was essential to ensure that the Conference of the Parties was the body responsible for determining policy and establishing project-selection criteria and the programme priorities and to make it clear that control of financial resources did not imply control of policy-making.

26. The Intergovernmental Negotiating Committee was also preparing its recommendation on the structure of the Convention secretariat, which should have the necessary resources to present the Conference of the Parties with independent evaluations of complex and important reports dealing with such sensitive issues as energy, transportation and industry; those reports were not abstract texts on scientific theories but assessments of measures that would have national and world impact.

27. Mr. RAZALI (Malaysia), after endorsing the views expressed by the representative of Algeria on behalf of the Group of 77, said it bore repeating that the transition to sustainable development in the South was contingent upon the provision of additional financial resources by the North; the only new funds that had been provided was the 2-billion dollar contribution to the Global Environment Facility, which was a mere fraction of the volume estimated at the Rio Conference. Official development assistance levels had steadily dropped and the commitment to allocating 0.7 per cent of the gross national product seemed all but forgotten.

28. Cooperation in the area of technology transfer, another commitment made at the Rio Conference, was not advancing at an acceptable pace. While it was claimed that all countries had the right to share natural resources, the North, as custodian of the world's financial and technological resources, would not

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allow that same principle to be applied to man-made resources. Malaysia resisted the attempt to impose the burden of change on the developing countries while developed countries sought to downplay their commitments and responsibilities under various conventions, such as the Framework Convention on Climate Change.

29. The Commission on Sustainable Development should play a leading role in the area of consumption patterns. Sustainability of resource use should not be at the expense of the development and human needs of the South but should be based on modifying the unsustainable consumption patterns prevalent in the North. The natural resources of the South were also threatened by advances in biotechnology. The advanced countries, which had for years duplicated the technologies of others, were currently claiming that the South should pass intellectual property laws to protect the interests of the major companies of the North which owned the major share of the world's patents. That meant that countries that did not wish to depend forever on Northern technology would have to pay out billions of dollars in patent rights.

30. Despite the fact that a considerable number of ministers of environment had been present at its most recent session, the Commission on Sustainable Development lacked a sufficiently high political profile. The Commission must become a forum in which ministers of environment and ministers of development could deal with a broad range of issues. Environment and development issues were linked to all fields of human endeavour; they also influenced policy and were affected by policy changes. It was thus vitally important that the Commission should remain one step ahead of all that took place in the field within and outside the United Nations system, in order to avoid duplication of efforts and a renegotiation of the principles agreed under Agenda 21. The Commission should also focus attention on the issue of trade and environment. The efforts being made in other forums, such as the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT) and the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD), to link trade and development might undermine development efforts, especially if they resulted in unilateral trade measures.

31. He wished to make two proposals which his delegation believed required urgent attention if progress was to be made in the implementation of Agenda 21. The first was to strengthen substantially the capacity of international financial institutions and other international organizations to implement Agenda 21 in a more effective and visible manner. The International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the World Bank must introduce operational reforms to reflect the objectives of Agenda 21 so that they could better serve the needs of the developing countries, especially the poor countries. The second proposal was to encourage the search for an appropriate combination of policies and funding sources for the various sectoral clusters. The Commission must draw up in some detail a model of the mix of instruments and financing schemes best suited to each cluster.

32. The contributions of the High-Level Advisory Board on Sustainable Development, established to enrich the Commission's deliberations, had been limited thus far. Board members in their capacity as experts, should

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participate more directly in the Commission's sessions. In addition, the Board should arrange briefing sessions open to all interested parties to present the results of its discussions. The Commission on Sustainable Development should not be seen as the mere guardian of Agenda 21 and other decisions taken at the Rio Conference, but should serve as a guiding force by initiating improvements in international relations as a whole and translating the promises of the Rio Conference into concrete action.

33. Mr. CHO (Republic of Korea) said that his country recognized the efforts made thus far by Governments, international organizations and the private sector to implement the commitments undertaken at the Rio Conference. It welcomed the establishment of the Commission on Sustainable Development, which was responsible for the internal coordination of the implementation of Agenda 21. The inter-sessional work of a number of Governments, the United Nations system and other international and intergovernmental bodies provided input to the Commission which, in turn, provided feedback on the practical implementation of Agenda 21. In that context, his delegation was pleased to announce that a meeting of experts on the dissemination of information on environmentally sound technologies would be held at Seoul from 30 November to 2 December.

34. His delegation was encouraged by the entry into force of the Framework Convention on Climate Change and the measures taken by developed countries which were parties to the Convention to reduce carbon dioxide emissions. It was regrettable, however, that, even after the tenth session of the Intergovernmental Negotiating Committee, there was still disagreement over some crucial issues covered by the Convention, such as financial assistance, technology transfer and the criteria and methods of joint implementation.

35. His delegation took note of the progress achieved by the United Nations Conference on Straddling Fish Stocks and Highly Migratory Fish Stocks. None the less, it believed that the Chairman's revised draft should reflect greater balance between the positions of coastal and fishing States. In addition, the sections dealing with new participants, compliance and enforcement, port State enforcement, the abuse of rights and enclaves should be further improved. Concerning the form of the final document, his delegation continued to maintain that the Conference should discharge its mandate not by formulating a binding instrument but rather by simply formulating recommendations.

36. Mr. DOUJAK (Austria) expressed support for the statement made by the representative of Germany on behalf of the European Union and said that, with the adoption of Agenda 21, the Rio Conference had represented a milestone in the debate on the conditions for sustainable development and its initial implementation. None the less, more than ever, the objectives established called for an unconditional commitment by all parties and, frequently, for a fundamental change in individual behaviour and in the behaviour of enterprises at both the local and state level. Austria sincerely appreciated the dedication shown by Dr. Toepfer, the Chairman of the Commission on Sustainable Development, in ensuring the success of its work. The publication of CSD-Update was useful in increasing the transparency of inter-sessional activities organized at the

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national level by the countries concerned and helped to build awareness of the issue among delegations.

37. In April 1994, Austria had organized a symposium on sustainable development and international law, in the belief that legal issues could have a decisive impact on sustainable development at the international level. In that connection, the outcome of the second session of the Commission on Sustainable Development was encouraging. His delegation also intended to pursue its efforts and to promote initiatives designed to establish the necessary legal framework and mechanisms for ensuring respect for the commitments undertaken.

38. Austria hoped that the commitments assumed under the Framework Convention on Climate Change would be strengthened. All the necessary elements already existed for the elaboration of a mandate under which those commitments could be strengthened. Moreover, carbon dioxide emissions must be reduced by the year 2000 if the objectives of the Convention were to be fulfilled. Austria, for its part, had already made a commitment at the national level to reduce emissions in accordance with the Toronto objectives and appealed to other countries to consider adopting such measures as well.

39. Mr. GALLEGOS (United States of America) said that his country continued to attach paramount importance to the world-wide objective of environmentally sound and sustainable development and to the role of the United Nations in that area. It hoped that the implementation of the measures about to be proposed by the Secretary-General in his final report on the Agenda for Development would integrate all the results of current United Nations activities and recent and future conferences relating to the implementation of Agenda 21.

40. His delegation shared the view that the Commission on Sustainable Development of the Economic and Social Council would continue to be the primary source of review, encouragement and support at the international level for the implementation of Agenda 21. It reaffirmed its strong, continuing support for the work of the Commission. During the consultations held in New York with the Chairman of the Commission, his delegation had formulated some suggestions on how to improve the functioning of the Commission. It had indicated, inter alia, that: it was necessary to increase and improve the information submitted by countries to the Commission on aspects of Agenda 21 for consideration at each session; the preparation and use of national sustainable development strategies must be encouraged and facilitated; coordination of the support provided by the United Nations system for the implementation of Agenda 21 must be more effective; the freedom and flexibility which had thus far characterized the inter-sessional work of Governments or appropriate international organizations must be maintained, since any restriction imposed on those activities would undermine the effectiveness of the Commission on Sustainable Development. The United States would focus its inter-sessional efforts on solving the problem of threats to coral reefs and reducing human and environmental exposure to toxic substances.

41. Significant international environmental agreements, such as those relating to climate change, biological diversity, hazardous waste and protection of the

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ozone layer, had been elaborated under the auspices of the United Nations and were being implemented with the Organization's support. The Convention to Combat Desertification and the work being done on the elaboration of a possibly binding agreement within the framework of the United Nations Conference on Straddling Fish Stocks and Highly Migratory Fish Stocks should be added to that list of major achievements. In that connection, his delegation was concerned about reports of violations of the drift-net moratorium in the Mediterranean and in the Bay of Biscay and supported the efforts of the flag States to resolve the problem.

42. His delegation also firmly supported the Programme of Action of the United Nations Global Conference on the Sustainable Development of Small Island Developing States and trusted that the report of the Secretary-General on its implementation would include consideration of United Nations system-wide coordination and inputs from relevant geographic regions and regional organizations. He stressed, however, that United Nations support for the follow-up process must be provided from within existing resources through the reorganization or reprogramming of available capacity.

43. In the spirit of the Rio Conference, the Summit of the Americas would be held in December at Miami and one of its major themes would be "Making democracy endure - sustainable development". Under that rubric, a call would be made for improving the well-being of the hemisphere's people and preserving the environment so that resources would be available to sustain future generations. He hoped that the Summit leaders would agree to increase technical cooperation and investment in energy efficiency and non-conventional renewable energy, leading to increased financing from multilateral development banks for sustainable energy projects and to the strengthening of environmental laws, standards and enforcement arrangements, with technical assistance from the appropriate regional institutions.

44. In conclusion, he recognized that the response to the Rio Commitments, though slow, was moving forward. Further impetus should be given to the efforts needed to continue the integration of environmental concerns into all aspects of economically viable and socially equitable development.

45. Mr. AMMARIN (Jordan) said that his Government had been working diligently to implement the decisions and recommendations of the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development and, in that context, it had ratified the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change and the Convention on Biological Diversity.

46. In order to acknowledge the efforts of those countries that were striving to achieve sustainable development while incurring high costs in doing so and to make up for short-term pains which would lead to long-term gains, Jordan proposed the creation of an incentive plan to encourage and assist those countries with outstanding records in the achievement of sustainable development, on the basis of objective evaluation criteria. Such criteria could include human rights indicators, the human development criteria of UNDP, the

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structural adjustment programmes of the World Bank and IMF, and the implementation of environmental programmes.

47. Mr. PANKIN (Russian Federation) acknowledged that considerable progress had been made in implementing the decisions and recommendations of the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development. The Commission on Sustainable Development and its working groups were engaged in fruitful work which served as the basis for action by the international community in that field. Concrete progress had been made towards resolving the sectoral problems dealt with in Agenda 21, such as hazardous waste disposal, the preservation of biological diversity and climate protection. The instruments which regulated international cooperation in the field of environmental protection were either being elaborated or had already entered into force. The Commission had begun the task of establishing new consumption patterns and ensuring the sustainable development of society. Although not without difficulty, progress had also been made on multisectoral issues such as financing for sustainable development and expanding the exchange of environmentally sound technologies. In that regard, the high-level meetings of international experts were of great importance, since they helped to bring the positions of the various countries closer together.

48. He welcomed the actions taken by certain countries to promote training in the field of the environment and to disseminate information on that subject. He also welcomed the more active participation of various sectors of society, including youth and children, in activities aimed at achieving sustainable development. The Russian Federation supported in particular the GLOBE initiative of the United States, which was a global study on environmental protection, and was prepared to work closely with other delegations interested in preparing a draft resolution on that subject during the current session of the General Assembly. On several occasions during the meetings of various bodies, the delegation of the Russian Federation had expressed its views on the need for strengthening cooperation within the United Nations system, including cooperation between the Commission on Sustainable Development and the High-Level Advisory Board on Sustainable Development. It would be useful if, in addition to the periodic contacts between those bodies, the Board and the Second Committee could organize ad hoc or informational meetings during their sessions to review the progress of work and to examine the prospects for cooperation with the Commission on Sustainable Development, the General Assembly and the Economic and Social Council.

49. More emphasis should be placed on cooperation between the Bretton Woods institutions and the Commission on Sustainable Development in national and international plans, in light of the increasing interest of the World Bank in the environment and sustainable development. The possibility could be examined of taking joint action to promote greater understanding and to elaborate a national and international environmental policy as well as concrete analytical and statistical data. It was very important to use all the potential of the restructured GEF, which was why it should be made fully operational as early as possible.

50. Closer working links should be established between the Commission on Sustainable Development and regional organizations, especially the regional economic commissions of the United Nations, in order to coordinate the Organization's recommendations with concrete regional programmes and projects. In that connection, it would be important to strengthen the interaction between the Commission and the International Institute for Applied Systems Analysis (IIASA), headquartered at Vienna. A very important task, which he hoped could be completed by 1997, was that of elaborating sustainable development indicators which could serve as guidelines for international cooperation and for the efforts of countries in that field.

51. He wished to stress the importance of continuing to elaborate international instruments for the protection of the environment and their application to the national policies of the various countries. The Parliament of the Russian Federation had already ratified the Framework Convention on Climate Change and his Government stood ready to take an active part in the work on the protocols additional to the Convention. He welcomed the recent signing at Paris of the International Convention to Combat Desertification in those Countries Experiencing Serious Drought and/or Desertification, particularly in Africa, which was a major milestone in international affairs and in the implementation of the Rio programmes. The delegation of the Russian Federation supported the decision to hold two additional sessions of the United Nations Conference on Straddling Fish Stocks and Highly Migratory Fish Stocks in 1995 and wished to stress how important it was for the decisions of that Conference to be binding.

52. In the view of the Russian Federation, one of the most important instruments for the implementation of the Rio decisions was effective participation in regional and subregional associations. Such cooperation was aimed at preserving the marine environment and living resources, disposing of toxic wastes, developing coastal infrastructure and taking joint action to promote sustainable development in border areas.

The meeting rose at 5.40 p.m.