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## Second Committee

### Summary record of the 17th meeting

Held at Headquarters, New York, on Monday, 29 October 2001, at 10 a.m.

*Chairman:* Mr. Djumala . . . . . (Indonesia)

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*The meeting was called to order at 10.15 a.m.*

**Agenda item 98: Environment and sustainable development** (A/56/115-E/2001/92, A/56/189, 74, A/56/222-S/2001/736, A/56/304, 303, 318, 358, 395)

**(a) Implementation of Agenda 21 and the Programme for the Further Implementation of Agenda 21** (A/56/25, 3, 19, 379, 306)

1. **Mr. Desai** (Under-Secretary-General for Economic and Social Affairs) said that agenda item 98 was particularly important, because under that item the Second Committee would consider the question of preparations for the Johannesburg World Summit on Sustainable Development. Before turning to that topic, he mentioned the reports prepared by the Secretary-General on three questions that would also be of interest to the Summit: the report on the status of preparations for the International Year of Freshwater (A/56/189), emphasizing in particular the World Water Development Report, the first edition of which would be available at the Third World Water Forum, to be held in Kyoto in March 2003; the report on the promotion of new and renewable sources of energy (A/56/129), including measures taken for the implementation of the World Solar Programme, 1996-2005; and, lastly, the report on the implementation of the Barbados Programme of Action (A/56/170).

2. Referring to the Summit preparations, he said so far the process had been conducted regionally at round tables and intergovernmental meetings which had revealed the progress made in the implementation of Agenda 21, while the various players (companies, local communities, trade unions, associations, scientists) had eagerly participated in the preparatory work of the Commission on Sustainable Development. The problem with the participatory approach was that it had not made it possible to set a precise work programme for the Summit, apart from evaluating the implementation of Agenda 21 and of the other Rio agreements and taking steps to strengthen their implementation. Although it was the primary responsibility of the Preparatory Committee, at its substantive session in January 2002, to collate all the contributions from the regional stage, the Second Committee should launch the global preparations phase by transforming those broad objectives into a series of concrete measures accompanied by commitments.

3. As for the topics to be considered at the Summit, he recalled that the Rio Summit had aspired to associate environment with development, and that sustainable development was measured by two yardsticks: provision for the needs of humanity and protection of the resource basis on which the survival of humanity depended, namely natural resources and the environment. However, progress made in recent years was somewhat disappointing. With regard to the first yardstick, one could not speak of spectacular progress in reducing poverty and malnutrition, while health-care improvements were jeopardized by the HIV/AIDS epidemic; as for the second yardstick, advances had been insufficient in almost all areas. There were still wide gaps between the countries in the Organisation of Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) and other countries. As an example, he cited figures from the World Wildlife Fund's *Living Planet Report 2000*. However, there was no indication of any progress in reducing those enormous gaps. At that rate, there was a risk that the environmental capital accumulated by previous generations might be exhausted. The problem was most acute in the area of energy, where two problems required immediate solutions: firstly, the growing energy needs of developing countries must be satisfied in a sustainable manner; secondly, the energy consumption pattern of rich countries must be modified to reduce their energy consumption.

4. Thus it was not only the environment but also development patterns that should be considered in Johannesburg. Firstly, sustainable patterns of subsistence and poverty relief must be examined. Since the first dimension of sustainable development was satisfaction of the population's needs, an ecologically sound world in which a large number of inhabitants were living in poverty could not be considered viable. The Millennium Summit had created an impetus by setting the target of halving absolute poverty by 2015, but that would not be enough.

5. Secondly, 75 per cent of the poor lived in rural areas in developing countries, and poverty relief efforts would remain ineffective unless they took into account the environmental dimension. Thus, water problems, and soil and biological resources degradation must be resolved. For instance, if infant mortality was to be reduced by three quarters by 2015, there would be a need for health care, vaccination campaigns and nutritional support, but environmental or habitat-

related factors that might be harmful to health (lack of drinking water and sanitation, poor air quality, so on) should also be taken into account. In other cases, poverty might be connected with natural disasters and raise the issue of soil and water management.

6. Thirdly, any development process, whether good or bad, involved human intervention: the history of civilization was the history of the impact of man on nature. The human community had reached a stage at which the extent and depth of its impact were such that a piecemeal approach was no longer appropriate. Rather, an approach friendly to the ecosystem should be adopted, whereby any development project would be defined in terms of environmental impact and sustainability.

7. In view of those new requirements, the question of implementation tools remained relevant: funding for development and concerns about globalization impacts must be addressed, if all credibility was not to be lost. A great technical cooperation effort was required, on the scale of the one made earlier to combat hunger in the world. Efforts of awareness-raising, education and research were also important, as was the decompartmentalization of institutions and disciplines.

8. In order to meet those tremendous challenges, it would be necessary to display political willingness to acknowledge the urgency of the environment problem and to place it at the heart of international development work; to decide on specific measures, accompanied by commitments and precise funding modalities; and to forge partnerships, not only between national and international institutions, but also between all players directly affected by resource utilization patterns. From that perspective, the task of the Johannesburg Summit would be to make the international community aware of the need to act without delay, because it was the time or never to take the necessary action.

9. **Mr. Amin** (United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP)), introduced the report of the UNEP Governing Council on the work of its twenty-first session (A/56/25) on behalf of Mr. Toepfer, Executive Director of UNEP. In February 2001, the Governing Council, constituted as a Global Ministerial Environment Forum (GMEF), had concentrated on providing concrete guidance, from an environmental policy perspective, for developing the road map to the World Summit on Sustainable Development in Johannesburg. The Council was aware that the Summit

would provide an opportunity for the international community to critically examine the new systemic environmental challenges that could endanger the future stability of global development. At that time, the Governing Council members had been far from envisaging the challenging situation currently facing world. Despite the overall pessimism and the grim economic message which prevailed in the current General Assembly session, it was encouraging that the Second Committee was determined to overcome those difficulties by underscoring the urgency of promoting sustainable development and strengthening international cooperation to foster peace and social and economic progress. Those were exactly the priorities which had been at the centre of the Council's consultations with various representatives, which had highlighted key issues such as the impact of globalization, the growing gap between rich and poor and its implications for the environment and for security, the growing need for cooperation and the increasing realization of countries' interdependence, and the need for tolerance and dialogue.

10. Pursuant to General Assembly resolution 55/200, the Governing Council had provided additional compelling reasons for UNEP's central role in the preparatory process for the Summit. Through decision 21/20 on governance of UNEP and implementation of General Assembly resolution 53/242, the Governing Council had responded to the General Assembly's call for strengthening UNEP, and providing it with sufficient, stable and predictable funding. UNEP governance issues had been discussed in the broader context of international environmental governance, since the strengthening of UNEP would ensure that it played a stronger role in that area. The Governing Council had stressed that sustaining the ecosystem of the planet required global efforts and not a continuation of unrelated attempts. Reaffirming the link between environment and development within the overall concept of sustainable development, the Governing Council, in decision 21/21 on international environmental governance, had decided to establish an open-ended Intergovernmental Group of Ministers or their representatives to undertake a comprehensive policy-oriented assessment of existing institutional weaknesses as well as future needs and options for strengthened international environmental governance, including the financing of UNEP, with a view to presenting a report containing analysis and options to the following session of the Governing Council/Global

Ministerial Environment Forum in February 2002. The Governing Council had also decided that the next GMEF meeting should undertake an in-depth review to provide input on future requirements of international environmental governance to the preparatory process of the World Summit in the broader context of multilateral efforts for sustainable development. The work of the Intergovernmental Group and the work on international environmental governance would build on the report of the Secretary-General's Task Force on Environment and Human Settlements and the provisions of General Assembly resolution 53/242. The broad conclusions emanating from the two meetings held in April and July 2001 had led to the adoption of a number of themes, including capacity-building, technology transfer and financial assistance as well as the inter-relationship between international environmental governance and sustainable development.

11. Determined to provide a substantive contribution to the Summit, the Governing Council had adopted a number of far-reaching decisions concerning chemicals, related to the Rotterdam Convention (21/3), the Convention for implementing international action on certain persistent organic pollutants (21/4); mercury assessment (21/5); lead in gasoline (21/6); chemicals management (21/7); and trade and environment (21/14). In its decision 21/18 on the implementation of the Malmö Ministerial Declaration, the Governing Council had stressed that the Declaration constituted a significant contribution to the World Summit on Sustainable Development, while in decision 21/24 on policy and advisory services in key areas of institution-building, it had addressed the issue of the application of international legal instruments. In decision 21/27 on compliance with and enforcement of multilateral environmental agreements, it had requested the UNEP Executive Director to continue the preparation of draft guidelines on compliance with multilateral environmental agreements and on capacity-strengthening for the implementation of national legislation with regard to the environment.

12. A series of collaborative efforts had been undertaken in the context of the preparations for the Johannesburg Summit. At the regional level, UNEP was actively supporting the various reviews of the implementation of the Rio agreements and Agenda 21, and was making available a number of outlook reports and task manager reports on sectoral and cross-sectoral issues. With the Department of Economic and Social

Affairs (DESA), the United Nations regional economic commissions, the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and intergovernmental bodies, UNEP was organizing high-level dialogues with civil society and heads of industry, whose involvement would be crucial for building the necessary partnerships to ensure the implementation of sustainable development goals. In addition to the Governing Council's decision concerning international environmental governance, UNEP would also provide the Summit with its assessment of the latest state of the environment through a series of endeavours: Global Environment Outlook (GEO3) designed to reframe the way in which the international community understood and responded to the environment at the dawn of the new millennium; a series of sectoral assessments, including the Global International Waters Assessment (GIWA), the pilot phase of the Millennium Ecosystem Assessment at the dawn of the third millennium, and the third assessment report of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC). Additionally, with regard to activities related to industry, UNEP had undertaken three parallel initiatives: a series of sectoral reports, whereby international sectoral industry organizations took stock of progress towards sustainable development and outlined future challenges; regional consultation processes, through which multiple stakeholders put forward key industry and sustainability issues for the consideration of decision-makers; and an overview report on industry's progress in the implementation of Agenda 21, which would document global developments at both aggregate and sectoral levels.

13. Although the broad participation in the preparatory process of governments, civil society, the academic community and the private sector was very encouraging, and some work had been done on the implementation of Agenda 21, much more needed to be undertaken. There were thus tremendous expectations that the Summit would have concrete outcomes covering fundamental areas that cut across all regions.

14. **Mr. Kamyab** (Islamic Republic of Iran), speaking on behalf of the Group of 77 and China, said that the countries he represented attached great importance to the World Summit and its preparatory process, in which they were fully committed to engage actively and constructively. The Summit should provide a unique opportunity for a comprehensive assessment of the achievements, constraints and

shortcomings in the implementation of Agenda 21, a decade after the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development (UNCED). It should aim at the removal of obstacles impeding the implementation of the Rio commitments and provide the developing world with adequate financial and technological support. It should arrive at concrete measures with a specific timetable for their implementation. The principle of common but differentiated responsibilities, which was still as relevant as when it had been enunciated in Rio, should continue to be the guiding principle for the Summit deliberations.

15. Concerning the Secretary-General's report (A/56/379), he stressed that so far only 11 countries had provided an assessment report on the implementation of Agenda 21. He encouraged all countries that had not yet done so to send their reports so that the Preparatory Committee could make a comprehensive assessment, and asked all relevant regional and international organizations to further step up their efforts to help countries to complete their reports in time, reiterating the importance of continued provision of support by the Capacity 21 Unit of UNDP. It was also important for major groups to become involved in the public awareness-raising and public debates for the preparation of reports. The Group of 77 and China wished in that regard to receive further explanation on the survey referred to in paragraph 11 of the report, which had been launched by different major groups and UNDP.

16. As regards the preparatory process, the meetings held at the regional level had sometimes produced different wording but they had more or less the same substance. They all affirmed that the continued existence of unsustainable patterns of production and consumption, inadequacy of means of implementation, poverty, income inequality, illiteracy, external debt, and impacts of globalization all indicated that what had been done so far had not been adequate. Therefore, it was important to decide on specific measures with timetables, particularly at the international level. In addition, the information provided in the reports on different regional meetings should be summarized and made available on the DESA web site. At the international level, there was an urgent need for a comprehensive information campaign aimed at raising global awareness so as to ensure broad international support and active participation of officials at the

highest possible level in the Summit. The Group of 77 and China wished also to receive some clarification on the proposal of the Secretary-General in paragraph 27 of his report concerning the global thematic round tables, their objectives, their participants, and their relations with the Preparatory Committee. They would also like an explanation of the role of the panel of eminent persons and the special envoy, appointed recently by the Secretary-General, and the relations those persons would have with the Preparatory Committee.

17. Turning to the report of the UNEP Governing Council (A/56/25), the Group of 77 and China drew attention to the ongoing discussions on international environmental governance, which they believed must be situated within the general context of sustainable development, because only that broad conceptual framework would ensure the delicate balance among the three pillars of sustainable development. The Group of 77 and China agreed on the need to strengthen UNEP in accordance with the provisions of General Assembly resolution 53/242. However, they believed that the Commission on Sustainable Development, as a unique forum for high-level policy dialogue on sustainable development, should also be strengthened. Moreover, the views of other relevant bodies — Conferences of the parties to various conventions, agencies and institutions — could also enrich the ongoing discussions on that topic. The Group of 77 and China would actively participate in that process and were looking forward to considering the work to be done by the Preparatory Committee in that domain, in accordance with General Assembly resolution 55/199 and the decision of the Commission on Sustainable Development at its organizational meeting.

18. **Mr. De Loecker** (Belgium), speaking on behalf of the European Union and the associated countries (Bulgaria, the Czech Republic, Estonia, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland, Romania, Slovakia and Slovenia, as well as Cyprus and Malta), said that during its preparatory work for the World Summit to be held in Johannesburg the European Union was aiming to promote sustainable production and consumption patterns and to eradicate poverty. Sustainable development, which was based on good governance, peace, respect for human rights and democracy, also required gender mainstreaming in all policies and empowerment of women. In line with that approach, the European Union was concentrating its work on

protecting natural resources, which were at the basis of economic and social development, on cooperating for the protection of the environment and eradication of poverty, on making globalization serve sustainable development, and on promoting good governance and participation. It hoped that the Summit would take specific initiatives on matters reflecting the economic, social and environmental aspects of sustainable development, in particular fresh water, energy, soil degradation and biodiversity. Those guidelines had been adopted at the Council of European Ministers of the Environment. To give the necessary political momentum to such an ambitious project, it was important that all countries be represented at the highest level at the Johannesburg Summit and that there be a ministerial presence at the Preparatory Committee in Bali.

19. The international community should increasingly operationalize the precautionary and polluter pays principles, while remaining receptive to new ideas, such as those concerning the concept of ecological footprint. However, the most important need was to accelerate the implementation of the vast programme behind Agenda 21 and to reinforce interventions to eradicate poverty. The World Trade Organization (WTO) Ministerial Conference in Doha and the International Conference on Financing for Development should, through their interaction, contribute to the success of the Johannesburg Summit.

20. The discussions initiated within the framework of the intergovernmental process on international environmental governance should lead to the creation of a more coherent international environmental architecture, in which all countries could participate on an equal footing and which would have the capability, authority and credibility required to cope effectively with environmental problems in a global context. UNEP should thus have a stable, suitable and foreseeable financial basis.

21. It would be necessary to reflect in depth on the future of the Commission on Sustainable Development. The social dimension of sustainable development should not be ignored, and a more equitable, inclusive and sustainable globalization should be promoted through more intensive cooperation between all international and national institutions on the basis of co-responsibility.

22. The Summit should encourage access to information on the various aspects of sustainable development, public participation in the decision-making processes and access to justice in the environmental field in order to give fresh impetus to the participatory approach which should characterize discussions on sustainable development.

23. The European Union hoped that at the Johannesburg Summit a global deal would be concluded between governments and other interested parties that would lead to concrete actions to improve implementation of sustainable development policies. The European Union noted that the Agenda 21 programme had not been fully implemented, because of the lack of political will to mobilize resources at the national and international levels. At the national level, countries should try to achieve pro-poor economic growth, by creating opportunities for the poorest sectors, in particular women, developing equitable labour standards and ensuring a more equitable distribution of income as well as social equity and environmentally sustainable development. Private capital flows as well as new and additional financial resources should be put in the service of more equitable and sustainable globalization, while freedom of action, which was private enterprise's force, should be preserved by multiplying partnerships and creating an environment at national and international levels which would be more favourable to the development of economic activities for the benefit of sustainable development. The European Union was considering how it could reach the development target set by the United Nations of allocating 0.7 per cent of GNP for official development assistance (ODA). It was prepared to explore new sources of funding.

24. The European Union also favoured the concept of global public goods, which made it possible to introduce a new approach to international cooperation for the benefit of sustainable development. Whatever the method of recording contributions to global public goods, additional resources would be necessary on a case-by-case basis.

25. In order for the Johannesburg Summit to give the necessary impetus, it was necessary to undertake, beginning at the preparatory stage, a collective strategy evaluation and elaboration exercise. Mobilized well in advance, local authorities, which had the necessary expertise to ensure that the urban and local dimension of sustainable development was taken into account

adequately, could help to promote potential synergies between the Habitat Agenda and Agenda 21. At the national level, the European Union invited all States flexibly to draw up sustainable development strategies by 2002, taking into account their own characteristics, and stressing an inclusive approach so as to ensure the best possible synergies and so that the objectives did not conflict with the other planning documents that they had prepared. The implementation of those strategies could be monitored through the country profiles provided by the Secretariat, which each country must update. At the subregional level, the European Union had decided to draw up a European sustainable development strategy prior to the Summit, drawing lessons from the other subregional and regional processes and benefiting from their contributions with regard to topics and possible results of the Summit, on one hand, and preparing thoroughly for the first substantive meeting of the preparatory committee which would examine the achievements and lessons drawn from the implementation of Agenda 21 and the main obstacles to its implementation, on the other. With regard to the regional level, the European Union stated that, in the process conducted under the aegis of the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe, States with different income levels and political situations had reached an agreement on the terms of a ministerial declaration. The European Union hoped that the Secretariat would make a succinct analysis of the results of the three regional meetings, and that each group would be actively inspired by the views expressed by its partners. At the international level, the States Members of the United Nations had achieved a convergence of views concerning the main topics of the Summit.

26. The European Union wanted to build on creative and consensual suggestions from the Secretariat, the various United Nations agencies and the secretariats of the multilateral environmental conventions, which should be included in the Secretary-General's report, and was counting on political leadership at the highest level on the part of the Secretariat.

27. Despite the strengthening of security rules, everything must be done logistically and organizationally to enable major groups to participate in the Summit and in the preparations for it.

28. It was important to inform the public by enabling the web site of the Division for Sustainable

Development to be consulted in all the official languages of the United Nations.

29. Addressing the other subsidiary questions under item 98, he said that the European Union reaffirmed its support for the Secretariat of the International Strategy for Disaster Reduction, and welcomed the fact that that distinct entity was directly answerable, following his wish, to the Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs. The European Union applauded the fact that during the humanitarian segment of the July session of the Economic and Social Council, there had been a consensus on the need to increase national and regional capabilities in terms of response to and preparation for natural disasters, and that delegations had called for greater cooperation between the United Nations and the regional, national and local partners. The European Union, considering how technology helped to prevent natural disasters, believed that it was vital to be able to use telecommunications in order to reduce the loss of human life, the suffering and the damage caused by disasters. It urged the States Members of the United Nations to sign and ratify the Tampere Convention. It supported the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification in Those Countries Experiencing Serious Drought and/or Desertification, particularly in Africa; the Convention's priorities, in terms of support for Africa, environmental protection and the fight against poverty, interfaced with those of the Union. Welcoming the fact that 100 States had signed the Cartagena Protocol on Biosafety, the European Union called on States to ratify it as soon as possible. The European Union welcomed the research conducted on the vulnerability of Small Island Developing States (SIDS) and the assistance that the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD) gave them. It reaffirmed its massive and unequivocal support for the Kyoto Protocol and hoped that a solid legal agreement would be quickly found, opening the way for ratification of the Protocol. The European Union hoped that the Johannesburg Summit would adopt specific initiatives for the promotion of the use of renewable energy sources in the context of sustainable development.

30. **Mr. Thayeb** (Indonesia) associated his delegation with the statement made by the representative of the Islamic Republic of Iran on behalf of the Group of 77 and China. Indonesia attached particular importance to the preparatory work for the World Summit, which would enable Member States to assess the progress

made over 10 years in the implementation of Agenda 21, identify its shortcomings and find applicable ways and means to ensure its further implementation based on the specific economic, social and environment character of each country, subregion and region. The preparatory meetings had shown that common problems, such as poverty, coupled with food insecurity and malnutrition in developing countries, unsustainable patterns of consumption and production, particularly in developed countries, and the lack of means of implementation, represented a challenge for the full implementation of Agenda 21.

31. The Indonesian delegation supported the active participation of major groups in the preparatory process. The Indonesian Government had organized, in cooperation with the secretariat of the World Summit and with the support of the Governments of Japan and Australia, a regional forum on partnership strategies relating to business opportunities and sustainable development. The forum had provided an opportunity for administration and business representatives and non-governmental organizations to help identify concrete ways and means for promoting the implementation of Agenda 21. Indonesian NGOs had established a people's forum aimed at coordinating inputs of some major groups to the preparatory process.

32. The General Assembly should endorse without delay the World Summit's provisional rules of procedure as recommended by the Commission on Sustainable Development acting as the Summit's Preparatory Committee, and should give a mandate to the Preparatory Committee to finalize the remaining procedural issues. That Committee was indeed the sole intergovernmental mechanism responsible for the Summit preparations. He therefore wished to seek further clarification concerning the newly established Panel of the Secretary-General and his special envoy to the Summit.

33. **Mr. Khalid** (Pakistan) endorsed the statement made by the representative of the Islamic Republic of Iran on behalf of the Group of 77 and China. In the past decade, Pakistan had endeavoured to implement Agenda 21. While wanting to increase economic growth, eradicate poverty and improve social conditions, it had nevertheless remained sensitive to environmental degradation, promulgating in particular an Environmental Protection Act and establishing various institutions at national and provincial levels to address environmental problems.

34. National efforts, though commendable and noteworthy, were insufficient and should be supplemented with a view to establishing an enabling international environment. The absence of such an environment had so far prevented national Governments from coping with the worsening situation in all three aspects, already mentioned, of sustainable development. Economic and social disparities had widened and ecosystems remained victims of over-exploitation. The implementation of Agenda 21 remained very inadequate, despite the many meetings held to address the issues. The preservation of natural resources was a common responsibility, which must be met by removing biased trade regimes and ensuring uninterrupted finance flow to developing countries for building institutional capacities and transfer of environmentally friendly technologies on a preferential basis. The debt burden of those countries must be lessened and greater access must be given to their products in affluent economies.

35. Most developing countries did not offer an attractive environment for private capital, and did not have the necessary infrastructures. ODA, technology transfer and improvement in institutional and human resources could help them to create an environment conducive to private capital, that would encourage a productive and development-oriented public-private partnership. Since 1992, ODA had sharply declined, debt had increased and the exchange of knowledge and information had been restricted by the intellectual property regimes. Those trends needed to be reversed in order to implement Agenda 21 effectively. The subregional preparatory meeting for South Asia had flagged areas of concern, such as widespread chronic poverty, uncontrollable demographic pressure and depletion and degradation of natural endowments which, if not addressed urgently, could have a universal impact. All partners should thus draw a road map with measures to identify major constraints hindering implementation of Agenda 21.

36. **Mr. Ierulescu** (Romania) endorsed the statement made by the representative of Belgium on behalf of the European Union. Some new developments, particularly in the field of information technology, had created new challenges for the implementation of Agenda 21 and would require the involvement of representatives of the private sector and civil society during the preparatory process. Romania had expressed its interest in environmental matters by ratifying the Rio



conventions, including the Kyoto Protocol, as well as other instruments, such as the Aarhus Convention on Access to Information, Public Participation in Decision-Making and Access to Justice in Environmental Matters. Romania had also hosted some significant events, particularly the Summit on Environment and Sustainable Development in the Carpathian and Danube Region, attended by nine Heads of State, who had adopted the Declaration on Environment and Sustainable Development in the Carpathian and Danube Region (A/56/74). Recommendations had also been adopted at the Regional Conference for the Evaluation of the Rio + 10 Process, concerning in particular the creation of a Regional Sustainable Development Network, development of a regional programme focused on the transfer of knowledge and exchange of experience, preparation of a regional workshop designed to improve exchange of information on related national initiatives.

37. **Mr. Stanislavov** (Russian Federation) recalled that his country was party to the major international environment agreements and was working on accession to new instruments. The Russian Government had established the Russian National Preparatory Committee for the World Summit, chaired by the Minister of Economic Development and Trade. The function of that Committee would be to coordinate all national preparatory activities for the Summit. The General Assembly should take fully into account the work done within the framework of the preparatory process in preparing its resolutions.

38. The Russian Federation attached great importance to enhancing the effectiveness of UNEP as a key element of the United Nations system in the field of the environment. The Intergovernmental Group established by the Governing Council could play an important role in improving the quality and effectiveness of the work of UNEP. Its effort should be focused on strengthening the complementarities among international instruments related to environment and sustainable development. In that regard, the Russian delegation expressed the hope that the Summit Preparatory Committee would consider the outcome of the Group at an early stage so that useful results could be taken into account in the course of the negotiations on the outcomes of the Summit. It reiterated its support for the initiative of Tajikistan, which had prompted General Assembly resolution 55/196 proclaiming the year 2003 as the

International Year of Freshwater, and considered that resolution as a timely and useful step towards international cooperation in that important field.

39. **Mr. Gamaleldin** (Egypt) endorsed the statement made by the representative of the Islamic Republic of Iran on behalf of the Group of 77 and China. He recalled that the mandate for the preparatory process was defined in General Assembly resolution 55/199, and that it was necessary to respect its terms. He welcomed the fact that the World Summit was being held in South Africa, because Africa was the continent which had benefited the least from the results of the Rio Conference. The Summit should be not a simple theoretical exercise but the beginning of a genuine struggle against poverty. It should be devoted not only to the environment but to all aspects of sustainable development. It would provide the opportunity to renew the commitments made pursuant to Agenda 21. A genuine partnership should be implemented between North and South, as well as between Governments, civil society and the private sector, and the principle of common but differentiated responsibilities should in particular be respected. It should also be decided what would be the main themes of the documents issued by the Johannesburg Summit. He suggested that the other Governments should undertake consultations on that topic.

40. The objectives of the Millennium Declaration and of the United Nations conferences and summits emphasized the common responsibility of North and South. Even good national results were not sufficient if not complemented by adequate international support, in a favourable environment. Tariff obstacles and subsidies granted by the North, especially in the sector of agriculture, should first be eliminated.

41. The meeting of the Regional Preparatory Committee for Africa had just been held and the main priorities for the next 10 years had been set, particularly the link between agriculture, soil degradation, rural development, water and energy. Efforts to combat desertification were the first step in the struggle against poverty. It was necessary to identify time-bound objectives and to find new funding sources. The World Summit should provide the opportunity to restore the credibility of the multilateral system and the central role of the United Nations, while ensuring that its policies coincided with those of the Bretton Woods institutions and WTO.

42. **Ms. Balaguer** (Cuba) associated herself with the statement made by the representative of the Islamic Republic of Iran on behalf of the Group of 77 and China. The degradation of the environment was the consequence of economic and social problems, production and consumption patterns in developed countries that were not sustainable in the long run, and inequalities in the distribution of wealth between rich and developing countries.

43. The protection of the environment and sustainable economic development were questions that needed to be resolved according to the principle of common but differentiated responsibility. Developed countries should demonstrate a genuine desire to give up production and consumption patterns which harmed the planet.

44. ODA was one of the engines of continued economic growth and of sustainable development for developing countries. It was thus imperative for donor countries to respect the target of earmarking 0.7 per cent of their GDP for ODA. Access to environment-friendly technologies was also essential and it was thus necessary to facilitate technology transfers and to contribute to the development of institutional capabilities and specialized training in developing countries.

45. The Summit preparatory process provided the opportunity for an analysis of the progress achieved in the implementation of commitments made and measures agreed, taking into account the necessary interdependence between the various environment agreements. UNEP should continue to be the principal United Nations body in that regard. It must have sufficient, stable and foreseeable financial resources. The Commission on Sustainable Development should become the political authority where sustainable development topics would be considered. Cuba attached great importance to regional environmental coordination and therefore recommended the strengthening of UNEP regional offices. Meetings at the ministerial level had also led to greater coordination between countries in the region and were the main method for reconciling their views on the environment.

46. **Mr. Davison** (United States of America) said that sustainable development was a three-dimensional challenge, made up of economic growth, social development and environmental protection. Economic

growth was essential, but countries must also work to reduce poverty and ensure that all levels of society shared the benefits of growth. Development goals should include progress on health care and education, as well as environmental protection and sustainable resource management. The United States of America had taken the same message to Geneva at a regional preparatory ministerial meeting. The meeting had identified essential elements which formed the foundation of an effective plan of sustainable development: capacity-building, institution-building, public access to information, informed decision-making, participation of multiple actors, coordination and partnerships, along with an independent justice system.

47. Two particularly important ingredients for sustainable development were the role of the private sector and the importance of sound institutions helping to create an enabling environment that would attract and retain financial resources. ODA was more effective when introduced in a stable environment.

48. The United States of America had begun an extensive preparatory process for the World Summit through meetings with major NGOs and private sector groups. It was actively participating in regional preparatory meetings. Several important multilateral processes were under way, particularly in areas such as ocean and water resources and international environmental governance. It hoped that the World Summit would encourage the strengthening of domestic institutions and promote the enhancement of capacity-building, which would require partnerships among Governments, civil society and the private sector.

49. Lastly, he associated himself with the Indonesian request for details on the respective roles of the newly established group of experts and of the special envoy of the Secretary-General.

50. **Mr. Mizukami** (Japan) said that his Government had identified five priority points in the regional preparatory process for the World Summit to be held in Johannesburg in 2002. First was the need to strengthen the political commitment necessary to address global environmental issues. The Summit might point the way to addressing environmental issues in the future. Secondly, the introduction of market-oriented approaches would contribute to the implementation of Agenda 21, particularly through partnership with the

private sector. Thirdly, socio-economic questions must be given sufficient thought and more sustainable modes of production and consumption must be established through the adoption of appropriate policies and measures, particularly with participation of industry and business, NGOs, the scientific community and other major concerned parties. Fourthly, one of the key issues was international environmental governance, which needed to be explored at the Summit in order to harness the synergies between multilateral environmental agreements and international organizations. UNEP played a central role in that area. Lastly, the Summit would identify additional problems, particularly that of water supply and its different aspects, including environment, development, availability and sanitation. The Government of Japan had decided to host the Third World Water Forum in 2003 and invited all delegations, international organizations and other stakeholders to participate actively in its deliberations. The Japanese delegation would actively participate in preparations for the World Summit on Sustainable Development.

51. **Mr. Benmellouk** (Morocco) endorsed the statement made by the representative of the Islamic Republic of Iran on behalf of the Group of 77 and China. The World Summit represented an opportunity to mobilize political support for the Rio commitments, to reaffirm the principle of sustainable development and to elaborate a complete action plan for the implementation of Agenda 21. The objectives of the Summit should be clearly defined: first, to make a general assessment of the progress achieved, to identify the obstacles encountered and take the necessary corrective measures, accompanied by precise schedules of implementation. In view of globalization and the development of the global economy, the international community should redouble its efforts to provide the necessary answers to environmental problems. However, that should not justify any rejection of the sustainable development principle as defined at the Rio Conference. The World Summit should reflect on the specific problems encountered by the developing countries with regard to environmental protection, which would go hand in hand with efforts to eliminate the root causes of global environmental degradation. Sustainable development went beyond mere environmental concerns. Poverty remained the main environmental threat in developing countries particularly in rural areas. The Johannesburg Summit must reaffirm the main objective of the Millennium

Declaration: to halve poverty in the world by 2015. Environmental degradation in South countries was also caused by the effects of drought, desertification, lack of equipment and financial resources, as well as the lack of effective international cooperation. The decrease in ODA, the debt burden, the low levels of investment, the difficulty of accessing new sciences and technologies and the problems of access to developed markets should also be mentioned.

52. Instead of imposing new regulations in the field of environmental protection, it was important to eliminate all handicaps which prevented developing countries from initiating growth and releasing financial resources that would allow them effectively to integrate environmental protection into their national development policies. The Summit would also be an opportunity to consider the adverse effects of globalization and its socio-economic and ecological impact. It would also be interesting to see how civil society and NGOs could contribute to the implementation of Agenda 21. The private sector should, for its part, play a central role in mobilizing financial resources. The implementation of Agenda 21 required the strengthening of international cooperation and the creation of synergies between the United Nations system and other international organizations, particularly the Bretton Woods institutions and WTO. The Moroccan delegation welcomed the strengthening of UNEP, the main United Nations body dealing with the environment. It also supported the Commission on Sustainable Development and welcomed its contribution to the implementation of Agenda 21.

53. **Mr. Ahsan** (Bangladesh) said that one of the greatest challenges to the dominant development paradigms all over the world was integrating environment in all development activities and achieving environmentally sound development methods. That was true in particular for a developing country such as Bangladesh, for which the outcome of the World Summit would be of crucial importance, given that there would be a detailed stock-taking of the progress achieved in the implementation of Agenda 21 since the Earth Summit of 1992. Most experts agreed that the progress towards the goals enumerated in Agenda 21 was far from satisfactory. One reason for the slow progress was the tendency to treat environment and development in an isolated manner.

54. One important aspect of the preparations for the Summit was the follow-up and implementation of

Agenda 21 decisions at the national level. At the regional level, meetings had already started determining what each region could contribute and what it would need from the international community. The main target should be to remove all obstacles impeding the implementation of Rio commitments.

55. Sustainable development required environmental conservation. Without such conservation, economic growth would endanger the delicate balance of the fragile ecosystem which sustained all forms of life. Bangladesh was one of the least developed countries and was aware of the destruction and damage caused by the over-exploitation of natural resources and its negative impact on the ecosystem. In order to protect the common future, ecologically sound production and consumption patterns should be practised and the environment should be protected nationally, regionally and globally. In that regard, Bangladesh had signed the Kyoto Protocol on 22 October 2001. Domestically, a strategy for the conservation and management of natural resources and for disaster mitigation had been drawn up and was being implemented by the Ministry of the Environment. Research institutes were contributing to that effort.

56. The Summit would provide an opportunity to resolve some difficulties encountered in the implementation of Agenda 21 and to achieve progress in areas of concern to the developing world, such as the provision of adequate financial resources, transfer of appropriate technologies and institutional and human capacity-building, while taking into account the objectives and concerns expressed at all the major international conferences held recently, and the one to be held in Mexico in 2002 on financing for development.

57. Bangladesh supported the idea of strengthening UNEP as provided in General Assembly resolution 53/242. It was also in favour of continuing the high-level policy dialogue on sustainable development under the auspices of the Commission on Sustainable Development, which should be strengthened as well.

58. **Mr. Lindeman** (Norway) said that the adoption of Agenda 21 at UNCED had been greeted with high hopes, because never before had the topics discussed been more vital and forward-looking. The documents signed were an agenda for the twenty-first century. The common future must be economically, socially and environmentally sustainable in the long term. Much

progress had been made since Rio. The implementation of Local Agenda 21s had often been successful and offered practical guidelines for the development of urban and rural communities in many regions of the world. It had to be admitted, however, that the follow-up of Agenda 21 had not met the hopes entertained in 1992. The progressive implementation of Agenda 21 should be pursued, based on specific commitments and targets. Major groups and stakeholders should be invited by Governments to contribute to the process of evaluating Agenda 21 from the very beginning and as closely as possible, so that the conclusions drawn would have a broad and relevant basis. That was the only way to revitalize the implementation of Agenda 21 so that it would serve its real purpose.

59. Sustainable development meant integrating economic, social and environmental concerns, with the creation of a better quality of life for everyone as its ultimate goal. The social pillar was no less important than the two others. Poverty eradication was therefore a pressing global problem. Poverty was preventing large groups from reaping the benefits of sustainable development. That had been affirmed in the Millennium Declaration. That Declaration had also stressed that special measures would be taken to address poverty and ensure sustainable development, particularly in Africa, through debt cancellation, improved market access, enhanced ODA, increased flows of foreign direct investments, and transfers of technology.

60. As an example of the necessary political will, mention could be made of the efforts by SIDS to implement the Barbados Programme of Action. One of the major tasks in that Programme of Action was the development of a vulnerability index. From the viewpoint of climate, it was important to measure the vulnerability of the natural environment of the small island States to both human and natural hazards.

61. The sustainable development agenda should be broadened in order to explicitly address poverty reduction issues, and that prerequisite for sustainable development should be the main premise in the agenda of the World Summit. Practical and implementable strategies for sustainable development should be developed before the World Summit. Concrete measures must be adopted towards that end. The goals should be to strengthen international environmental governance and to strengthen UNEP in order to promote synergies between key issues such as climate

change, biodiversity, desertification, liability regimes, capacity-building, technology transfer and sharing of information. The Global Environment Facility could become an integral part of a coherent implementation system. The role and function of the Commission on Sustainable Development should be reviewed as part of the World Summit preparatory process. The Commission should pay more attention to the social and economic dimensions of sustainable development.

62. The issue of health should be given particular attention in the Summit agenda, and primary health care services must be able to maintain basic social welfare and good health. The question of financing sustainable development was also crucial, and advantage should be taken of any synergistic effects between the International Conference on Financing for Development and the preparations for the World Summit.

63. The impact of globalization also had to be addressed when the focus was on sustainable development. Globalization must work for sustainable development. Everyone should have the same opportunities to benefit from globalization, and no groups of people should be marginalized. Global competition should not be allowed to undermine social and environmental policies or exacerbate the effects of weak environmental policies.

64. Political will to change policies and practices was one of the conditions for success at the World Summit. To that end, the participation of civil society and the private sector, which should play a role in the preparations for the Summit and in the implementation of its decisions, should be secured.

65. **Ms. Loose** (New Zealand) said that the decision taken by the General Assembly to convene the World Summit had been rooted in its conviction that more could be done to achieve sustainable development, notwithstanding the historical context of 30 years of evolution of ideas on sustainability. The preparatory process for the Summit was well under way. The Pacific region had, for its part, defined the themes which were particularly of concern to it: oceans, natural resources (including new initiatives on freshwater and the protection of indigenous practices and knowledge), climate change impacts, energy reforms, health initiatives and capacity-building. The preparatory process had been open and participatory. The Pacific regional submission had benefited from the

input of major groups. That was a valuable aspect of preparatory work that the New Zealand Government wished to see continued.

66. There remained a challenge in defining precisely how the Summit should handle a manageable yet fully representative range of sustainable development issues. Some specific sectoral initiatives and some key cross-sectoral ones could be identified. The Summit could benefit from the wealth of 30 years of ideas. Over that time, the United Nations and other agencies had established fairly clear notions of what must be done to implement Agenda 21. Libraries were full of analyses on the obstacles to sustainable development. Institutions such as WTO, OECD and the Commission on Sustainable Development had abundantly reflected on those questions. The link between poverty eradication and sustainable development had been fully identified. There was a need for policy reforms and technological upgrades and, most importantly, to make markets work to provide the right incentives for sustainable behaviour.

67. The Johannesburg Summit must recognize that progress had been made. That was necessary in order to demonstrate that global institutions were effective and had delivered on the objectives for which they had been established. There were plenty of examples that could be brought to public attention at the Summit: the United Nations Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD), the incremental progress on climate change, the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD), the replenishments of the Global Environmental Fund, the improved oceans resource management, new controls on hazardous substances, quality state of environment reporting, ongoing development assistance, and rising rates of literacy and public health.

68. But that would not be enough. There must be no false sense of complacency. The Summit must be a turning-point with regard to what remained to be done. The sustainable development pathways to the future were known to involve shifting away from current patterns of behaviour that were comfortable and profitable to the present generation but quite insufficient for the prospects of coming generations. There must be a commitment to making difficult changes to ensure a switch away from damaging unsustainable practices towards alternatives that would achieve long-term sustainability. There were plenty of illustrative examples: improved access to medicines

and technologies; market reform to achieve sustainable trade, production and consumption in energy, fisheries, and agriculture; conclusion of work on improved indicators of progress; and improving multilateral and national governance.

69. In Johannesburg, her delegation would be able to describe work on the detailed rules that would be necessary to implement the Kyoto Protocol. New Zealand had participated fully in work at Bonn, and would attend the Marrakech Conference with the firm expectation that the legal texts on all outstanding issues would be completed, because the work begun must be finished. At the time of the World Summit, ratification of the Kyoto Protocol should be under way.

70. All nations were affected by climate change, but that was particularly true of SIDS, which were vulnerable both environmentally and economically. Work had to proceed on the criteria for establishing the list of least developed countries and on the elaboration of an environmental vulnerability index. She accorded high priority to helping SIDS to overcome their vulnerability and isolation, especially in the Pacific region.

71. A key to success in meeting the challenges of sustainable development lay in greater coordination between the various conventions on the environment. New Zealand looked forward to the results of the review of international environmental governance currently under way under the auspices of UNEP and to recommendations on the future of the Commission on Sustainable Development. When nations worked together, much could be achieved. That year had seen, for instance, the launching of the Intergovernmental Forum on Forests, and in 2000 there had been the informal consultative process on oceans, proposed by the Commission on Sustainable Development in 1999. Both examples showed that the United Nations could take the lead in vital sectors. Thus the Organization continued to play a crucial role in achieving sustainable development.

72. **Mr. Ibrahim** (Nigeria) said that the ten-year review of progress achieved in the implementation of the outcome of UNCED presented the international community with a unique opportunity to reinvigorate their commitments and to give effect to a more concrete programme of action for the implementation of Agenda 21. To achieve that objective, the review should address the three components of sustainable

development — economic growth, social development and environmental protection — as interdependent pillars of development, with due regard to the fundamental principle of common but differentiated responsibilities. To that end, it was essential to reaffirm commitment to the Rio Principles, Agenda 21 and other outcomes of UNCED, and to emphasize that those global blueprints for sustainable development should not be renegotiated.

73. The outcome of the organizational meeting of the tenth session of the Commission on Sustainable Development should remain the guide for all activities of the preparatory process and the Summit itself. The Bureau of the tenth session should remain the only coordinating body of the review process. All the issues intended for inclusion in the Summit agenda should be referred to the third session of the Preparatory Committee, so that Governments and other relevant stakeholders would have the opportunity to discuss those points before the Summit itself. While welcoming the participation of major groups as identified in Agenda 21, Nigeria emphasized that the UNCED ten-year review process should remain an intergovernmental process.

74. His Government supported all the global and regional efforts to promote the implementation of Agenda 21. It had been actively involved in the subregional meetings and the African Preparatory Committee, which had made concrete proposals based on the New Partnership for Africa's Development. At the national level, the National Committee on the Implementation of Agenda 21, comprising government representatives and other relevant stakeholders, had been working actively on Nigeria's preparatory process for the Summit.

75. The ten-year review of UNCED should be thorough and transparent, highlighting the gains, weaknesses and failures over the past ten years in the implementation of the global agreements reached in Rio. The Summit should also recommend methods for addressing new issues within the framework of the implementation of Agenda 21, including the fundamental challenges of financing for development, globalization, market access for exports from developing countries, as well as external debt problems. With regard to new issues, the Summit should have the courage to tackle the question of negative use of biotechnology, especially in food production, and the threats emanating from

uncontrolled use of hazardous chemicals beyond those identified in the new Convention on Persistent Organic Pollutants (POPS).

76. An objective evaluation of the implementation of Agenda 21 would, regrettably, conclude that not much had been achieved in the past ten years. The reason was not complicated. As long as there was no sufficient flow of financial resources to address fundamental issues of Agenda 21, including financial mechanism, technology transfer and capacity-building, especially in developing countries, the goals set would remain a fleeting illusion. The review process must align itself with the global efforts to find a concrete solution to poverty, if Agenda 21 was to have any meaning in most developing countries.

*The meeting rose at 1.20 p.m.*