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Summary record of the 2nd meeting

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Chair: Ms. Mesquita Borges (Timor-Leste)
later: Mr. Faye (Vice-Chair) (Senegal)

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The meeting was called to order at 3.05 p.m.

Agenda item 26: Social development *(continued)*

- (a) **Implementation of the outcome of the World Summit for Social Development and of the twenty-fourth special session of the General Assembly** *(continued)* (A/69/157)
- (b) **Social development, including questions relating to the world social situation and to youth, ageing, disabled persons and the family** *(continued)* (A/69/61-E/2014/4 and A/69/187)
- (c) **Follow-up to the International Year of Older Persons: Second World Assembly on Ageing** *(continued)* (A/69/180)
- (d) **Literacy for life: shaping future agendas** *(continued)* (A/69/183)

1. **Mr. Joshi** (India) said that eradicating poverty should be the central objective of the post-2015 development agenda. India's inclusive growth strategy aimed to ensure that growth benefited all Indians, including rural Indians, women and children. His country had numerous programmes to assist families and had taken steps to extend banking to those outside the formal banking system. It was focusing on expanding secondary and higher education capacity and reducing post-elementary dropout rates. Its rural health missions had improved life expectancy, increased child immunization and substantially reduced infant and maternal mortality.

2. India was working to improve employment and livelihood opportunities, education, training and health for 15-to-29-year olds, who represented more than a quarter of the population. Adequate resources, capacity-building and participation by all stakeholders in the implementation of public policy were critical for social development. Lastly, it was also critical for developed countries to meet their development commitments.

3. **Ms. Yaguchi** (Japan) said that Japan attached great importance to empowering and promoting the rights of the vulnerable, including persons with disabilities. It had ratified the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities in January 2014 and urged the international community to include disabled persons in discussions on promoting an inclusive society and to consider their needs in the context of disaster risk reduction. As a strong advocate of

empowering young people through youth volunteerism, Japan applauded the efforts of United Nations Volunteers (UNV) to improve its effectiveness and efficiency. UNV had developed a university volunteer scheme in cooperation with Kwansei Gakuin University, and Japan hoped that "youth power" would help to implement the post-2015 development agenda.

4. As the world's most rapidly ageing country, Japan would work with other Member States in a similar situation, especially Asian countries, to address the associated challenges. It had already contributed substantial assistance to efforts to combat the Ebola virus in Africa and had pledged to contribute much more. At the Fifth Tokyo International Conference on African Development in 2013, her country had pledged to provide support for development to both the private and public sectors and would continue to work to promote resilient and inclusive growth across Africa under the ownership of the African States.

5. **Ms. Fehr** (Switzerland), speaking as a youth delegate, said that unaccompanied migrant children continued to be detained, mistreated and forcefully repatriated. They were the victims of serious human rights violations and desperately required special protection. She stressed the need for urgent national and international action to address the causes of migration, improve strategies for welcoming migrant children and make migration a positive factor for sustainable development. Solutions would require close collaboration among all actors, including the children.

6. Like many other countries, Switzerland was experiencing increased arrivals of unaccompanied migrant children. To assist immigrant children, it had instituted a mandatory education programme that combined traditional subjects with language instruction and acculturation activities to prepare them to enter the regular school system. Migrant children should always be treated as children first and foremost.

7. **Mr. Barkan** (Israel) said that Israel promoted the rights of persons with disabilities through legislation, education and partnerships with civil society. It was a member of the Bureau of the Conference of States Parties to the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, had instituted a commission for equal rights for persons with disabilities and worked closely with numerous civil society institutions at the forefront of creating enabling environments and integrated communities. To harness the capabilities of older

persons and provide for their special needs, it had established a ministry of senior citizens, and it looked forward to working with the first Independent Expert on the enjoyment of all human rights by older persons, Ms. Kornfeld-Matte.

8. **Ms. Athamni** (Israel), speaking as a youth delegate, said that in many societies young people were alarmingly disadvantaged in terms of income, unemployment and poverty. Over the preceding 20 years Israel had developed a comprehensive approach to responding to the needs of at-risk youth through major advances in legislation and increased public awareness.

9. **Mr. Ríos Sánchez** (Mexico) said that poverty could not be eliminated without structural reform. The post-2015 agenda should focus on combating poverty and inequality through economic and social inclusion. To be effective and ensure accountability, public development policies should be based on multidimensional measures of poverty. Mexico was proud to have helped several countries in Africa, Asia and Latin America develop methods for measuring and assessing poverty. At home, Mexico had taken up the United Nations Zero Hunger Challenge by launching a national hunger crusade that had already succeeded in reducing hunger among millions of Mexicans.

10. To achieve full social development, his country had redesigned its programmes to meet the needs of each population segment, with an emphasis on families, women and girls. Ensuring young people's prosperity and full participation in political, economic and social life should continue to be a priority of the international development agenda. Mexico reaffirmed its commitment to respecting and realizing the rights of older persons, and it welcomed the establishment within the Human Rights Council of a mandate on the rights of persons with disabilities. In closing, he reiterated the importance of the Economic and Social Council, which should play a leadership role in discussions on the post-2015 development agenda.

11. **Ms. Akhuputra** (Thailand), speaking as a youth delegate, said that education should be a top priority, as it was key to lifting people out of poverty. Much remained to be done to come even close to achieving equal access to basic education for all children. Thailand was therefore proud to have hosted the first in a series of United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization regional education conferences,

which had set a goal of inclusive education and lifelong learning for all by 2030.

12. **Mr. Tanakasempipat** (Thailand), speaking as a youth delegate, urged other countries to follow Thailand's example by doing their utmost to guarantee basic health care for all, without which a just society was impossible. Young people had much to contribute and, like him, could be empowered by volunteerism. Young people must come together to bring about equality, happiness and respect for basic human rights.

13. **Mr. de Aguiar Patriota** (Brazil) said that the post-2015 development agenda should promote more equitable, sustainable societies as well as social inclusion for vulnerable groups. Unfortunately, during the 2008 economic crisis, many countries had instituted austerity programmes that had exacerbated inequality. The goals and targets developed by the Open Working Group on Sustainable Development Goals built on the recent successful experiences of countries that had instead chosen to invest in anti-recessive policies and social inclusion.

14. The time had come to negotiate an international legal instrument on the rights of older people that would address the regulatory dispersion of those rights, strengthen their monitoring and realization and clarify the responsibilities of States, much as the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities had done. In that connection, as a member of the Bureau of the Conference of States Parties to that Convention, Brazil hoped to raise the profile of the Conference as a platform for exchanging information about the various strategies and programmes being implemented throughout the world. Reminding the Committee that the goals agreed at the Rio+20 Conference specifically targeted the inclusion of persons with disabilities, he invited all Member States to consider ratifying the Marrakesh Treaty to Facilitate Access to Published Works for Persons Who Are Blind, Visually Impaired, or Otherwise Print Disabled.

15. Brazil had experienced an unprecedented decline in inequality, thanks to a framework of social protection measures, including its very successful family stipend programme, which provided support for needy families of every kind and had lifted millions of people out of extreme poverty. Within the family, it was necessary to address the special problems of children, youth, persons with disabilities, older persons and women, who were discriminated against,

responsible for a disproportionate share of unpaid work and, above all, victims of domestic violence.

16. **Mr. Lin Shilie** (Singapore) said that, as one of the fastest ageing societies in Asia, Singapore was fully committed to implementing the 2002 Madrid International Plan of Action on Ageing and was pleased that the proposed sustainable development goals and targets incorporated age-inclusive language. Singapore's domestic policies and programmes aimed to provide older persons with accessible, affordable care and keep them healthy, active and safe. His country would provide universal health care insurance for all its citizens by 2015. Health insurance would be free for those over 80, and older persons in general would soon be receiving additional subsidies for visits to specialized outpatient clinics and purchases of standard drugs.

17. Singapore had increased institutional and home care capacity and was working to improve the quality of care by implementing new nursing home standards and home care guidelines. It provided lifelong learning programmes and opportunities for senior volunteerism in partnership with civil society organizations. Since 2012, Singapore required employers to offer three years' re-employment to workers who had reached the mandatory retirement age of 62. It also required companies putting up age-discriminatory job advertisements to take them down and issue public apologies and had recently launched a campaign to encourage the hiring and retention of older workers.

18. **Mr. Cabactulan** (Philippines) said that his country had enjoyed consistent economic growth since 2010. It had recently adopted sector-focused strategies to make future growth more inclusive and sustainable and provide more equitable access to development opportunities. Through data-driven policies and programmes, it was creating the conditions for productive, well-paying work, investing in universal health care and social protection, promoting people's potential and expanding financing for micro-, small and medium enterprises. It fully agreed with the Secretary-General on the need for empowerment and equalization of opportunities and looked forward to the fifty-third session of the Commission for Social Development in that regard.

19. With respect to disabled persons, he noted with concern that very few Member States or United Nations entities had submitted data on their progress

on achieving the development goals for persons with disabilities, which was needed for future policymaking. Also, while the Open-ended Working Group on Ageing had initiated work on a framework for the protection of older persons, it had not achieved general agreement on approaches to the issue or even on definitions of basic concepts, and data was still needed, especially on abuse and violence directed at older women. Lastly, while social development was essential, the Philippine experience had shown that disaster risk reduction must be incorporated in the development agenda in order to ensure sustainability.

20. **Ms. Alsaleh** (Syrian Arab Republic) said that her country's infrastructure had been damaged by small terrorists groups financed by Arab and regional States. Nevertheless, her Government continued to encourage social and economic development and to strive to implement the outcomes of the World Summit for Social Development and the twenty-fourth special session of the General Assembly. It was cooperating with all United Nations bodies on logistics for the delivery of humanitarian assistance and with the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East and civil and non-governmental organizations on social protection. It sought to protect children and women within Syrian borders and in neighbouring countries.

21. The illegal unilateral trade and financial sanctions imposed by the United States and its allies had caused fuels prices to soar and triggered rampant inflation, swelling the public debt, driving up unemployment and undermining the Government's ability to provide social protection. Although otherwise commendable, the Secretary-General's reports on social development ignored not only the catastrophic effects of foreign occupation and unilateral measures but also the disabilities caused by bombardments and mines.

22. **Mr. Dehghani** (Islamic Republic of Iran) said that all relevant United Nations bodies should improve technical cooperation with Member States in addressing the alarming issues in the social development sector. In keeping with its long-standing prioritization of the Millennium Development Goals, his country's fifth economic, social and cultural development plan promoted the reduction of inequalities. The Islamic Republic of Iran, which would soon be holding its first national conference on entrepreneurship for persons with disabilities, attached great importance to the role of sports in empowering

disabled persons and was proud that an Iranian woman had been among the gold medallists at the 2012 Paralympic Games. The State Welfare Organization had prepared a national strategic plan on ageing, and the National Council for the Elderly's work to implement an integrated national policy on older persons had been commended by the United Nations Population Fund.

23. **Ms. Blossner** (Sweden), speaking as a youth delegate, said that one of the most effective ways to reduce poverty was to invest in girls and their education by tackling discrimination, sexual violence, forced marriages and early pregnancies. Girl children and women also were more keenly affected by the lack of sanitation and the global water crisis. Young people, who constituted half of the world's population, should be seen as agents for change and included in the decision-making process.

24. Migration exposed youth, especially young women, to higher risks of abuse, discrimination and exploitation. It was important, therefore, to address the rights and the empowerment of migrants, including women and children, and to see them also as agents for change. If the world was ever to avoid the scourge of war, States must forego short-term gains from arms exports and the exploitation of natural resources and abide by the rules of international law, including international human rights, humanitarian and refugee law.

25. **Mr. Seck** (Senegal) said that his Government had recently instituted universal health care coverage, social services for disabled persons with certified disabilities and a family stipend for vulnerable families. It had programmes to promote youth employment and the empowerment, economic participation and social integration of women. The effective participation of women, young people and older and disabled persons should be included in the post-2015 development agenda.

26. Social integration of disabled persons should be a cross-cutting theme, but it was also important to address the obstacles to the empowerment of women and girls and their full enjoyment of human rights and to initiate negotiations on an international instrument on the protection of the rights of older persons. However, to achieve sustainable progress on social development, the international community must also tackle the problems of climate change; water, food and

energy security; land utilization; and natural and man-made disasters.

27. **Mr. Logar** (Slovenia) said that Slovenia took a holistic approach to protecting the rights of older people and ensuring their safety and independence. Although safeguarding the interests of older people was a basic function of the State, it recognized the critical contribution of civil society. Slovenia welcomed the appointment of the first Independent Expert on the enjoyment of all human rights by older persons, whom it had invited to visit, and called for inclusive discussions on a new human rights instrument on the rights of older persons.

28. **Ms. Pongrac** (Slovenia), speaking as a youth delegate, said that non-formal education was increasingly important to help young people to transition from school to work and should therefore be fully recognized and better integrated with formal education. It was also necessary to ensure that young people could earn a living wage by adopting measures to promote equal opportunities, equitable remuneration, adequate social security and fair working conditions. Lastly, young people's voices should be heard with regard to more than just youth policies. There could be no peace, prosperity or progress without the full and equal participation of young people.

29. **Mr. van Schayik** (Netherlands), speaking as a youth delegate, said that he had young friends all over the world who were working to build fairer, more equitable societies. Yet young people had very little voice in their own countries and very little representation within the United Nations. He hoped to contribute to making the post-2015 development agenda more inclusive by traveling by bicycle from Amsterdam to Cape Town to explore the agenda from a youth perspective. In closing, he called on all Member States to include a youth representative in their delegations to the seventieth session of the United Nations General Assembly. There could be no peace, prosperity or progress without the full and equal participation of young people.

30. *Mr. Faye (Senegal), Vice-Chair, took the Chair.*

31. **Ms. Solórzano** (Nicaragua) said that her Government continued to pursue its fundamental objective of human development based on Christian values, socialist ideals and solidary practices. It had met the Millennium Development Goal of eradicating

extreme poverty and had substantially reduced inequality, exclusion, hunger and malnutrition. It had more women ministers, parliamentarians and mayors than most of the world's countries and was working to prevent domestic violence and strengthen the family through legislation and practical measures such as women's commissariats in every municipality, maternity waiting homes throughout the country, early childhood care programmes and free health care and education for all.

32. Nicaragua had more than halved the maternal mortality rate and had made significant strides in reducing under-five mortality. Its successful efforts to combat drug trafficking, organized crime and human trafficking made it the safest country in the region. It would continue to work to realize all the human rights of all its citizens. In closing, her delegation thanked Nicaragua's partners in the Bolivarian Alliance for the Peoples of Our America and Petrocaribe for their enormous contribution to improving the quality of life of the citizens of Nicaragua.

33. **Mr. Raja Zaib Shah** (Malaysia) noted that progress on social development could be hindered by external factors such as the global economic and financial crisis. His delegation concurred with the Secretary-General's recommendations for promoting social development through empowerment, as set forth in his report on the implementation of the outcome of the World Summit for Social Development and of the twenty-fourth special session of the General Assembly (A/69/157). To meet the changing needs of Malaysian families, the Government had recently implemented parenting-at-work and premarital education programmes.

34. Malaysia was encouraging youth volunteerism, through a seed fund for youth volunteer activities and promoting youth leadership through a new youth parliament. Welcoming the Secretary-General's report on the follow-up to the Second World Assembly on Ageing (A/69/180), he said that his Government was implementing a national policy and plan of action for older persons based on the three priority areas of the Madrid International Plan of Action on Ageing. It would continue to work to create national consensus and to develop inclusive social development programmes for all Malaysians, regardless of creed or ethnicity.

35. **Ms. Mejía Vélez** (Colombia) said that the State alone had the means to establish the laws, institutions and infrastructures needed to empower its citizens and bring about equitable social development. The twentieth anniversary of the International Year of the Family was an excellent occasion to further strengthen the ability of families to contribute to the social and economic well-being of society. However, to be effective, policies must encompass all families, not just traditional families.

36. Her delegation called on the Open-ended Working Group on Ageing to develop, without further delay, a proposal on the main elements that should be included in an international legal instrument to promote and protect the rights and dignity of older persons, as stipulated in General Assembly resolution 67/139, and welcomed the appointment of the Independent Expert on the enjoyment of all human rights by older persons. It also welcomed the Commission for Social Development's recent appointment of a Special Rapporteur on disability, who would help to integrate a disability perspective into development processes.

37. In addressing the economic and political barriers to young people's full participation in development, States should bear in mind that the 15 priority areas of the World Programme of Action for Youth were all interrelated and equally important. It was troubling that the economic system was unable to create conditions that facilitated young people's access to the labour market, and States should continue to explore solutions such as comprehensive, quality education, educational equity and the possibilities provided by science, technology and innovation.

38. **Ms. Bany** (Poland), speaking as a youth delegate and recalling the lofty goals of the Charter, said that the international community must not rest on its laurels. The Polish experience showed that sustainable development must be based on the rule of law and respect for the fundamental freedoms of all. Young people wished to exercise their rights, including their right to be heard. In many parts of the world, a disproportionate number of young people were without jobs or livelihoods. The younger generation was thus a natural and necessary partner in the quest for sustainable development.

39. She called on the international community to include youth organizations in discussions on the post-

2015 development agenda, to revive the World Programme of Action for Youth in the context of the sustainable development goals and to expand the recruitment of young professionals in international organizations.

40. **Mr. Pruchnik** (Poland), speaking as a youth delegate, said that the few countries that had escaped the middle-income trap had a high stock of social capital, in other words, human capital, institutions and infrastructure. Of the three components, the most important was institutions, which regulated not only business activities but also rights and freedoms. When discussing poverty reduction, economic convergence and social development, the Committee should focus on social capital, especially institutions.

41. **Mr. Abdrakhmanov** (Kazakhstan) said that his delegation welcomed the focus on social development in the proposed sustainable development goals. Kazakhstan endorsed the recommendations in the Secretary-General's report (A/69/157), which were in line with its own development strategy. The Kazakhstan 2050 strategy for development called for higher quality education and health care, targeted social support, enhanced social security and retirement benefits, new retraining programmes and measures to modernize labour, employment and salary policies, all with an emphasis on the needs of the most vulnerable or marginalized groups and regions.

42. At a time when other States were cutting social programmes, Kazakhstan had continued to increase social spending with a focus on children, youth, women, older persons and persons with disabilities. It was fully committed to achieving the objectives of the United Nations system through partnership in multilateral action to implement the post-2015 development agenda.

43. **Mr. Batora** (Ethiopia) said that, as required under the Ethiopian Constitution, his Government was implementing strategies and intervention programmes to protect and promote the social and economic rights of all Ethiopians. It agreed that disability should be a cross-cutting issue in all global development goals and processes, and it was making every effort to incorporate the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities into national law, as well as taking concrete measures to promote full participation and equal opportunity for persons with disabilities.

44. Ethiopia's education policy had helped young people to qualify for jobs and increase their earnings and had raised the adult literacy rate to almost 40 per cent. Although child mortality had been halved, progress on reducing maternal mortality lagged. Youth volunteerism had tripled since 2010. To tackle high unemployment, particularly among the young, Ethiopia was pursuing broad-based, pro-poor, employment-centred economic growth with an emphasis on the agricultural sector and small and medium enterprises.

45. **Ms. Sabelo** (South Africa) said that social development should be at the centre of the post-2015 development agenda. The recent Ebola virus outbreak highlighted the importance of strengthening health care systems in developing countries. International cooperation and adequate resources were crucial to stem the spread of the disease, which posed a global health risk. Her Government had implemented targeted programmes to empower women, young people, persons with disabilities, older persons and the family. It provided access to basic social protection and social services for all South Africans, as well as income support and a social wage package including social benefits for those who qualified.

46. Her country was working to reduce high youth unemployment by ensuring access to higher education and vocational training. With respect to older persons, it supported the establishment of a United Nations convention on the human rights of older persons based on the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, the Madrid Plan of Action on Ageing and the African Common Position on the Human Rights of Older Persons in Africa. It recognized families of all kinds and considered the family to be the basic unit of development.

47. **Mr. Abubaker** (Libya) said that over the years the enormous barriers to social development had made people less and less optimistic. The world faced new challenges, such as the spread of the Ebola virus and the terrible destruction inflicted by Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant. The best approach was to tackle the causes of the problems, rather than the effects. Regrettably, after the great sacrifices made by the Libyan people in 2011, the ensuing instability had halted social development, and the Government must therefore redouble its efforts to achieve the internationally recognized goals, as well as to reintegrate combatants into society. Its first priorities were to restore stability through national

reconciliation, strengthen vital basic care, revive the economy, stamp out corruption and bring development to rural areas.

48. **Ms. Al-Malki** (Qatar) said that priority should be given to producing a post-2015 development agenda which should address the empowerment of marginalized and vulnerable groups. Recognizing the importance of empowerment, Qatar was pursuing people-centred social development, as described in the Qatar National Vision 2030, which called for social development based on the establishment of strong and active civil society organizations, and implemented in its National Development Strategy 2011-2016.

49. In view of the family's fundamental role in society and development, Qatar attached great importance to protecting the family and developing the capacities of family members. One civil society organization, the Doha International Institute for Family Studies and Development, had recently organized an international conference on empowering families. Its outcome document, the Doha Call to Action, urged Governments to take specific steps to empower and enable families to contribute to development.

50. Another civil society organization, the Shafallah Center for Children with Special Needs, had established a mechanism to ensure educational and social services for persons with disabilities. Silatech, established in 2008, was working to improve opportunities for young people throughout the Arab world. Qatar's Educate a Child initiative aimed to ensure that every child in the world had access to quality primary education. In closing, she reaffirmed her country's commitment to playing an active role in the global partnership for equitable and sustainable development.

The meeting rose at 5.55 p.m.