Chapter I

Development policy and international economic cooperation

The year 2015 marked a milestone with the expiration of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) and the adoption of the post-2015 development agenda, including the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). At the United Nations summit for the adoption of the post-2015 development agenda in September, participants adopted the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development with its 17 SDGs and 169 associated targets. In a September resolution, the General Assembly endorsed the outcome document and resolved, by 2030, to end poverty and hunger everywhere; combat inequalities within and among countries; build peaceful, just and inclusive societies; protect human rights and promote gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls; and ensure the lasting protection of the planet and its natural resources. It also resolved to create conditions for sustainable, inclusive and sustained economic growth, shared prosperity and decent work for all, and assigned the central role in overseeing follow-up and review at the global level to the high-level political forum under the auspices of the General Assembly and the Economic and Social Council. The resolution further announced the launch of a Technology Facilitation Mechanism in order to support the implementation of the SDGs.

In a December resolution, the General Assembly welcomed the launch of the Global Partnership for Sustainable Transport, developed by the International Road Transport Union and the United Nations Global Compact, as the primary tool to implement the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development in the transport sector, and called for efforts to promote regional and interregional economic integration and cooperation, including by improving transportation infrastructure, enhancing connectivity and facilitating trade and investment.

Noting the key findings contained in the review of the implementation of the United Nations Decade of Education for Sustainable Development (2005–2014) the General Assembly in December called upon the international community to provide inclusive and equitable quality education at all levels, and encouraged Governments and other concerned stakeholders to scale up education for sustainable development action through implementation of the Global Action Programme on Education for Sustainable Development.

The General Assembly, in its review of progress made in implementing the Second United Nations Decade for the Eradication of Poverty (2008–2017), expressed its concern that progress had been uneven, and stressed the need for the development of a global strategy on youth employment.

In May, the Commission on Science and Technology for Development considered progress made in implementing and following up to the outcomes of the World Summit on the Information Society (WSIS). It also addressed its two priority themes on strategic foresight for the post-2015 development agenda and digital development. In December, the Assembly adopted a resolution on the outcome document of the high-level meeting of the General Assembly on the overall review of the implementation of the WSIS outcomes.

With regard to development policy and public administration, the Committee for Development Policy, in March, addressed the themes of accountability for the implementation of the post-2015 development agenda as its contribution to the discussions on the 2015 annual ministerial review; the triennial review of the category of least developed countries (LDCs); monitoring of countries that were graduating and had graduated from the list of LDCs; review and fine-tuning of the human assets index of the criteria for the identification of LDCs; and strengthening official development assistance for the implementation of the Istanbul Programme of Action.

The Committee of Experts on Public Administration, at its April session, considered the issue of building trust in government in pursuit of the SDGs, including through redefining relationships and responsibilities in support of participatory governance and responsive public service delivery; strengthening innovation, prioritization, informed decision-making and integration of policy development processes; and promoting accountable institutions, ethical leadership and integrity.

The United Nations continued to address the development problems of groups of countries in special situations, including follow-up to the Fourth United Nations Conference on the Least Developed Countries, and UN system support to small island developing States (SIDS), including through implementation of the Mauritius Strategy for Further Implementation of the Programme of Action for
the Sustainable Development of SIDS and the SIDS Accelerated Modalities of Action (SAMOA) Pathway. The UN system also continued to strive towards achieving inclusive growth and sustainable development through the Vienna Programme of Action for Landlocked Developing Countries for the Decade 2014–2024.

**International economic relations**

**Economic and social trends**

The World Economic and Social Survey 2014/2015: Learning from national policies supporting MDG implementation [E/2015/50/Rev.1], published by the Department of Economic and Social Affairs (DESA), analysed the broad policies and strategies adopted and implemented to achieve the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), in order to draw necessary lessons for the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). The report used a multidimensional analytical framework to capture the MDG lessons in the areas of economic, social and environmental policies, as well as national adoption of global goals, governance and institutions, peace and stability, global cooperation for achieving development goals, and data development.

The report highlighted that the general growth pattern observed during the MDG period was not sustainable. For instance, gross domestic product (GDP) per capita growth had been closely associated with an increase in carbon dioxide emissions, which was the main cause of global climate change; and environmental sustainability challenges, such as resource depletion, ecosystem degradation and climate change had undercut the hard-earned gains in economic and social development in many developing countries. It further emphasized that while economic policies sought to support the achievement of the MDGs through the promotion of a growth pattern that was sustained, inclusive and equitable, the post-2015 growth pattern had to become environmentally sustainable for attainment of the SDGs. An important step in effecting that transformation entailed counting the full value of environmental resources in the measurement of national wealth, including through developing and mainstreaming the 2012 System of Environmental–Economic Accounting, adopted by the Statistical Commission in its decision 43/105 [YUN 2012, p. 1247].

With regard to social policies, non-contributory social protection schemes would continue to be important for the reduction of poverty during post-2015, and many low-income developing countries would continue to need external support in order to administer those policies. In the field of education, MDG experience pointed to the necessity of aligning expansion of education with expansion of employment opportunities. It was also important to note the time lags between educational investment and its benefit in the form of increased economic growth. Health systems had to provide people-centred solutions and had to become part of the core social institutions.

Important issues in the field of environmental policies included protecting the atmosphere to combat climate change; sustainable management of forests; protecting terrestrial and marine areas, water use, fish stock and biodiversity; and improving drinking water, sanitation and slums. As the MDGs relied largely on environment-related conventions under the aegis of the United Nations for the determination and implementation of environmental targets, and the SDGs also appeared to follow that model, greater efforts were needed to ensure the success of those conventions.

The report concluded that the adoption of global development goals by Governments was the important initial step towards achieving the goals, and it required decisions by political leadership, legislative changes, consultation with stakeholders and advocacy, and incorporation of the global goals into national and subnational plans and budgets. The UN system could play a crucial role in assisting Member States as they engaged in that process. A range of economic, social and environmental policies were found to have been crucial for achieving the MDGs through either their direct influence on specific goals and targets or their indirect effects on creation of the necessary enabling conditions. Some of those policies would have to be adjusted to the much broader scope of the SDGs. Good governance, effective institutions, peace and stability were found to be both enablers and outcomes of development; taking into account that interconnection would be of great importance for implementation of the post-2015 development agenda. Various forms of global partnerships would have to be strengthened in order for the SDGs to be achieved.

The World Economic Situation and Prospects 2015: update as of mid-2015, jointly produced by DESA, the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD) and the five UN regional commissions, projected the world GDP to grow at 2.8 per cent in 2015, accelerating to 3.1 per cent in 2016. The growth divergence among various regions was widening, owing to differing impacts of the decline in the prices of oil and other commodities, as well as country-specific factors. The short-term growth prospects of heavily commodity-dependent countries had worsened considerably. By contrast, commodity importers were benefiting from lower prices in the form of reduced inflationary, fiscal and balance-of-payment pressures. The overall subdued performance of the world economy in preceding years had raised concerns of a “new normal” of lower growth, and the broad-based weakness in investment worldwide not
only held back growth, but also reduced potential growth in the future.

The downside risks to the baseline outlook were related to the impact of the monetary policy normalization in the United States of America, uncertainties in the eurozone, potential spillovers from geopolitical conflicts and persistent vulnerabilities in emerging economies. To mitigate those risks and ensure a return to strong, sustainable and balanced growth, a broad set of policy measures at the domestic, regional and global levels was needed. The report identified key challenges in the areas of monetary, fiscal, labour market and trade policies, underlining the need for strengthened international policy coordination.

**Development and international economic cooperation**

International economic cooperation issues were considered by various UN bodies, including the General Assembly and the Economic and Social Council.

The Council held a special high-level meeting (New York, 20–21 April) with the World Bank, the International Monetary Fund, the World Trade Organization and UNCTAD, addressing the theme “Coherence, coordination and cooperation in the context of financing for sustainable development and the post-2015 development agenda” (see p. 000). For its consideration at the meeting, the Council had before it a note [E/2015/52] by the Secretary-General.

On 22 December (decision 70/540), the Assembly took note of the report of the Second (Economic and Financial) Committee regarding macroeconomic policy questions [A/70/470].

**High-level segment of Economic and Social Council**

In accordance with General Assembly resolutions 67/290 [YUN 2013, p. 782] and 68/1 [ibid., p. 1413], and Economic and Social Council decision 2015/205 (see p. 000), the Council held the high-level segment of its 2015 substantive session in New York from 6 to 10 July [A/70/3], including the three-day ministerial meeting of the high-level political forum on sustainable development.

The Council had before it the reports of the Secretary-General on managing the transition from the Millennium Development Goals to the sustainable development goals: what it will take [E/2015/68] and on strengthening and building institutions for policy integration in the post-2015 era [E/2015/69] (see p. 000); and notes on the progress on the 10-year framework of programmes on sustainable consumption and production patterns [E/2015/56] and on the discussions on the theme of the eighteenth session of the Commission on Science and Technology for Development [E/2015/78] (see p. 000). It also had before it the World Economic and Social Survey 2014/2015: MDG Lessons for Post-2015 [E/2015/50] and a report on the world economic situation and prospects as of mid-2015 [E/2015/73] (see p. 000).

On 8 July [E/HLS/2015/1], the Council adopted a ministerial declaration of the high-level segment on the theme “Managing the transition from the Millennium Development Goals to the sustainable development goals: what it will take”.

**Policy dialogue.** On 9 July [A/70/3], the Council held a high-level policy dialogue with international financial and trade institutions on the topic “Headwinds in the global economy”.

**Thematic discussion.** On 10 July, in accordance with decision 2015/206 (see p. 000), the Economic and Social Council held the thematic discussion of its 2015 high-level segment on “Strengthening and building institutions for policy integration in the post-2015 era”. The Council had before it a report of the Secretary-General on the topic [E/2015/69], which represented a conceptual discussion of institutions and institutional arrangements that could best support integrated policymaking to tackle the goals and challenges of the post-2015 period. It noted that transformation of governance mechanisms and structures at all levels would be needed to enable institutions to support policy coherence and integration across all dimensions of sustainable development in the post-2015 context. It also highlighted that institutions would need to be multidisciplinary, participatory, collaborative, transparent, accountable, willing and agile so as to be adaptable to evolving circumstances. Recommendations included institutional innovation to make policy integration work in practice; government ownership and transformational leadership to initiate institutional change; new and effective governance structures to facilitate multi-stakeholder engagement in the various stages of policymaking; changes in norms, rules and regulations; and building institutional capacity to strengthen management of the sustainable development process.

**Communication.** On 6 October [A/70/410], South Africa transmitted to the Secretary-General the Ministerial Declaration adopted at the thirty-ninth annual meeting of Ministers for Foreign Affairs of the States members of the Group of 77 and China (New York, 24 September), which reviewed the world economic situation and the challenges faced by developing countries.

**Globalization and interdependence**

Pursuant to General Assembly resolution 68/219 [YUN 2013, p. 772], the Secretary-General submitted an August report [A/70/326] on the role of the United...
Nations in promoting development in the context of globalization and interdependence, which examined trends and challenges in globalization and their implications for policymaking. The report also considered several key global and transboundary issues, such as inequality within and between countries, the financial and economic crisis, the energy and food crises, and climate change, that had potential implications for the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development were also examined. It was proposed that the United Nations enhance its role in policy integration, coordination and coherence to support and reinforce efforts towards the achievement of the 2030 Agenda. The Addis Ababa Action Agenda, adopted at the third International Conference on Financing for Development (see p. 000), provided concrete policies and action that should be implemented to support the achievement of the 2030 Agenda.

The Secretary-General recommended that Governments improve policy coordination and coherence through the relevant global and regional institutions and policies to enhance global economic and financial stability; continue to promote enabling domestic and international conditions for sustainable private sector investment that supported national development policies; and strengthen cooperation and dialogue on international migration. Assistance should be provided to developing countries to attain long-term debt sustainability, including through well-coordinated policies that fostered debt financing, relief and re-structuring and sound debt management. To address global environmental priorities and transboundary challenges from the local to the global level, all development stakeholders should align their environmental governance structures to support the integration of social, environmental and economic objectives into sustainable development policies.

**GENERAL ASSEMBLY ACTION**

On 22 December [meeting 81], the General Assembly, on the recommendation of the Second (Economic and Financial) Committee [A/70/474/Add.1], adopted resolution 70/211 (Role of the United Nations in promoting development in the context of globalization and interdependence) without vote [agenda item 22 (a)].

Also on the same date, by decision 70/543, the General Assembly took note of the report of the Second Committee on globalization and interdependence [A/70/474].

**Development cooperation with middle-income countries**

In response to General Assembly resolution 68/222 [YUN 2013, p. 774], the Secretary-General submitted a July report [A/70/227] on development cooperation with middle-income countries. In 2015, there were 104 countries in that category.

Middle-income countries were facing a number of challenges in the three dimensions (economic, environmental and social) of sustainable development. While economic growth in those countries had remained robust, the pace had nevertheless slowed owing to both less favourable external conditions and domestic fragilities. That, in turn, had led to challenging conditions in labour markets, besides structural employment problems in a number of countries. While middle-income countries as a group had registered remarkable progress towards the MDGs, particularly in reducing poverty, they were facing challenges in terms of sustainable development. High GDP growth rates had often been accompanied by rising greenhouse gas emission levels and environmental degradation; and undermanaged rural-urban migration, the influx of migrants and the rapid growth of informal settlements and slums in urban centres posed another sustainable development challenge.

Development cooperation between the UN system and middle-income countries was as varied as it was important for the achievement of sustainable development in those countries. Upstream cooperation activities and, in particular, capacity-building had gained in significance, as had concerns about environmental sustainability. The United Nations Industrial Development Organization had facilitated a number of activities in middle-income countries, including the project “EQuIP—Enhancing the Quality of Industrial Policies”, to support policymakers in middle-income countries in the design of evidence-based strategies for inclusive and sustainable industrial development. It also organized the first regional round table on inclusive and sustainable industrial development (Buenos Aires, Argentina, March), and facilitated an international conference on industrial development in middle-income countries (Minsk, Belarus, 23–24 April). The International Labour Organization (ILO) was active in many middle-income countries, providing technical support and advisory services through decent work country programmes. During the 2013–2015 period, ILO provided development assistance to 92 middle-income countries. The United Nations Environment Programme assisted Governments, businesses and individuals to reduce emissions in an effort to minimize the pace and scale of climate change. It also provided cooperative technical assistance to middle-income countries facing disasters and conflicts.

The Secretary-General observed that future initiatives needed to take into account country-specific needs and the trade-off between creating a more coherent policy background for development cooperation of the UN system with middle-income countries and preserving sufficient independence to meet with the specific mandates of individual agencies.
Development through partnerships

In accordance with General Assembly resolution 68/234 [YUN 2013, p. 776], the Secretary-General submitted an August report [A/70/296] on enhanced cooperation between the United Nations and all relevant partners, in particular the private sector. The Secretary-General stated that progress in implementing the recommendations of that resolution had contributed to a more strategic and integrated approach to engaging with business partners and the design of more innovative, effective and impactful partnerships for sustainable development and humanitarian purposes. At the same time, emerging trends were driving new partnership developments within the United Nations and setting the stage for progress to come. The United Nations was becoming more adept at managing the risks of partnering with the private sector, both by improving due diligence and integrity measures and by leveraging its reputation and normative strength to align the business community with the values of the United Nations. The Secretary-General observed that the United Nations should pursue stronger disclosure of partnership activity to better monitor results; and that UN entities should adopt a holistic approach to private sector engagement, employing risk-managed partnership strategies where appropriate and pursuing integrated partnership models that positively affected business partners’ core corporate performance while pursuing other specific partnership objectives; and build robust engagement mechanisms and strategies that fostered institutional continuity while leveraging their unique mandates, operational advantages and capacities, including at country level.

Human security

At the Third UN World Conference on Disaster Risk Reduction (Sendai, Japan, 14–18 March) (see p. 000), the Human Security Unit of the United Nations Trust Fund for Human Security (untfhs) and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Japan hosted an event entitled “Disaster Risk Reduction and Human Security: Effective Responses to Strengthen Resilience and Protect and Empower People in Response to Natural Disasters”. The event highlighted the effectiveness of the human security approach in tackling disaster risk reduction and how it added value to strengthening the resilience of communities, especially those most vulnerable.

The United Nations summit for the adoption of the post-2015 development agenda, held in September and convened as a high-level plenary meeting of the General Assembly, represented the culmination of years of research and negotiation on the post-2015 development agenda, a bold vision for achieving sustainable development for all. More than 150 world leaders attended the summit and formally adopted the Sustainable Development Goals (sdgs), a set of 17 goals that address global challenges, in-
including poverty, inequality, climate change, environmental degradation, peace and justice. The goals were designed to benefit all people, in all countries of the world.

**High-level political forum on sustainable development**

In accordance with General Assembly resolutions 67/290 [YUN 2013, p. 782] and 68/1 [ibid., p. 1413], and Economic and Social Council decision 2015/205 (see p. 000), the third meeting of the high-level political forum on sustainable development was convened (New York, 26 June–8 July) under the auspices of the Council [E/HLPF/2015/4] and the three-day ministerial segment (6–8 July), was held during the Council’s high-level segment (see p. 000). The theme for the high-level forum was “Strengthening integration, implementation and review: the high-level political forum after 2015”. The forum held 19 panel discussions on: shaping the world for 2030; the role of business in the implementation of the post-2015 development agenda; supporting national action through the outcomes of the high-level political forum; keeping science involved in the implementation of the sdgs; the Global Sustainable Development Report; changing approaches to policymaking; regional support for national action; the sdgs Accelerated Modalities of Action (samoan Pathway); communicating the agenda; training and learning for sustainable development; sustainable consumption and production; investing in the future we want; tracking progress through existing mechanisms; a transformative integrated agenda; emerging issues; communicating and implementing a universal agenda at home; the high-level political forum on sustainable development in the next 15 years; reviewing and monitoring progress; and realizing the sdgs. The forum also held a general debate (7–8 July) within the framework of the general debate of the Council’s high-level segment.

The 2015 Global Sustainable Development Report, launched by the UN Secretariat in June, was discussed at the forum. The report examined the sustainable development goals as constituting an interlinked system, analysing how the goals were interrelated through their targets, and how progress towards one goal depended on and contributed to progress towards others. It also provided a survey of scientific findings on pressing sustainable development issues involving oceans, seas and marine resources and human well-being; the cross-cutting issue of disaster risk reduction; industrialization and its links to sustainable consumption and production; and innovative uses of big data in Africa. It highlighted the state of the science-policy interface in countries in special situations and examined emerging issues from various perspectives. Member States underlined that the report should inform intergovernmental discussions and should be clearly linked to the implementation, follow-up and review of the sdgs, focusing on the interlinkages of the goals and identifying emerging issues.

The forum had before it a report of the Secretary-General on the mainstreaming of the three dimensions of sustainable development throughout the UN system [A/70/75-E/2015/55] (see p. 000), a note of the Secretary-General transmitting the progress report on the 10-year framework of programmes on sustainable consumption and production patterns [E/2015/56] (see p. 000), and discussion papers on the theme of the high-level political forum on sustainable development [E/HLPF/2015/2]. It also had before it reports of the regional forums on sustainable development [E/HLPF/2015/3], namely of the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (New York, 19–20 March) [E/HLPF/2015/3/Add.1], the Economic Commission for Europe (Geneva, 14–16 April) [E/HLPF/2015/3/Add.2], the Arab High-level Forum on Sustainable Development (Manama, Bahrain, 5–7 May) [E/HLPF/2015/3/Add.3], the Asia-Pacific Forum on Sustainable Development (Bangkok, 21–22 May) [E/HLPF/2015/3/Add.4], and the Africa Regional Forum on Sustainable Development (Addis Ababa, 17–18 June) [E/HLPF/2015/3/Add.5], which were submitted in response to Assembly resolutions 67/290 [YUN 2013, p. 782] and 69/214 [YUN 2014, p. 948].

**Ministerial declaration.** On 8 July, the forum adopted a ministerial declaration on the theme “Strengthening integration, implementation and review: the high-level political forum on sustainable development after 2015” in which participants requested the Economic and Social Council to issue summaries of the discussions held at the high-level segment and the high-level political forum as a contribution to the third International Conference on Financing for Development (see p. 000) and the intergovernmental negotiations on the post-2015 development agenda.

**Follow-up to UN Conference on Sustainable Development**

**Open Working Group on Sustainable Development Goals**


Explanations of positions and reservations by some Member States on the 2014 report of the Open Working Group on Sustainable Development Goals were transmitted to the General Assembly in an August report [A/68/970/Add.2]. In a further addendum
Adoption of the post-2015 development agenda

On 16 January, by decision 69/555 on modalities for the process of intergovernmental negotiations on the post-2015 development agenda, the General Assembly decided that the co-facilitators would ensure the engagement of the relevant stakeholders, including major groups, civil society, scientific and knowledge institutions, parliaments, local authorities and the private sector; and seek their views, building upon the practices of the Open Working Group on Sustainable Development Goals and in accordance with resolution 69/244 [YUN 2014, p. 961]. It further decided that, in accordance with resolution 68/390 [ibid., p. 946], the proposal of the Open Working Group should be the main basis for integrating the SDGs into the post-2015 development agenda; and that the initial draft of the outcome document on the post-2015 development agenda should be prepared on the basis of views provided by Member States and taking into account substantive discussions in the negotiations, and should be presented to Member States by May 2015 for the intergovernmental negotiations. It also decided that the interactive dialogues of the summit should have an overarching theme entitled “Transforming the world: realizing the post-2015 development agenda” and the themes for the six individual dialogues would be decided through the process of intergovernmental negotiations.

On 5 March (decision 69/557), the General Assembly decided that the opening plenary meeting of the UN summit for the adoption of the post-2015 development agenda on 25 September would begin at 11 a.m.; and that the first interactive dialogue would be convened from 12 p.m. to 3 p.m. on the same day.

General Assembly action. In response to Assembly resolution 69/244, the President of the General Assembly convened informal interactive hearings on the post-2015 development agenda with representatives of non-governmental organizations (NGOs), civil society organizations, major groups and the private sector (New York, 26–27 May).

Addis Ababa Action Agenda. At the third International Conference on Financing for Development (Addis Ababa, 13–16 July), participants adopted the Addis Ababa Action Agenda of the Third International Conference on Financing for Development, which was endorsed by the General Assembly in resolution 69/313 (see p. 000) and was an integral part of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (see below).

The Addis Ababa Action Agenda focused on a global framework for financing development post-2015; action areas; and data, monitoring and follow-up. It identified actions and addressed critical gaps relevant to the post-2015 development agenda,
a range of cross-cutting areas including the sustainable development goals, with the aim of harnessing their considerable synergies so that implementation of one would contribute to the progress of others. Cross-cutting areas included: delivering social protection and essential public services for all; scaling up efforts to end hunger and malnutrition; establishing a new forum to bridge the infrastructure gap; promoting inclusive and sustainable industrialization; generating full and productive employment and decent work for all and promoting micro, small and medium-size enterprises; protecting the ecosystems for all; and promoting peaceful and inclusive societies.

Parliamentary hearing. In a July note [A/70/137-E/2015/86], which was circulated pursuant to General Assembly resolution 65/123 [YUN 2010, p. 1417], the President of the General Assembly transmitted to the Assembly and the Economic and Social Council the summary report of a parliamentary hearing (New York, 19–20 November 2014) that brought together some 200 parliamentarians and ambassadors from a diverse set of countries under the theme “Ensuring a people-centred approach to the new sustainable development goals: a shared responsibility”. The hearing was jointly organized by the Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU) and the President of the General Assembly. The participants emphasized the need for parliamentary involvement in the formulation and implementation of the SDGs to ensure that they were people-centred.

Communication. In a 26 June note verbale [A/70/131], Bangladesh, as the country holding the presidency of IPU, forwarded to the General Assembly the Hanoi Declaration, endorsed by the 132nd Assembly of IPU (Hanoi, Vietnam, 31 March). The Assembly reviewed the emerging SDGs and considered their role in attaining them.

Intergovernmental negotiations on the post-2015 development agenda. Eight meetings of the process of the intergovernmental negotiations on the post-2015 development agenda were held, all in New York. The first session (19–21 January) conducted a stock-taking of governments’ views on the agenda. The second session (17–20 February) focused on the declaration component for the UN summit for the adoption of the post-2015 development agenda outcome document. The third session (23–27 March) focused on a proposed timeline and roadmap for the UN Statistical Commission to create an indicator framework for the SDGs; country experiences in implementing sustainable development; and arrangements for the fourth session (21–24 April), which was convened as a joint meeting with the third International Conference on Financing for Development preparatory process (see p. 000). The fifth session (18–22 May) discussed follow-up and review of the post-2015 development agenda; goals, targets and indicators; and themes for the interactive dialogues during the post-2015 summit (see p. 000), as requested by General Assembly decision 69/555 (see above). At the sixth session (22–25 June), participants provided reactions and amendments to the zero draft that had been circulated. The seventh session (20–24 July) undertook a section-by-section review of the preamble and declaration, goals and targets, means of implementation, and follow-up and review. At the eighth session (27 July–2 August), Member States attempted to bridge differences on several contentious issues. On 2 August, Member States adopted by acclamation the outcome document on the post-2015 development agenda entitled “Transforming Our World: The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development”. The document was transmitted to the General Assembly (see below).

GENERAL ASSEMBLY ACTION

On 1 September [meeting 101], the General Assembly adopted resolution 69/315 [draft: A/69/L.85, as orally revised] (Draft outcome document of the United Nations summit for the adoption of the post-2015 development agenda) without vote [agenda items 13 (a) & 115].

Communication. In a 22 September letter [A/70/401], Bangladesh transmitted to the Secretary-General the final declaration adopted at the Fourth World Conference of Speakers of Parliament, convened by IPU at United Nations Headquarters from 31 August to 2 September 2015.

UN summit for the adoption of the post-2015 development agenda

In accordance with General Assembly resolution 69/244 [YUN 2014, p. 961] and decision 69/557 of 5 March (see p. 000), the United Nations summit for the adoption of the post-2015 development agenda (New York, 25–27 September) was convened as a high-level plenary meeting of the General Assembly. The summit was attended by more than 150 Heads of State and Government and high-level leaders from business and civil society, who formally adopted the 17 SDGs and 169 targets included in the document entitled “Transforming our world: the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development” (see below).

Speakers at the summit reflected on the MDGs and outlined the impressive achievements in implementing them yet noted that progress had been uneven, and that unfinished business remained. The SDGs were recognized as more comprehensive and complex and a springboard for continued progress. The summit further included six interactive dialogues on ending poverty and hunger; tackling inequalities, empowering women and girls and leaving no one behind; fostering sustainable economic growth, transformation and promoting sustainable consumption and production; protecting our planet and combating climate change; building effective, accountable and inclusive
institutions; and a strengthened global partnership for realizing the post-2015 development agenda.

GENERAL ASSEMBLY ACTION

On 25 September [meeting 4], the General Assembly adopted resolution 70/1 [draft: A/70/L.1] (Transforming our world: the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development) without vote [agenda items 15 & 116].

Communications. In a 24 September letter [A/70/417], the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia transmitted to the Secretary-General a joint statement of the States members of the Central European Initiative at the UN summit for the adoption of the post-2015 development agenda on the outcome document entitled “Transforming our world: the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development”. The States members pledged their full support to the 2030 Agenda and called upon the international community to display the utmost degree of good will and mutual trust in order to support the new, effective Agenda.

Further statements, including observations and reservations on the outcome document of the UN summit were submitted by Cameroon [A/70/382]; Canada [A/70/383]; Iran [A/70/399]; Libya [A/70/372]; Qatar [A/69/1022]; the Sudan [A/70/370]; and Yemen [A/70/402].

Programme budget implications. In a September note [A/70/391] on programme budget implications of draft resolution A/70/L.1, the Secretary-General informed the General Assembly that the implementation of the recommendations contained in the outcome document of the UN summit for the adoption of the post-2015 development agenda, entitled “Transforming our world: the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development”, would give rise to additional resource requirements under the proposed programme budget for the biennium 2016–2017 and beyond.

Following the adoption of resolution 70/1 (see above), the Secretary-General in December [A/70/589 & Corr.1] submitted revised estimates resulting from the decisions contained in that outcome document and in the Addis Ababa Action Agenda of the Third International Conference on Financing for Development (see p. 000). The Secretary-General requested the General Assembly to approve an additional appropriation, representing a charge against the Contingency Fund, in the total amount of $15,048,600 under the proposed programme budget for the biennium 2016–2017.

ACABQ report. In December [A/70/7/Add.39], the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions (ACABQ) recommended that the General Assembly authorize the Secretary-General to enter into commitments in an amount not exceeding $7,547,300 in the first year of the biennium 2016–2017 for the implementation of the decisions contained in the Addis Ababa Action Agenda and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. ACABQ would revert to its consideration of the proposals of the Secretary-General during the course of its next session.

Implementation of Agenda 21, the Programme for the Further Implementation of Agenda 21 and the outcomes of the World Summit on Sustainable Development and of the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development

Reports of Secretary-General. In accordance with the outcome document of the 2012 United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development, which was endorsed by the General Assembly in its resolution 66/288 (YUN 2012, p. 782), the Secretary-General in March submitted a report [A/70/75-E/2015/55] on mainstreaming of the three dimensions of sustainable development (economic, environmental and social) throughout the UN system. The report highlighted the role of the SDGs at the core of the post-2015 development agenda and their potential to inject new impetus for embracing integrated approaches to development and to marshal a range of policy tools and guidance for collaboration. It noted that the structure of the SDGs had implications for policy integration and coherence across areas, as they referred to multiple goals and sectors. Of the 107 targets in the proposal that were not related to means of implementation, more than half were explicitly cross-cutting, with many targets even linking three or more different goals. Such links could also facilitate real mainstreaming of the three dimensions of sustainable development, particularly around such themes as sustainable consumption and production.

The report also examined accelerated efforts within the UN system to prepare for the new universal development agenda, building on collective efforts that successfully leveraged acceleration towards the achievement of the MDGs. A dialogue involving Member States and all relevant stakeholders held by the Economic and Social Council in February underlined how the UN development system had to respond coherently in linking the normative, standard-setting and operational dimensions of UN work, which would require new thinking and new approaches to work models and financing to guarantee operational effectiveness. The United Nations System Chief Executives Board for Coordination (CEB), through the High-level Committee on Programmes, was looking specifically at sustainable urbanization, climate change and youth employment, in order to identify measures to deepen policy coherence, system-wide coordination and engagement with other stakeholders to better support Member States in those areas. The framework for advancing environmental and social sustainability was being applied throughout various parts of the system.
however, further efforts were needed to promote its full implementation.

The Secretary-General stated that the impact of the post-2015 development agenda and the SDGs was driving the elaboration of more integrated approaches to implementation. The UN system needed to further strengthen its efforts to help countries to implement the universal development agenda and review progress at all levels.

In accordance with General Assembly resolution 69/214, the Secretary-General submitted an August report [A/70/283] on the implementation of Agenda 21, the Programme for the Further Implementation of Agenda 21 and the outcomes of the World Summit on Sustainable Development and of the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development. The report provided an update on the follow-up to the UN Conference on Sustainable Development (YUN 2012, p. 780) and new developments, taking into account the Addis Ababa Action Agenda of the Third International Conference on Financing for Development (see p. 000), which was endorsed by the General Assembly in resolution 69/313 (see p. 000). The report took into account the outcome of the UN summit for the adoption of the post-2015 development agenda (see p. 000) and highlighted the main outcome of the third meeting of the high-level political forum on sustainable development (see p. 000).

The third International Conference on Financing for Development decided to establish a Technology Facilitation Mechanism to be launched at the UN summit for the adoption of the post-2015 development agenda in order to support the SDGs. The Secretary-General highlighted the role of the regional commissions in contributing to the work of the high-level political forum, including through annual regional meetings; and of partnerships and voluntary commitments, directed towards working towards sustainable development, which were monitored through the Sustainable Development Action Registry.

On 20 July, by decision 2015/220, the Economic and Social Council took note of the report of the Secretary-General on the mainstreaming of the three dimensions of sustainable development throughout the UN system (see p. 000).

**Communications.** In a 6 February letter [A/69/769], Uzbekistan transmitted to the Secretary-General information on the outcomes of its socioeconomic development programme in 2014 and on the priorities of the economic programme in 2015.

In a 2 March letter [A/69/825], Ecuador transmitted to the Secretary-General the political declaration of Belén, the action plan 2015, and 26 special declarations, adopted at the third Summit of Heads of State and Government of the Community of Latin American and Caribbean States (Belén, Costa Rica, 28–29 January).

On 11 May [A/69/901], Azerbaijan, Turkey and Turkmenistan transmitted to the Secretary-General a joint statement on trilateral cooperation adopted at a meeting (Ashgabat, Turkmenistan, 29 January) that served as a positive example of a results-based approach and contribution to the international efforts in addressing challenges for the UN post-2015 development agenda.

**General Assembly Action**

On 22 December [meeting 81], the General Assembly, on the recommendation of the Second Committee [A/70/472/Add.1], adopted resolution 70/201 (Implementation of Agenda 21, the Programme for the Further Implementation of Agenda 21 and the outcomes of the World Summit on Sustainable Development and of the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development) without vote [agenda item 20 (a)].

**Technology facilitation mechanism**

Based on recommendations emanating from four structured dialogues on possible arrangements for a facilitation mechanism to promote the development, transfer and dissemination of clean and environmentally sound technologies, which were noted by the Assembly in resolution 68/310 (YUN 2014, p. 951), and the Secretary-General’s proposal included in his synthesis report entitled “The road to dignity by 2030: ending poverty, transforming all lives and protecting the planet” [ibid., p. 1124], the General Assembly, by resolution 69/313 (see p. 000), decided to establish a Technology Facilitation Mechanism, which was to be launched at the United Nations summit for the adoption of the post-2015 development agenda (see p. 000) in order to support the SDGs. It further decided that the Mechanism would be based on a multi-stakeholder collaboration between Member States, civil society, the private sector, the scientific community, UN entities and other stakeholders and would be composed of a UN inter-agency task team on science, technology and innovation for the SDGs, a collaborative multi-stakeholder forum on science, technology and innovation for the SDGs and an online platform. The inter-agency task team would work with 10 representatives from civil society, the private sector and the scientific community to prepare the meetings of the multi-stakeholder forum; and in the development and operationalization of the online platform, including preparing proposals for the modalities for the forum and the online platform. The 10 representatives would be appointed by the Secretary-General, for periods of two years. The online platform would facilitate access to information, knowledge and experience, as well as best practices and lessons learned,
on science, technology and innovation facilitation initiatives and policies. The multi-stakeholder forum on science, technology and innovation for the SDGs was to be convened once a year, for a period of two days, to discuss science, technology and innovation cooperation for the implementation of the SDGs. The summaries of the meetings should serve as input to the meetings of the high-level political forum, in the context of the follow-up and review of the implementation of the post-2015 development agenda.

On 25 September, by resolution 70/1 (see p. 000), the General Assembly decided to launch the Technology Facilitation Mechanism.

International cooperation for sustainable development: the role of transport

Report of Secretary-General. Pursuant to General Assembly resolution 69/213 (YUN 2014, p. 952), the Secretary-General in August submitted a report [A/70/262] on the role of transport and transit corridors in ensuring international cooperation for sustainable development, which conveyed the views of Member States, relevant regional and international organizations and entities of the UN system, including the regional commissions, on issues relating to the development of transport and transit corridors. The Secretariat received submissions from Azerbaijan, Brunei Darussalam, Georgia, Paraguay, the Russian Federation, Turkey and Turkmenistan. It further received submissions from the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean, ILO, UNCTAD, the United Nations Human Settlements Programme (UN-Habitat), the Office of the High Representative for the Least Developed Countries, Landlocked Developing Countries and Small Island Developing States, the World Food Programme and the World Health Organization.

Global Partnership. The Global Partnership for Sustainable Transport and the Post-2015 Development Agenda High-Level Side Event (New York, 26 September), was convened by the International Chamber of Commerce, UN-Habitat, the International Road Transport Union (IRU) and the UN Global Compact. The meeting soft-launched the Global Partnership for Sustainable Transport (GPST), an initiative focusing on the implementation of the SDGs and the recommendations of the Secretary General’s High-level Advisory Group on Sustainable Transport [YUN 2014, p. 951]. The IRU-led public-private GPST was recognized as the primary tool to implement the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development in the transport sector at the first ever Global Conference on Sustainable Transport, to be held in Ashgabat, Turkmenistan in November 2016. GPST focused on the three main areas promoting best practice: giving businesses the tools and information needed to make their day-to-day trading more sustainable, including through promoting initiatives like the 10 principles of the UN Global Compact; starting the conversation, including through encouraging Governments and businesses to talk about sustainability and coming up with concrete solutions; and working in partnership.

GENERAL ASSEMBLY ACTION

On 22 December (meeting 81), the General Assembly, on the recommendation of the Second Committee [A/70/472], adopted resolution 70/197 (Towards comprehensive cooperation among all modes of transport for promoting sustainable multimodal transit corridors) without vote [agenda item 20].

Education for sustainable development

World Education Forum. The World Education Forum 2015 (Incheon, Republic of Korea, 19–22 May) was attended by the Secretary-General and the President of the Republic of Korea, and brought together 1,600 participants from 160 countries, including 120 Ministers of Education, heads of UN agencies, global education leaders and influential advocates from civil society, NGOs, donor agencies and the private sector. By adopting the Incheon Declaration entitled “Education 2030: Towards inclusive and equitable quality education and lifelong learning for all”, Member States and the global community demonstrated their commitment to a single, renewed education agenda that was holistic, ambitious and inspirational, with the aim to realise everyone’s right to education as a fundamental dimension of human, social and economic development.

UNESCO report. In a July note [A/70/228], the Secretary-General transmitted to the General Assembly a letter from the Director-General of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) forwarding a review of the implementation of the United Nations Decade of Education for Sustainable Development (2005–2014) and an account of the World Conference on Education for Sustainable Development (YUN 2014, p. 953), which was submitted in accordance with General Assembly resolutions 65/163 [YUN 2010, p. 806] and 69/211 [YUN 2014, p. 953].

The review was conducted through extensive data collection and consultations with a wide range of stakeholders and was based on regional multi-stakeholder consultations and peer-reviewed research. It concluded that a solid foundation had been laid for education for sustainable development at the end of the Decade, achieved by raising awareness, influencing policies and generating significant numbers of good practice projects in all areas of education and learning. Education systems were addressing sustainability issues; sustainable development agendas and
education agendas were converging; political leadership had proven instrumental; multi-stakeholder partnerships were particularly effective; local commitments were growing; whole-institution approaches had become more widespread; education for sustainable development facilitated interactive, learner-driven pedagogies; education for sustainable development was being integrated into formal education; non-formal and informal education for sustainable development was increasing; and technical and vocational education and training advanced sustainable development. Remaining challenges in realizing the full potential of education for sustainable development included further alignment of education and sustainable development sectors; more effort towards institutionalizing education for sustainable development; and improving monitoring and evaluation. UN coordination during the Decade was ensured through the Inter-Agency Committee for the United Nations Decade of Education for Sustainable Development. UNESCO, as lead agency for the promotion of the Decade, provided strategic leadership for the coordination and implementation of the Decade and undertook its own implementation activities in support of the Decade.

Recommendations for future action on education for sustainable development included implementing the Global Action Programme [YUN 2014, p. 952] in its five priority action areas: policy, learning environments, educators, youth and local communities; aligning education and sustainable development agendas at global, regional, national and subnational levels; strengthening multi-stakeholder partnerships; including using education for sustainable development as a means of implementation across all the SDGs; and systematically integrating and institutionalizing education for sustainable development in the education sector and other relevant sectors in Member States. That required the inclusion of education for sustainable development in relevant policies and developing the capacities of policymakers, institutional leaders and educators. It also required strengthening research, innovation and monitoring and evaluation to support the scaling up of good practice.

**GENERAL ASSEMBLY ACTION**

On 22 December [meeting 81], the General Assembly, on the recommendation of the Second Committee [A/70/472/Add.8], adopted resolution 70/209 (United Nations Decade of Education for Sustainable Development (2005–2014)) without vote [agenda item 20 (b)].

**Agricultural technology for development**

In accordance with General Assembly resolution 68/209 [YUN 2013, p. 790], the Secretary-General submitted an August report [A/70/298] on agricultural technology for development, which examined trends in technologies that had the potential to overcome challenges related to food security and enable producers to transition to more sustainable agricultural systems. The report also provided suggestions for transitioning to sustainable agricultural systems. Challenges to sustainable production included land degradation and soil health; competition for land; loss and waste of food; environmental impact of agricultural chemicals; water use and management; climate change; and regional policy environments.

According to climate change models and the International Model for Policy Analysis of Agricultural Commodities and Trade, the most promising technologies for improving yields were the use of heat tolerant varieties in North America and South Asia; the use of drought tolerant varieties in Latin America and the Caribbean, the Middle East and North Africa, and sub-Saharan Africa; and crop protection in Eastern Europe, South Asia and sub-Saharan Africa. In addition, the adoption of irrigation technologies was expected to amplify and complement the adoption of those technologies. The International Food Policy Research Institute concluded that addressing the issues of both climate change and food security would require increased investments in research on crop productivity, irrigation technologies, and resource management and conservation.

According to the Secretary-General, it was of critical importance to introduce agricultural practices that moved beyond yield gains to build up organic matter in the soil, which would contribute to mitigating climate change while also reducing soil erosion and increasing soil fertility and soil health. As identified by an International Assessment of Agricultural Knowledge, Science and Technology for Development synthesis report, agroecology and organic and regenerative practices provided increased resilience through crop, animal and system diversification, crop rotation, permanent plant cover and significant underground carbon storage. Further recommendations included supporting smallholders and family farmers, especially women and youth; empowering women; investments in pre- and post-harvest loss reduction; building the capacity of family farmers, fisherfolk, fish farmers, forest dwellers and rural producers; increased public investment and conducive policy environments; incentives to increase the role of the private sector; gender-balanced investment; and investments in better data collection and information systems.
Sustainable tourism

In July [A/70/215 & Add.1], the Secretary-General submitted a report on sustainable tourism and sustainable development in Central America, which provided an update on the continuing efforts of Central American States to implement programmes to promote sustainable tourism and sustainable development, and which was submitted in accordance with Assembly resolution 68/207 [YUN 2013, p. 793]. Early in 2015, the World Tourism Organization (unwto) surveyed Central American States to monitor the implementation of the resolution. As only Nicaragua responded, it was not possible to draw broad conclusions for the entire region. The Secretary-General noted that Nicaragua had made significant efforts to support the development of sustainable tourism, including the adoption of new legislation and the establishment of fiscal measures to increase competitiveness, improve air connectivity, facilitate the issuance of visas and enhance the protection of biodiversity, cultural heritage and community rights. Furthermore, it had supported the development of national strategies for disaster prevention that engaged the tourism sector in a public-private partnership to facilitate monitoring and control mechanisms.

Strengthening collaboration on and alignment of sustainable activities at the national, regional and global levels had the potential to provide effective support for evidence-based policy formulation and scaling up of good practices for the development of sustainable tourism in all its forms and in all Member States. In that respect, the Central American Tourism Integration Secretariat framework could contribute to fostering engagement at the national, regional and global levels, something that was essential to aligning policies with a universally shared agenda.

GENERAL ASSEMBLY ACTION

On 22 December [meeting 81], the General Assembly, on the recommendation of the Second Committee [A/70/472], adopted resolution 70/200 (Global Code of Ethics for Tourism) without vote [agenda item 20].

International Year of Sustainable Tourism for Development, 2017

UNWTO session. In an 8 October letter [A/C.2/70/4], the Secretary-General of unwto informed the Chair of the Second Committee (Economic and Financial Committee) that resolution A/RES/653 (XXI) was adopted by the General Assembly of unwto at its twenty-first session (Medellin, Colombia, 12–17 September). The resolution acknowledged with appreciation the initiative of Samoa, together with several other delegations, for the General Assembly of the United Nations to proclaim 2017 as the International Year of Sustainable Tourism for Development. The recommendation by the General Assembly of unwto was made in view of the fact that international tourism was an increasingly significant component of international trade, as evident in export earnings from international tourism and passenger transport, which reached $1.5 trillion in 2014. International tourism (travel and passenger transport) represented 30 per cent of the world’s exports of services and 6 per cent of overall exports of goods and services. As a worldwide export category, tourism ranked fourth after fuels, chemicals and food, and in many developing countries it ranked first.

The objectives of the proposal were to increase awareness among public and private stakeholders about their participatory role in harnessing the contribution of tourism to sustainable development and peace; provide for a better understanding of sustainable tourism and its contributions to economic development; and provide for a better understanding of sustainable tourism and its contributions to economic development.

Report of Secretary-General. In a July report [A/70/224], the Secretary-General reviewed progress on the implementation of the Global Code of Ethics for Tourism. The Code was adopted by the General Assembly of unwto in 1999 and acknowledged by General Assembly resolution 56/212 [YUN 2001, p. 752] as a frame of reference for sustainable tourism development. It constituted a comprehensive set of principles, which aimed at maximizing the sector’s benefits while minimizing the potentially negative impact of tourism on the environment, societies and cultural heritage across the globe.

The report summarized the findings of a survey on the implementation of the Code, which had been conducted by unwto secretariat in 2014. The secretariat had received 62 responses from its member States and territories, including one non-member State, Finland.

In 2011, unwto initiated a campaign to enhance the implementation of the Code by the private sector, the ultimate practitioners of tourism development. As at 30 June, 417 companies and associations from 57 countries around the world had signed the Private Sector Commitment to the unwto Global Code of Ethics for Tourism, of which 134 had submitted their reporting questionnaire to the Committee.

The Secretary-General noted that, despite some remarkable achievements, there was still great scope for improvement in terms of the practical application of the Code’s principles. The World Committee on Tourism Ethics for Tourism had undertaken initial steps to transform the Code into an international convention.

Global Code of Ethics for Tourism

The objectives of the proposal were to increase awareness among public and private stakeholders about their participatory role in harnessing the contribution of tourism to sustainable development and peace; provide for a better understanding of sustainable tourism and its contributions to economic development; and provide for a better understanding of sustainable tourism and its contributions to economic development.
growth, inclusive development and environmental sustainability; and promote policies and business practices that advanced the contribution of tourism to the implementation of relevant SDGs.

**GENERAL ASSEMBLY ACTION**

On 22 December [meeting 81], the General Assembly, on the recommendation of the Second Committee [A/70/472], adopted resolution 70/193 (International Year of Sustainable Tourism for Development, 2017) without vote [agenda item 20].

**Eradication of poverty**

**Second United Nations Decade for the Eradication of Poverty**

In an August report [A/70/281], the Secretary-General reviewed progress on the implementation of the Second United Nations Decade for the Eradication of Poverty (2008–2017), in accordance with General Assembly resolution 69/234 [YUN 2014, p. 956]. The report discussed the progress made to eradicate poverty and examined the challenges—such as low agricultural productivity, high unemployment, rising inequality, social exclusion, economic crises and the impacts of climate change—faced by countries engaged in those efforts. The report also presented an overview of UN activities to implement the plan of action for poverty eradication; and highlighted key policy measures that had proved effective in reducing poverty. The final section of the report offered recommendations for consideration by the Assembly.

The Secretary-General noted that levels of poverty had dropped in all regions: from 1990 to 2015, the number of people living below $1.25 a day had fallen from 957.1 million to 86.4 million in East Asia and the Pacific, from 71.1 million to 1.3 million in Eastern Europe and Central Asia, from 52.7 million to 26.8 million in Latin America and the Caribbean, and from 53.2 per cent to 18.1 per cent in South Asia. In the Middle East and Northern Africa region, poverty rates had begun to trend upward owing to conflict situations. In sub-Saharan Africa, 40.9 per cent of the population lived on less than $1.25 a day in 2015 compared with 56.6 per cent in 1990.

The global labour-market situation remained uneven or fragile, and the rise in the number of people who were unemployed—from 197 million in 2012 to 201 million in 2014—especially among young people, was of great concern, with the Middle East (10.9 per cent) and Northern Africa (12.2 per cent) region experiencing the highest unemployment rates of all regions in 2013.

Policy priorities for poverty eradication and employment creation assessed by the report included structural transformation for employment creation and poverty reduction; investing in agriculture and promoting decent rural employment; improving access to quality education and health care; promoting gender equality and women’s empowerment; expanding social protection coverage; climate change mitigation and adaptation; and combating inequality and social exclusion. The implementation of those policies required concerted efforts at national and international levels. The inter-agency system-wide plan of action for poverty eradication had served to coordinate the efforts of the UN system in its advisory and programmatic support to Member States. The experience of countries that had achieved success in reducing poverty indicated that economic growth had to be complemented by mutually supportive social and environmental policies, critical investments in the social sector, agriculture and infrastructure, and a supportive international environment.

**GENERAL ASSEMBLY ACTION**

On 22 December [meeting 81], the General Assembly, on the recommendation of the Second Committee [A/70/476/Add.1], adopted resolution 70/218 (Second United Nations Decade for the Eradication of Poverty (2008–2017)) without vote [agenda item 24 (a)].

Also on the same date, by decision 70/545, the General Assembly took note of the report of the Second Committee on eradication of poverty and other development issues [A/70/476].

**Millennium Development Goals and the post-2015 development agenda**

The Millennium Development Goals Report 2015, published by the Department of Economic and Social Affairs (DESA), evaluated the progress made on MDG indicators. The report, which was the final one issued on the MDGs, stated that the global mobilization behind the MDGs had produced the most successful anti-poverty movement in history. The data and analysis presented showed that extreme poverty and hunger (Goal 1) had declined significantly: from 1990 to 2015, the proportion of the population in the developing world living on less than $1.25 a day dropped from nearly 50 per cent to 14 per cent; the number of people living in extreme poverty had declined from 1.9 billion to 836 million; and the proportion of undernourished people in the developing regions had fallen from 23.3 per cent to 12.9 per cent.

With respect to universal primary education (Goal 2), the net enrolment rate in the developing regions had reached 91 per cent in 2015, up from 83 per cent in 2000, with Sub-Saharan Africa showing the best record of improvement in primary education of any region. Regarding the promotion of gender equality and the empowerment of women (Goal 3), developing regions as a whole had achieved the target to eliminate gender disparity in primary, secondary and tertiary education. In 2015, women made up 41 per cent of
paid workers outside the agricultural sector and had gained ground in parliamentary representation in nearly 90 per cent of the 174 countries. The reduction of child mortality (Goal 4) was also successful, with the global under-five mortality rate dropping from 90 to 43 deaths per 1,000 live births between 1990 and 2015. Measles vaccination helped prevent nearly 15.6 million deaths between 2000 and 2013, as the rate of children that received at least one dose of measles-containing vaccine went up from 73 per cent to 84 per cent in that period. With regard to maternal health (Goal 5), the maternal mortality ratio had declined by 45 per cent worldwide since 1990, and most of the reduction had occurred since 2000. Concerning the fight against HIV/AIDS, malaria and other diseases (Goal 6), new HIV infections had fallen by approximately 40 per cent between 2000 and 2013, from an estimated 3.5 million cases to 2.1 million, and tuberculosis prevention, diagnosis and treatment interventions saved an estimated 37 million lives. Between 2000 and 2015, the global malaria incidence rate had fallen by an estimated 37 per cent. In the field of environmental sustainability (Goal 7), 1.9 billion people had gained access to piped drinking water; 98 per cent of ozone-depleting substances had been eliminated; and terrestrial and marine protected areas in many regions had increased substantially since 1990. With a view to developing a global partnership for development (Goal 8), official development assistance from developed countries increased by 66 per cent in real terms between 2000 and 2014, reaching $135.2 billion.

Despite those significant achievements on MDG targets, progress had been uneven across regions and countries, leaving significant gaps. The report found that gender inequality persisted, as women faced discrimination in access to work, economic assets and participation in private and public decision-making, and remained at a disadvantage in the labour market. Big gaps existed between the poorest and richest households, and between rural and urban areas, especially with regard to school enrolment, under-five mortality rates, improved drinking water sources and improved sanitation facilities. Climate change and environmental degradation undermined progress achieved, and poor people suffered the most. Conflicts remained the biggest threat to human development and had forced almost 60 million people to abandon their homes by the end of 2014—the highest level recorded since the Second World War. About 800 million people still were still living in extreme poverty and suffering from hunger.

Further progress would require a political will; collective, long-term effort; tackling of root causes; and the integration of economic, social and environmental dimensions of sustainable development. The emerging post-2015 development agenda, including the set of SDGs, strived to reflect those lessons, build on successes and put all countries, together, firmly on track towards a more prosperous, sustainable and equitable world.

Annual ministerial review. From 8 to 10 July, during the high-level segment of its 2015 substantive session [A/70/3] (see p. 000), the Economic and Social Council held its annual ministerial review on the theme “Managing the transition from the Millennium Development Goals to the sustainable development goals: what it will take”, in accordance with decision 2015/203 (see p. 000).

The Council had before it a report [E/2015/68] of the Secretary-General on the topic, which was provided in response to General Assembly resolutions 61/16 [YUN 2006, p. 1589] and 68/1 [YUN 2013, p. 1413]. The Secretary-General noted that the international community faced a different set of development challenges at the outset of the post-2015 era than when the UN Millennium Declaration was adopted [YUN 2000, p. 49]. Globalization and interdependence had opened up opportunities for development, but also needs, given that many people had been excluded from their positive impacts. In addition, the world had seen food, energy, financial, health and environmental challenges across countries in the past decade, amplifying global systemic risks. The Secretary-General emphasized that policy integration based on the three dimensions of sustainable development—economic, social and environmental—would need to become the new operational standard, supported by a greater emphasis on achieving integration and coherence across actors and sectors; and suggested that institutions at all levels would need to undertake adaptations to implement the new development agenda, requiring a fundamental shift in mindsets and attitudes accompanied by strong leadership and vision. Emphasis was laid on the importance of ensuring that the efforts of the growing diversity of development actors were aligned with the objectives of the post-2015 development agenda and the underpinning revitalized global partnership for sustainable development. There was a need to build trust among Governments, institutions and people by strengthening institutions at all levels, with institutional arrangements being country-specific and time-specific, and suiting local circumstances. The Secretary-General also stressed that a multi-tiered and inclusive follow-up and review of implementation would be required to ensure an effective exchange of experiences, advancement of progress and ownership and engagement by all development stakeholders.

The annual ministerial review further included two panel discussions on the themes “Lessons from the Millennium Development Goals for the future” and “Implementing a post-2015 development agenda that works for the least developed countries”, and a dialogue with the executive secretaries of the regional
commissions on the theme “Managing the transition to the sustainable development goals: what it will take at the regional level”.

On 10 July, the Council heard voluntary national presentations on the theme of the annual ministerial review provided by Kyrgyzstan [E/2015/62], Mongolia [E/2015/61], the Philippines [E/2015/60] and Zambia [E/2015/63].

Communications. In a letter [A/69/883] dated 16 April, the Republic of Moldova transmitted to the Secretary-General the Chisinau Outcome Statement on Strengthening Capacities and Building Effective Institutions for the Implementation of the Post-2015 Development Agenda, which was endorsed at the High-Level Meeting of the Global Dialogue on Strengthening Capacities and Building Effective Institutions (Chisinau, Republic of Moldova, 25–26 February).

In a letter dated 28 April [A/69/892], Canada, Peru and the Republic of Korea transmitted to the Secretary-General recommendations adopted at a global event entitled “Dialogue on the implementation of the post-2015 development agenda: participatory monitoring for accountability” (Lima, Peru, 12–13 March).

In a letter dated 12 November [A/70/550-S/2015/868], Slovakia and South Africa transmitted the outcomes of a high-level meeting of the Group of Friends of Security Sector Reform (New York, 2 October) on security sector reform and the sdgs.

On 23 December (decision 70/554), the General Assembly decided that the agenda item on follow-up to the outcome of the Millennium Summit would remain for consideration during its resumed seventieth (2016) session.

Science, technology and innovation for development

Commission on Science and Technology for Development

At its eighteenth session (Geneva, 4–8 May) [E/2015/31-E/CN.16/2015/4], the Commission on Science and Technology for Development (cstd) reviewed progress made in the implementation of and follow-up to the outcomes of the World Summit on the Information Society (wsis), held in 2003 and 2005 [YUN 2003, p. 857 & YUN 2005, p. 933], at the regional and international levels. It also considered two priority themes: strategic foresight for the post-2015 development agenda and digital development. The session included a segment on science, technology and innovation policy reviews, and two ministerial round tables on managing the transition from the mdgs to the sdgs: the role of science, technology and innovation, and on ten-year review of progress made in the implementation of wsis outcomes.

The Commission had before it reports of the Secretary-General on the priority themes and on progress made in implementing and following up to the outcomes of wsis at the regional and international levels (see below); and reports by unctad on the meeting of the cstd intersessional panel (Geneva, 26–28 November 2014) [E/CN.16/2015/CRP.1], and on a ten-year review of implementing the wsis outcomes [UNCTAD/DTL/STICT/2015/3] (see p. 000).

The Secretary-General, in his report [E/CN.16/2015/2] on the priority theme of cstd related to digital development, reviewed emerging changes in the digital development landscape with regard to digital technologies, digital demographics and development priorities. The report highlighted the need to broaden the discourse on information and communications technologies (ict) for development, and identified four policy focus areas for facilitating effective digital development: the digital ecosystem, digital inclusion, digital sustainability and digital threats. The Secretary-General encouraged cstd to inform the Secretary-General the Chisinau Outcome Statement on the need for a more central role of icts as an enabler and means of achieving the sdgs, and provide a forum for sharing best practices in terms of developing national and regional regulations and incentive mechanisms to facilitate the application of emerging technologies. Member States were encouraged to collaborate with all relevant stakeholders, develop regulations and initiate pilot projects that would facilitate the wider application of emerging technologies; bring icts to the core of national and international development agendas and conduct audits of national digital ecosystems.

Pursuant to Economic and Social Council resolution 2014/27 [YUN 2014, p. 972], the Commission organized a substantive discussion on the 10-year review report on progress made in the implementation of the outcomes of the World Summit on the Information Society (wsis). The unctad report Implementing wsis Outcomes: A Ten-Year Review [UNCTAD/DTL/STICT/2015/3] was welcomed by most Governments and other stakeholders as a comprehensive, thorough and balanced analysis of developments. Some participants, however, stated that the report did not reflect sufficiently the view that little or no progress had been made in the area of enhanced cooperation. It was suggested that there was a need for clear recommendations and focus on developing countries and their post-2015 needs. The Commission decided to transmit the report through the Economic and Social Council to the General Assembly as an input to its overall review of the implementation of the wsis outcomes (see p. 000).

The Commission recommended two draft resolutions and five draft decision for adoption by the
Economic and Social Council. It adopted and brought to the attention of the Council a decision by which it took note of the report of the Secretary-General on digital development.

On 22 July (decision 2015/246), the Council took note of the Commission’s report on its eighteenth session and approved the provisional agenda and documentation for its nineteenth (2016) session.

On the same date, (decision 2015/242), the Council decided to extend the mandate of the cstd Gender Advisory Board for a further five years, beginning on 1 January 2016, in order to allow it to complete its programme of work within the extrabudgetary resources allocated for that purpose.

Also on 22 July, the Council invited NGOs and civil society entities that were not in consultative status with the Council, but that had received accreditation to wsis, to participate in the work of cstd until 2020 (decision 2015/243). It extended the arrangements for the participation of academic and technical entities (decision 2015/244) and business sector entities, including the private sector (decision 2015/245), in the work of the Commission until 2020.

ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL COUNCIL ACTION

On 22 July [meeting 54], the Economic and Social Council, on the recommendation of the Commission on Science and Technology for Development [E/2015/31], adopted resolution 2015/27 (Science, technology and innovation for development) without vote [agenda item 18 (b)].

Report of Secretary-General. In response to General Assembly resolution 68/220 [YUN 2013, p. 804], the Secretary-General in August submitted a report [A/70/276] on science and technology for development, which provided information on the work of cstd (see p. 000, unctad and other relevant UN organizations. The report highlighted findings from policy discussions and research on science, technology and innovation as an enabler of sustainable development; lessons learned and recommendations from the work done to assist developing countries in their efforts to integrate science, technology and innovation policies into national development strategies and strengthen their national innovation systems; and the review of progress made in implementing the outcomes of the World Summit on the Information Society.

Unc tad work aimed at improving the integration of science, technology and innovation policies within national development strategies; making innovation policies more inclusive; enhancing innovation systems; facilitating technology transfer; promoting technology parks and cooperation in science, technology and innovation; and strengthening ict capacity. A Technology Facilitation Mechanism was launched at the United Nations summit for the adoption of the post-2015 development agenda. The Mechanism comprised a multi-stakeholder forum on science, technology and innovation for the sustainable development goals; an online platform as a gateway for information on existing science, technology and innovation initiatives, mechanisms and programmes; and a United Nations inter-agency task team on science, technology and innovation for the sustainable development goals, which would promote coordination, coherence, and cooperation on science, technology and innovation within the United Nations system to enhance synergy and efficiency, particularly for capacity-building initiatives.

GENERAL ASSEMBLY ACTION

On 22 December [meeting 81], the General Assembly, on the recommendation of the Second Committee [A/70/474/Add.2], adopted resolution 70/213 (Science, technology and innovation for development) without vote [agenda item 22 (b)].

Information and communications technologies

During 2014, the United Nations continued to consider how the benefits of new technologies, especially information and communications technologies (ict), could be made available to all, in keeping with recommendations contained in the ministerial declaration adopted by the Economic and Social Council at its 2000 high-level segment [YUN 2000, p. 799]; the Millennium Declaration [ibid., p. 49] and the Geneva Declaration of Principles and Plan of Action [YUN 2003, p. 857] adopted at the first phase of wsis [ibid.], and the Tunis Commitment and the Tunis Agenda adopted at its second phase [YUN 2005, p. 933].

Follow-up to World Summit on the Information Society

Report of Secretary-General. In response to Economic and Social Council resolution 2006/46 [YUN 2006, p. 1001], the Secretary-General in a February report [A/70/63-E/2015/10], reviewed progress made in the implementation of and follow-up to the outcomes of wsis at the regional and international levels.

The contribution of the information society to human development since wsis had been considerable and continued to grow rapidly. Access to ict had become more widespread, and ict innovations had profound impacts on the ways in which Governments delivered services, businesses related to consumers and citizens participated in public and private life. Digital divides, however, remained a serious challenge. While divides in access to basic communications between and in countries had been diminishing, new divides had been growing in access to broadband.
networks. Particular concern had been expressed that least developed countries (LDCs) might fall behind, that rural areas were disadvantaged and that there remained a gender gap in ICT access and use. Priorities included the importance of investment in broadband networks and services, content and capacity-building; the need to ensure trust in ICT and maintain cybersecurity; and the need for legal and regulatory arrangements to adapt to rapidly changing technology and markets, including the growing significance of e-commerce and cloud computing. The Partnership on Measuring ICT for Development recommended that future targets and indicators be ambitious, achievable, measurable and related to the post-2015 development agenda, with more attention paid to the development impact of ICT. The task of implementing WSIS outcomes was the responsibility of a variety of actors, primarily Governments, the private sector and development agencies.

**WSIS Forum.** The annual WSIS Forum (Geneva, 25–29 May), organized by the International Telecommunication Union (ITU), UNESCO, UNCTAD and the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), was held under the theme “Innovating Together: Enabling ICTs for Sustainable Development”.

**ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL COUNCIL ACTION**

On 22 July [meeting 54], the Economic and Social Council, on the recommendation of the Commission on Science and Technology for Development [E/2015/31], adopted resolution 2015/26 [Assessment of the progress made in the implementation of and follow-up to the outcomes of the World Summit on the Information Society without vote [agenda item 18 (b)].

In a September note [A/70/360], the Secretary-General provided an assessment of the progress made in the implementation of and follow-up to the outcomes of WSIS.

**Ten-year review of the World Summit on the Information Society**

**CSTD review.** In response to the Tunis Agenda, which was adopted at the second phase of the World Summit [YUN 2005, p. 933], CSTD Secretariat undertook a ten-year review of progress made in the implementation of WSIS outcomes and submitted its results, through the Economic and Social Council, to the General Assembly. Its report, entitled Implementing WSIS outcomes: A Ten-year Review, highlighted the importance of the emerging Information Society in global development, and found that its dynamism, generated by continuous innovation in technology and services, had greatly changed the context for WSIS implementation. At the same time, new challenges had emerged because of developments in the ICT sector and in the context of economic and social change. Those challenges included the digital divide, the unpredictability of changes taking place in technology and services, the mainstreaming of ICTs into wider social and economic development policies and programmes, education and capacity-building in ensuring that ICTs and the Information Society contributed to development, and monitoring and measurement of WSIS outcomes. Attention by the international community was required on eight issues: the rapid development of broadband networks, inclusiveness, Internet governance, education and capacity-building, cybersecurity, the cloud economy, rights aspects of the Information Society, and threats to the environment. Suggestions regarding the monitoring, measurement, evaluation and implementation of the outcomes of WSIS were related to a framework for the adoption of new targets, improving the capacity of National Statistical Offices, the future development of Action Lines, integration of WSIS outcomes into UN Development Assistance Frameworks, financial mechanisms for the Information Society, achieving consensus on the future of Internet governance, and the importance of a multi-stakeholder approach to Information Society.

**High-level meeting of the General Assembly**

**Preparatory process.** On 1 June, in accordance with General Assembly resolution 68/302 [YUN 2014, p. 976], the President of the Assembly appointed Janis Maieiks, Permanent Representative of the Republic of Latvia to the United Nations, and Lana Zaki Nusseibeh, Permanent Representative of United Arab Emirates to the United Nations, as co-facilitators to lead an intergovernmental negotiation process, which was to include preparatory meetings, resulting in an outcome document for adoption at the high-level meeting of the General Assembly on the overall review of the implementation of the WSIS outcomes (see below).

At the first preparatory meeting (New York, 1 July), which was intended to provide an opportunity for participants to share their preliminary inputs on and expectations concerning the outcome document, delegations addressed a number of themes, including the importance of investment and innovation; the free flow of information; the critical importance of capacity-building; the development of local and multilingual content; the need to improve the affordability of access and usage; the value of an enabling policy and regulatory environment in attracting investment and fostering innovation; the role of public-private partnerships; and the need to address governance issues. At the second preparatory meeting (New York, 20–22 October), Member States made statements on the zero draft of the outcome document.

On 30 July, by decision 69/559, the General Assembly decided that the high-level meeting of the
Assembly on the overall review of the implementation of the outcomes of the World Summit on the Information Society would be held on 15 and 16 December.

High-level meeting. The General Assembly concluded its overall review of the wsis outcomes during a two-day high-level meeting (New York, 15–16 December). The meeting included the plenary, which featured statements from Member States and non-government entities, as well as side events, organized by Member States, UN agencies, and non-government stakeholders, that offered interactive exchange on key topics cited in the review.

On 16 December, by decision 70/529, the General Assembly decided to invite UN agency representatives Mr. Malcolm Johnson, itu Deputy Secretary-General; Mr. Getachew Engida, Deputy Director-General and Assistant Director-General for Communication and Information of unesco; Mr. Patrick Keuleers, undp Director and Chief of Profession of the Governance and Peacebuilding Team; and Mr. Torbjörn Fredriksson, unctad Officer-in-Charge of the Science, Technology and ict Branch, to deliver statements at the high-level meeting of the Assembly on the overall review of the implementation of the wsis outcomes.

GENERAL ASSEMBLY ACTION

On 16 December [meeting 79], the General Assembly adopted resolution 70/125 [draft: A/70/L.33] (Outcome document of the high-level meeting of the General Assembly on the overall review of the implementation of the outcomes of the World Summit on the Information Society) without vote [agenda item 17].

Internet Governance Forum

The Internet Governance Forum held its tenth meeting (João Pessoa, Brazil, 10–13 November) on the theme “Evolution of Internet Governance: Empowering Sustainable Development”. The Forum, which was attended by more than 2,400 registered participants from over 116 countries, focused on a range of sub-themes, including cybersecurity and trust; Internet economy; inclusiveness and diversity; openness; enhancing multi-stakeholder cooperation; Internet and human rights; critical Internet resources and emerging issues.

Broadband Commission for Digital Development

In 2015, the Broadband Commission for Digital Development [YUN 2011, p. 818], which sought to promote the adoption of effective and inclusive broadband policies and practices with a view to achieving development goals and empowering every woman and man, and every society through the benefits of broadband, published its report The State of Broadband 2015: Broadband as a foundation for sustainable development. The report was structured around four themes: policy leadership, broadband for sustainable development, and universal access. The Commission found that, although strong growth rates continued for mobile broadband and Facebook usage, and mobile cellular subscriptions exceeded 7 billion for the first time in 2015, growth in global mobile cellular subscriptions and Internet usage had slowed sharply. Better coordination and more effective use of existing resources by all stakeholders was needed to achieve universally available and more affordable Internet access. Policy recommendations to maximize the impact of broadband on the supply-side included promoting co-deployment and infrastructure-sharing of telecom infrastructure and co-investment to reduce prices; fostering co-deployment with access to non-telecoms infrastructure; ensuring sufficient availability of quality spectrum to deploy mobile broadband networks; expanding network coverage; and developing effective technical standards to achieve economies of scale and enhance quality of services. Policy measures on the demand side included ensuring availability and affordability of broadband-enabled devices and services for poor or at-risk households and other vulnerable groups; enabling the development of local and relevant broadband applications and content; improving broadband availability mapping; and promoting effective ict skills through training and education at all levels.

GENERAL ASSEMBLY ACTION

On 22 December [meeting 81], the General Assembly, on the recommendation of the Second Committee [A/70/469], adopted resolution 70/184 (Information and communications technologies for development) without vote [agenda item 17].

Development policy and public administration

Committee for Development Policy

The Committee noted that the success of the post-2015 development agenda depended on a robust accountability system for results and constructive change, in which all stakeholders were involved, with clearly delineated responsibility for implementation among partners and relevant quantifiable targets. The Sustainable Development Goals (sdgs) were universal, but needed to be adapted to national contexts, in order to ensure ownership and facilitate answerability, transparency and inclusiveness.

In its triennial review of the list of LDCs, CDP found Angola eligible for graduation for the second consecutive time and recommended it for graduation from the list. Kiribati, which was also found eligible for the
second consecutive time, was not recommended for graduation, but was to be considered at the next triennial review in 2018, together with Bhutan, Nepal, Sao Tome and Principe, Solomon Islands and Timor-Leste, which were all found eligible for graduation for the first time. The graduation of Tuvalu, which had been recommended by CDP for graduation in 2012 and postponed by Economic and Social Council resolutions 2012/32 [YUN 2012, p. 837] and 2013/20 [YUN 2013, p. 817], was scheduled to be addressed by the Council in 2015.

In preparation for its 2018 review, the Committee re-examined the human assets index and decided to add the maternal mortality ratio. Accordingly, the index would be comprised of five indicators, three of which were related to health and two of which were related to education. CDP also decided to continue to examine other elements of the index, notably to consider further a possible replacement of the undernourishment indicator with stunting, as a measure of malnutrition.

In its monitoring of countries that were graduating and had graduated from the LDC category, CDP reviewed the development progress of Maldives and Samoa, which had graduated in 2011 [YUN 2011, p. 826] and 2014 [YUN 2014, p. 986] respectively, and of Equatorial Guinea and Vanuatu, which were graduating. Maldives and Samoa had continued to achieve steady development progress, while they remained vulnerable to economic and environmental shocks. The Committee noted the imbalance between per capita income and the level of human assets in Equatorial Guinea and its heavy dependence on the oil sector. It expressed its concern about the negative impacts of cyclone Pam that hit Vanuatu in March (see p. 000).

Furthermore, CDP considered issues related to the implications of the post-2015 development landscape and the need for LDCs to gain better access to ODA and alternative sources of financing. Donors should meet their commitments to LDCs and adopt better aid allocation criteria to improve ODA efficiency. CDP proposed that donors organize LDCs into clusters with similar structural impediments; and underscored the need for addressing aid dependency without reducing ODA flow to those countries.

For its eighteenth session, CDP would follow up on its work on the post-2015 UN development agenda, with a particular focus on how international trade could help developing countries, in particular LDCs, to achieve the SDGs. In that regard, particular attention would be given to the issue of developing the necessary productive capacities while achieving social and environmental objectives, as defined in the post-2015 development agenda.

ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL COUNCIL ACTION

On 10 June [meeting 35], the Economic and Social Council adopted resolution 2015/11 [draft: E/2015/L.13] (Report of the Committee for Development Policy on its seventeenth session) without vote [agenda item 18 (a)].

Public administration

The Committee of Experts on Public Administration, at its fourteenth session (New York, 20–24 April) [E/2015/44], considered the issue of building trust in government in pursuit of the sustainable development goals, with an emphasis on the question “What will it take?”. The outline of an answer was reflected in the sub-issues discussed, namely redefining relationships and responsibilities in support of participatory governance and responsive public service delivery, including through e-solutions; strengthening innovation, prioritization, informed decision-making and integration of policy development processes; and promoting accountable institutions, ethical leadership and integrity. For its consideration, the Committee had before it notes of the Secretariat on the sub-issues [E/C.16/2015/3, E/C.16/2015/4, E/C.16/2015/5], on building trust in government in pursuit of the sustainable development goals: the case of Nicaragua [E/C.16/2015/2], and on review of the United Nations Programme in Public Administration and Development Management [E/C.16/2015/6].

The Committee noted that building trust in governmental pursuit of the SDGs would depend primarily on the implementation of sound public policy that reflected people’s priorities and on institutional performance and the quality of public services. Bearing in mind national and local specificities, an ability to achieve political consensus and manage relationships with citizens would be an essential element. In promoting citizen engagement in public policymaking, care should be taken to remove barriers to participation, in particular by marginalized groups, and to ensure both technical and substantive equality of opportunity in consultative processes. The Committee stressed that the public sector had a critical role to play in pursuing all of the SDGs and could have tremendous strategic value and influence; that political endorsement of the SDGs at national and local levels would be essential; that achievement of the SDGs would also necessitate a steady and continued process of institutional and administrative reform; and that national systems of accountability should be permeated with ethical values and standards. Recalling the United Nations Convention against Corruption [YUN 2003, p. 1127], the Committee stressed the need to accelerate the adoption of measures to prevent corruption in the public sector and end impunity for corrupt practices.
In its review of the United Nations Programme in Public Administration and Development Management, the Committee noted that the governance aspects of proposed sustainable development goal 16, and aspects of goal 17, notably targets related to technology, policy and institutional coherence and multi-stakeholder partnerships, were areas where the Programme could best support its work in the follow-up to the post-2015 development agenda. In light of the substantially different nature of the sdgs from the mdgs, in particular with regard to governance and public administration aspects, the Committee decided to undertake an informal review of its name and terms of reference with a view to ensuring that it was fit for purpose in the post-2015 period.

**ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL COUNCIL ACTION**

On 22 July [meeting 54], the Economic and Social Council, on the recommendation of the Committee of Experts on Public Administration [E/2015/44], adopted **resolution 2015/28** (Report of the Committee of Experts on Public Administration on its fourteenth session) without vote [agenda item 18 (g)].

Also on the same date, by decision 2015/247, the Council decided that the fifteenth session of the Committee of Experts on Public Administration would be held at United Nations Headquarters from 18 to 22 April 2016, and approved the provisional agenda for that session.

**GENERAL ASSEMBLY ACTION**

On 14 September [meeting 105], the General Assembly adopted **resolution 69/327** [draft: A/69/L.81/ Rev.1] (Promoting inclusive and accountable public services for sustainable development) without vote [agenda item 21 (g)].

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**Least developed countries**

The special problems of the officially designated least developed countries (ldcs) were considered in several UN forums in 2015, particularly through implementation of the Istanbul Declaration and Programme of Action for the Least Developed Countries for the Decade 2011–2020 (Istanbul Programme of Action) [YUN 2011, p. 828], adopted at the Fourth United Nations Conference on the Least Developed Countries [ibid., p. 827]. In addition to the United Nations Office of the High Representative for the Least Developed Countries, Landlocked Developing Countries and Small Island Developing States (ohrlls), the Committee for Development Policy (cdp) and the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD) also dealt with ldc-related issues.

The **Least Developed Countries Report 2015** [UNCTAD/LDC/2015], published by UNCTAD, addressed transforming rural economies. Economic growth in ldcs had slowed since 2012, and less favourable external conditions in 2014, compounded by the impact of the Ebola outbreak in Guinea, Liberia and Sierra Leone, contributed to a further deterioration in their economic performance. Growth in ldcs as a group was projected at 5.2 per cent in 2015. The Sustainable Development Goals (sdgs) required an acceleration in the rate of progress and implied a shift in focus, towards areas of greatest need, namely ldcs. As more than two thirds of their total population lived in rural areas, rural development was of particular importance in ldcs. Agriculture played a crucial role in all ldc economies, accounting for 60 per cent of total employment and 25 per cent of value added; and shortfalls in human development were much greater in rural than in urban areas. Sustainable poverty eradication in ldcs required a poverty-oriented structural transformation, including increasing the level of labour productivity; providing productive economic opportunities for the entire workforce; increasing the lowest levels of labour productivity to generate an income above the poverty line; and ensuring that such increases were translated into higher household incomes. The key to achieving rural economic transformation was harnessing the synergies between agricultural upgrading and rural economic diversification through development of the rural non-farm economy. With regard to agricultural productivity, which played an essential role in rural economic transformation and development and strengthening the rural non-farm economy, the main factors driving productivity growth in ldcs were the quantity of inputs; technology, human capital and input quality; public investment and policies; agro-ecological conditions and climate change; and rural diversification.

With respect to domestic policies for rural economic transformation, encompassing agricultural upgrading
and diversification into non-farm activities, the report recommended agricultural right-sizing; increasing use of locally appropriate inputs to increase agricultural productivity and yields; promoting early adoption of innovations and new technologies; increasing support to research and development; market differentiation, through organic, fair trade and sustainability certification; increased staple production, particularly in remote and isolated areas; gender-specific measures to tackle the causes of disadvantages faced by rural women; a major increase in infrastructure investment; rural electrification; sequencing infrastructure investments and interventions; appropriate policies and interventions in finance, human resources and enterprise support; increasing schooling of children and adult education; and vocational training. Rural economic transformation required effective policy coordination and an effective inter-ministerial coordinating mechanism could contribute substantially to that goal.

LDC list

In accordance with Economic and Social Council resolution 2013/20 [YUN 2013, p. 817], CDP at its seventeenth session (see p. 000) monitored the development progress of countries graduating from the LDC category, namely Equatorial Guinea and Vanuatu, earmarked for graduation in June 2017 and December 2017, respectively. It found that Equatorial Guinea continued to rely on the hydrocarbon sector and had an imbalance between the high level of per capita income and the low level of its human assets index. CDP advised the country to formulate and implement a transition strategy for economic diversification and an improved index. In 2014, Vanuatu continued to achieve steady income growth and improved the level of its human assets; however, CDP noted with concern the devastating consequences of Cyclone Pam, which hit the country in March 2015 (see p. 000), raising uncertainty about the near-term development outlook.

In response to Assembly resolution 67/221 [YUN 2012, p. 842], CDP further reviewed the development progress of Maldives and Samoa, which had graduated in 2011 [YUN 2011, p. 860] and 2014 [YUN 2014, p. 986], respectively. It noted that both countries continued to achieve steady development progress, although they remained vulnerable to economic and environmental shocks, as indicated by their high scores on the economic vulnerability index. The Committee found that Samoa had been active in engaging its development and trading partners in the implementation of the transition strategy to minimize possible negative impacts as a result of graduation.

At year’s end, the list of LDCs comprised the following 48 countries: Afghanistan, Angola, Bangladesh, Benin, Bhutan, Burkina Faso, Burundi, Cambodia, Central African Republic, Chad, Comoros, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Djibouti, Equatorial Guinea, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Gambia, Guinea, Guinea-Bissau, Haiti, Kiribati, Lao People’s Democratic Republic, Lesotho, Liberia, Madagascar, Malawi, Mali, Mauritania, Mozambique, Myanmar, Nepal, Niger, Rwanda, São Tomé and Príncipe, Senegal, Sierra Leone, Solomon Islands, Somalia, South Sudan, Sudan, Timor-Leste, Togo, Tuvalu, Uganda, United Republic of Tanzania, Vanuatu, Yemen and Zambia.

GENERAL ASSEMBLY ACTION

On 9 December [meeting 70], the General Assembly adopted resolution 70/78 [draft: A/70/L.16, as orally revised] (Extension of the preparatory period preceding the graduation of the Republic of Vanuatu from the least developed country category) without vote [agenda item 9].

Smooth transition strategy

In accordance with General Assembly resolution 67/221 [YUN 2012, p. 842], the Secretary-General submitted an August report [A/70/292] on implementation, effectiveness and added value of smooth transition measures, including initiatives taken by the UN system to support countries during their graduation from the LDC category. The Secretary-General concluded that much still needed to be done to implement the provisions of the resolution, with a clear focus and leadership by the graduating and graduated countries and equally strong support from the development partners and the UN system. Graduation and smooth transition strategies should be integrated into national development strategies and donors’ aid strategies, and development partners should provide timely information about those measures and apply the LDC criteria to their process of aid allocation. It was important that both the funding to LDCs be increased and concessional funding be made accessible for graduated countries, taking into account their vulnerability and geographical constraints. UN entities had to consider the extension and gradual phasing-out of LDC-specific support to graduated countries for a fixed period of time in a predictable manner and applied in accordance with the specific development situation of each graduating country. The institutionalization of efforts by OHRILS to coordinate UN system organizations, including the establishment of a dedicated working group as part of its inter-agency consultative group mechanism, needed to be further pursued. The issues of graduation and smooth transition should be prominently included in the comprehensive high-level midterm review of the Programme of Action for the Least Developed Countries for the Decade 2011–2020, to be held in 2016.
Follow up to the Fourth UN Conference on LDCs

Appointment of co-facilitators. In response to General Assembly resolution 69/231 [YUN 2014, p. 987], in which the General Assembly decided to convene a comprehensive high-level midterm review of the implementation of the Istanbul Programme of Action in June 2016, the President of the General Assembly appointed Bénédicte Frankinet, Permanent Representative of Belgium to the United Nations, and Jean-Francis Régis Zinsou, Permanent Representative of the Republic of Benin to the United Nations, as co-facilitators to oversee and direct informal intergovernmental consultations on all issues relating to the review and its preparatory process.


At a High-Level Policy Dialogue on the Implementation of the Istanbul Programme of Action in Asia and the Pacific (Siem Reap, Cambodia, 4–6 March), jointly organized by the Government of Cambodia and the United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific, participants adopted an outcome document entitled “The Siem Reap Angkor Outcome Document”, which was transmitted to the seventy-first session of the Commission (see p. 000) as a basis for the midterm review of the Programme of Action.

Report of Secretary-General. Pursuant to General Assembly resolution 68/224 [YUN 2013, p. 822] and Economic and Social Council resolution 2014/29 [YUN 2014, p. 922], the Secretary-General submitted an October report [A/70/408] that included the recommendations of a high-level panel of experts on a technology bank for LDCs. The Secretary-General had established the High-level Panel on Technology Bank for Least Developed Countries in November 2014 to study the scope and functions of the proposed technology bank dedicated to helping the world’s LDCs to lift themselves out of poverty. The Assembly mandated the Panel to examine the scope, functions, institutional linkage with the United Nations and organizational aspects of the technology bank, including by assessing the ability of a technology bank to promote scientific research and innovation and facilitate the diffusion and transfer of technologies to LDCs; considering the international institutional landscape, synergies and options for cooperation with international technology initiatives, stakeholders and organizations; examining potential functions, activities, working methods, governance mechanisms, staffing arrangements and costs for a technology bank and science, technology and innovation supporting mechanism, including possible regional centres in LDCs; and examining options for facilitating the necessary voluntary financial support. The Panel held two meetings in Turkey, the first one in Gebze (16–17 February), and the second in Istanbul (2–4 September), hosted by the Scientific and Technological Research Council of Turkey.

In its feasibility study, which was supported by the ohrlls secretariat, the Panel argued that the technology bank was feasible, that the thinking behind it had been sound, and that it could be launched on a firm foundation. It further determined that the technology bank, as a dedicated, coordinated and interlinked facility, could achieve quick gains during its initial phase of operation. The Panel recommended its operationalization during the seventieth session of the General Assembly, and its formal operationalization at the comprehensive midterm review of the Istanbul Programme of Action, to be held in Antalya, Turkey, in June 2016. It requested the Secretary-General to take the necessary steps to launch and operationalize the technology bank, including preparing a host country agreement, and inform the General Assembly accordingly; to establish a trust fund with the necessary flexibility to attract voluntary funding from Member States and other stakeholders, including the private sector and foundations; to mobilize organizations of the UN system and other international and regional organizations to support the launching and operationalization of the bank and its effective functioning; and to encourage the principal stakeholders to extend generous support to the bank during its initial phase and beyond.

In line with the recommendations of the Panel, the Secretary-General was of the view that the establishment of the technology bank for LDCs would serve as a critical instrument for creating a strong and viable science, technology and innovation base in those countries. ohrlls would continue to provide substantive support and to assist the coordination of the UN system entities for the operationalization of the technology bank.

Communication. In a letter [A/C.2/70/2] dated 7 October, Bangladesh transmitted to the Secretary-General the Ministerial Declaration adopted at the Annual Ministerial Meeting of the Least Developed Countries (New York, 1 October).

GENERAL ASSEMBLY ACTION

On 22 December [meeting 81], the General Assembly, on the recommendation of the Second Committee [A/70/475/Add.1], adopted resolution 70/216 (Follow-up to the Fourth United Nations Conference on the Least Developed Countries) without vote [agenda item 23 (a)].

On 23 December (decision 70/554), the Assembly decided that the agenda item on groups of countries
in special situations: Follow-up to the Fourth United Nations Conference on the Least Developed Countries would remain for consideration during its resumed seventieth (2016) session.

**Programme of Action (2011–2020)**

Pursuant to General Assembly resolution 69/231 [YUN 2014, p. 987] and Economic and Social Council resolution 2014/29 [ibid., p. 992], the Secretary-General in May [A/70/83-E/2015/75] reported on implementation of the Programme of Action for the Least Developed Countries for the Decade 2011–2020 (Istanbul Programme of Action) [YUN 2011, p. 828], and on progress made towards including the implementation of the Istanbul Programme of Action in the agenda of the United Nations System Chief Executives Board for Coordination (ceeb).

The report found that the implementation of the Istanbul Programme of Action had seen continued progress by LDCs, however, poverty was still widespread in many LDCs, with 46 per cent of their population living in extreme poverty. Areas of progress that gave hope included the reduction of poverty and hunger, re-bounding growth, fledgling structural transformation and a number of countries graduating or in the process of graduation. New initiatives such as the technology bank and an investment promotion regime for LDCs signified continued support by the international community. Progress in building productive capacity in LDCs was critical to achieving the other seven priorities of the Istanbul Programme of Action. The structural transformation of LDCs was insufficient, and investment rates, which were low but improving, had to be further accelerated and sustained over a long period of time. Progress was made in infrastructure areas, such as improving access of the population in LDCs to mobile/cellular telephone services, improving road networks and conditions, increasing the volume of air transport and enhancing shipping connectivity. Enrolment in primary and secondary education also increased, while child and maternal mortality continued to decrease. Further national and global efforts were needed to sustain and accelerate the pace of those improvements. Further recommendations included giving LDCs more priority in the allocation of aid and other resources with enhanced quality and concessionality, capacity-building for collecting and processing timely and accurate data, more progress in granting duty-free and quota-free market access to LDCs, and further assistance to reduce trade costs by strengthening inland transportation infrastructure. The Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015–2030 (see p. 000) had to be implemented with a special focus on LDCs, and the high vulnerability of LDCs to climate change also had to be addressed. With regard to the LDC category, further support to LDCs on graduation and smooth transition was needed from OHRLLS, development partners and the UN system, including through technical assistance and capacity development for resource mobilization.

**Ministerial meeting.** The Ministerial Meeting of African Least Developed Countries (Milan, Italy, 8–10 June), jointly organized by the Government of Italy and OHRLLS, had as its theme “Structural Transformation, Graduation and the Post-2015 Development Agenda”. The overall objective of the Ministerial Meeting was to support African LDCs to achieve internationally agreed development goals, including the attainment of the goals and targets of the Istanbul Programme of Action, and in particular to make progress in poverty eradication, peace and development for graduating from the LDC category.

**ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL COUNCIL ACTION**

On 23 July [meeting 56], the Economic and Social Council adopted resolution 2015/35 [draft: E/2015/1.23] (Programme of Action for the Least Developed Countries for the Decade 2011–2020) without vote (agenda item 11 (b)).

**Small island developing states**


**Samoa Pathway and Mauritius Strategy**

**JIU report.** In a June note [A/69/921], the Secretary-General transmitted a report of the Joint Inspection Unit (JIU) entitled “Recommendations to the General Assembly for the determination of parameters for a comprehensive review of United Nations system support for small island developing States” [JIU/REP/2015/2], which was prepared pursuant to General Assembly resolution 69/217 [YUN 2014, p. 1010]. The review provided a preliminary synthesis of data collected through a system-wide survey completed by more than 20 JIU participating organizations and the secretariats of environmental conventions to assess their contribution to the priority areas of the Samoa Pathway by means of implementation. Findings made by the review included a need for clarification of roles and linkages, and improved communication and mechanisms for system-wide coordination; an overlap and lack of clarity regarding the mandates of OHRLLS and the Department of Economic and Social Affairs (DESA) Units for small island developing States (SIDS);
limited resources allocated to DESA and OHRLS Units for SIDS; and environmental vulnerability with regard to issues such as climate change, biodiversity, oceans, chemicals and waste management as a common concern of SIDS.

JIU recommended that the Assembly should ensure that the comprehensive review addresses the necessary linkages between the Samoa Pathway and the UN global mandates on related key issues, with a view to strengthening system-wide coherence and ensuring effective system-wide support for the sustainable development of SIDS through adequate provision of resources. The Assembly should also ensure that the review evaluate the allocation of resources, as well as their effective and efficient use, at the UN Secretariat, with a view to improving governance and effective coordination in the delivery of the mandates given by the Assembly to DESA and OHRLS; identify all relevant entities of the UN Secretariat; and propose effective ways for the Secretariat to strengthen its programmatic coordination and integrated reporting. The review should assess the role and functioning of the Inter-Agency Consultative Group on Small Island Developing States, and propose concrete measures to strengthen its effectiveness as a coordinating forum, to foster the implementation of the Samoa Pathway and to facilitate its monitoring. An analysis of the institutional set-up in place and the coordination process aimed at monitoring and reporting on implementation of the Samoa Pathway, and institutional and managerial mechanisms for strengthening coordination between DESA and OHRLS should also be part of the review.

GENERAL ASSEMBLY ACTION

On 8 June [meeting 93], the General Assembly adopted resolution 69/288 (draft: A/69/L.73) (Comprehensive review of United Nations system support for small island developing States) without vote [agenda item 19 (b)].

Report of Secretary-General. In accordance with General Assembly resolution 69/217 [YUN 2014, p. 1010], the Secretary-General submitted an August report [A/70/200] on follow-up to and implementation of the SIDS Accelerated Modalities of Action (SAMOA) Pathway [ibid., p. 995] and the Mauritius Strategy for the Further Implementation of the Programme of Action for the Sustainable Development of SIDS [YUN 2005, p. 946]. The report evaluated the integration of the Samoa Pathway into national and regional policies and development and cooperation frameworks, programmes and activities, as well as support to national sustainable development strategies and programmes. It included updates from the UN system and partner agencies with regard to cross-cutting activities; economic growth; trade; data and statistics; oceans, climate change; disaster risk reduction; energy; health; gender equality and women’s empowerment; partnership framework; partnership dialogue; and the International Year of Small Island Developing States. Member States had also actively sought to implement the Samoa Pathway within the areas of priority for SIDS, namely economic growth; sustainable energy; oceans and seas; food security and nutrition; gender equality and women's empowerment; data and statistics; and partnerships.

SIDS were featured prominently in activities at the Third United Nations World Conference on Disaster Risk Reduction (see p. 000), which included an event on building effective partnerships towards resilient SIDS in the post-2015 world. During the third International Conference on Financing for Development (see p. 000), a side event was held with the theme: SIDS: meeting the challenge of post-2015 financing. The high-level political forum on sustainable development (see p. 000) convened the segment on SIDS under the theme “The Samoa Pathway: translating vision into action”. Key challenges for SIDS emphasized in the dialogue included the need for enabling inclusive economic growth through adequate financing, in particular for infrastructure projects, a small economic base due to remoteness, land scarcity and vulnerability, and a focus on generating youth employment and reducing underemployment.

The report included the initial findings of the review and the recommendations of JIU on UN system support for SIDS. In response to resolution 69/288 (see above), JIU decided to include the comprehensive review of UN system support for SIDS in its programme of work for 2015, addressing issues relating to evaluation of allocation of resources at UN Headquarters, focusing on DESA and OHRLS, in order to assess the commensurability of resources and mandates given to them to support the sustainable development of SIDS; and assessing existing programmatic coordination and the role of the Inter-Agency Consultative Group on SIDS. The comprehensive review had been included in the roster for the programme of work for 2016.

The Secretary-General observed that SIDS had carefully outlined their priorities through the Samoa Pathway and during the formulation of the post-2015 development agenda and the SDGs. The international community had provided considerable support to SIDS and had remained committed to the implementation of the Samoa Pathway.

GENERAL ASSEMBLY ACTION

On 22 December [meeting 81], the General Assembly, on the recommendation of the Second Committee [A/70/472/Add.2], adopted resolution 70/202 (Follow-up to and implementation of the SIDS Accelerated Modalities of Action (SAMOA) Pathway and the Mauritius Strategy for the Further
Landlocked developing countries

Vienna Programme of Action (2014–2024)

Pursuant to General Assembly resolution 69/232 [YUN 2014, p. 1026], the Secretary-General transmitted an August report [A/70/305] on implementation of the Vienna Programme of Action for Landlocked Developing Countries for the Decade 2014–2024. The report provided a review of the progress made, focusing on key priority areas, such as: fundamental transit policy issues; infrastructure development and maintenance; international trade and trade facilitation; regional integration and cooperation; structural economic transformation; and means of implementation. It further presented initiatives and activities being undertaken by Member States, relevant UN system entities and other regional and international organizations in response to the Vienna Programme of Action, concluding with a set of recommendations.

The Secretary-General observed that an important element for the effective implementation of the Vienna Programme of Action was its mainstreaming into national and sectoral development plans and the work programmes of international, regional and subregional organizations. Landlocked developing countries should take the lead in the further mainstreaming of the Programme into national strategies so as to fully implement it, and development partners should accord priority to landlocked developing countries. Landlocked developing countries should continue their efforts to streamline and harmonize customs and border crossing procedures and formalities; pursue national measures aimed at increasing the share of high-value added exports; and encourage the development of labour-intensive sectors and forms of technology through industrial and educational policies. To monitor the implementation of the Vienna Programme of Action, there was a need for systematic collection of data in landlocked developing countries and transit countries in order to monitor improvements in trade facilitation.

GENERAL ASSEMBLY ACTION

On 22 December [meeting 81], the General Assembly, on the recommendation of the Second Committee [A/70/475/Add.2], adopted resolution 70/217 (Follow-up to the second United Nations Conference on Landlocked Developing Countries) without vote [agenda item 23 (b)].