



**123rd ASSEMBLY OF THE INTER-PARLIAMENTARY UNION
AND RELATED MEETINGS**

Geneva, 4-6.10.2010

SUMMARY RECORDS

**OF THE PANEL DISCUSSION HELD DURING THE 123rd ASSEMBLY IN GENEVA
(OCTOBER 2010)**

on the subject item

***The role of parliaments in ensuring sustainable development through the management
of natural resources, agricultural production and demographic change***

chosen for debate by the Second Standing Committee
(Sustainable Development, Finance and Trade)

during the 124th Assembly in April 2011 in Panama

The role of parliaments in ensuring sustainable development through the management of natural resources, agricultural production and demographic change

Item 3(b) of the agenda

Panel discussion on the subject chosen for debate by the Second Standing Committee on Sustainable Development, Finance and Trade during the 124th Assembly in April 2011

Sitting of Tuesday, 5 October

(Afternoon)

The meeting was called to order at 2.05 p.m. with the President of the Second Standing Committee, Mr. P. Martin-Lalande (France), in the Chair.

The MODERATOR explained that the meeting would consist of an interactive debate to prepare the final report to be discussed by the Second Standing Committee of the IPU at the 124th Assembly to be held in Panama in April 2011.

Mr. A. CHERRAR (Algeria), *co-Rapporteur*, said that there was a variety of elements to be addressed in the subject under discussion. There were clear links to the MDGs, and the human factor was of critical importance. An important question to be asked was how a global population estimated to reach 9 billion by 2050 could be fed, and still leave a sustainable planet for future generations. There was a direct relationship between food production and poverty, food and agricultural requirements needed to be quantified, agricultural produce distributed in a fairer manner, and consumption models and farming techniques reviewed. The agricultural and industrial sectors contributed to global warming, and steps must be taken to preserve air quality. The management of land and water was another area to be addressed. Water quality was inversely proportional to the level of human activity, and deforestation in order to obtain more agricultural land was leading to desertification, which some estimated to be in the order of 60,000 km² over the previous 10 years. In addition, the increasing use of biofuels was having a detrimental effect on food crops, agricultural land and air quality. Turning to demographic changes identified, he said that the birth rate was decreasing in developed countries. However, it remained high in Africa, and it was estimated that by 2050 Africa would be home to some 2 billion people – almost a quarter of the world's population. Urbanization was increasing to the detriment of agricultural land; there were more people to feed in the cities, but fewer people at work in the fields, which was a particular problem for developing countries where agriculture was not mechanized and farming methods remained traditional. Forced or voluntary migration also had an impact on levels of urbanization. Noting that there were a number of factors associated with sustainable development, he concluded by asking whether GDP and the human development index should continue to be used as indicators of economic efficiency, and suggested that the IPU might wish to hold a meeting to consider the issue of new agricultural techniques.

Mr. K. PUTTERS (Netherlands), *substitute co-Rapporteur*, said that it was an honour for him to stand in for Ms. K. Ferrier, who had unfortunately been detained in the Netherlands by political events. Turning to some of the report's noted worldwide trends, he said that there were challenges associated with feeding an estimated population of 9 billion in 2050, and noted that, according to the United Nations, hunger had already risen sharply in 2009. The financial and energy crises were also affecting the food crisis and lowered agricultural exports,

and the depletion of natural resources and the increasing use of chemical fertilizers reduced water quality, particularly in poor areas. Some of the specific problems relating to Africa that the report had highlighted were the high birth and unemployment rates, the serious food and land problems, and the direct relationships between demography, food production and poverty. The report called on parliamentarians to raise awareness of those issues at the national and international levels, and to take action in terms of financial development and environmental and export policies. It was important for parliamentarians not to close their eyes to such problems, particularly in times of crisis and cutbacks.

Mr. U. HOFFMANN, *Economic Affairs Officer, United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD), Panellist*, said that he would address the issue of profoundly transforming agriculture to ensure food security given the challenges of global warming. Agriculture was important in the context of global warming for a number of reasons, including the fact that, for a large number of developing countries, it remained the single most important sector accounting for between 20 and 60 per cent of GDP, providing a livelihood for some 40 per cent of the global population. Noting that the problems of climate change; hunger and poverty; economic, social and gender inequality; poor health and nutrition and environmental sustainability were interrelated, he said that agriculture had the potential to become an essential part of the solution provided that there was a more holistic vision of food security, agricultural mitigation and climate change adaptation. Agriculture and forestry could contribute almost 40 per cent of world estimated greenhouse gas mitigation potential up to 2030, which was even greater than the contribution from the energy sector. However, agriculture was very greenhouse-gas intensive, accounting for between 13 and 15 per cent of global greenhouse gas emissions, and under a business-as-usual scenario, greenhouse gas emissions from agriculture would grow by 40 to 60 per cent up to 2030, so action had to be taken to bring about a change. There should be a rapid and significant shift from conventional monoculture based and high-external-input dependent industrial production towards systems that considerably improved the productivity of small-scale farmers. However, the sheer scale of the modified production methods to be adopted, and the difficulties in measuring, reporting and verifying the reductions in greenhouse gas emissions posed considerable challenges. In order to facilitate the transformation, policy changes had to be made at the national level, including removal or modification of the existing tax and pricing policies that generated perverse incentives for sustainable production systems; action to promote greater stability in land management and tenure systems; steps to increase significantly the share and effectiveness of public expenditure for agricultural development; efforts to reduce pre and post harvest losses; and action to reduce carbon emission intensity. Regulations in the financial sector facilitating the flow of funds for mitigation benefits to local communities were also important, as was action to strengthen the performance of producer organizations and enhance the capacity of those communities. In order to improve the performance of the sector and the livelihoods of small farmers, consideration should be given to the integration of agricultural adaptation and mitigation actions into sustainable development policy and measures, nationally appropriate mitigation actions, or national adaptation programmes of action.

Turning to international action, he said that one major challenge was to modify at the international level a number of key market distortions and market structures acting as a disincentive to the transition to sustainable agricultural practices at the national level in developing countries. He drew attention in that regard to the huge agricultural subsidies in Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) countries for production and export, the market domination of very few companies in global agricultural input markets, and the scale bias of agricultural processors and marketing companies. Another challenge was to reverse the decline in international aid for agriculture. The international community should make every effort to include land-use changes and terrestrial carbon opportunities under the

flexibility mechanisms of the Kyoto Protocol. In addition, the scope of the Clean Development Mechanism should be extended so the potential sequestration of soil and aboveground carbon in agriculture could be tapped effectively. Lastly, he drew attention to the increasing importance of agricultural product standards and labelling relating to greenhouse gas mitigation benefits, particularly in the area of food products.

Debate

Ms. M. KUMAR (India) said that parliaments and parliamentarians had to act as agents of change for sustainable development particularly as the world's population was expected to increase to roughly 9 billion people, stretching resources to the limit. The Indian Constitution recognized protection and improvement of the natural environment as a fundamental duty of each Indian citizen. Legislation had been enacted in the 1970s and 1980s to abate water and air pollution, and a national green tribunal and national environment protection agency had been established as part of India's holistic strategy. The national environment policy was currently being implemented, and she drew attention in that regard to a national solar mission, which sought to generate 20,000 megawatts of solar power by 2022, and noted that the green mission for accelerating forestation and protecting the human ecosystem had been implemented. The construction of solar green buildings was also being promoted. Noting that India's greenhouse gas emissions per capita were in the order of 1.2 tonnes, she said that her country was deploying new technologies to reduce emissions in coal-based power generation. Although India occupied only 2 per cent of the world's geographical area, it supported 17 per cent of the world's population. It was, therefore, moving away from resource exploitative agriculture to regenerative agriculture, and agricultural production had increased from 51 million tonnes in 1950-1951, to 233 million tonnes in 2008-2009. Parliament had been spearheading the campaign for sustainable development in India; progressive legislation for equitable distribution of land holdings had been enacted, and three parliamentary forums considered issues relating to population, public health, water conservation and management, global warming and climate change. The exchange of experiences and best practices would be very useful, and she requested clarification on how it would be possible to achieve equitable distribution of development benefits when each country was endeavouring to achieve sustainable development. Lastly, she said that she would welcome the holding of a special IPU session on agriculture.

Mr. M. SHEHAB EDDIN (Egypt) said that world population explosion since World War II had put excessive pressure on resources and called into question the future of generations to come. Respect for the resources of the planet was essential. The consequences of some development approaches over the past few decades, such as overcrowding, overexploitation of land, and the use of technology that threatened the purity of the air, had proved to be problematic, and alternative methods must be considered. Sustainable development remained an issue of concern, and States had a responsibility to ensure that the use of diverse natural resources of a particular country was regulated so as to ensure their consistent management. If future generations were to enjoy the same quality of life as the present one, States must consider new methods of research and development that increased production without adversely affecting the environment. In addition, parliamentarians had a responsibility to work together with their governments to consider population growth, and to look at family planning and contraception as part of reproductive health services.

Mr. R. BAYDAVLETOV (Russian Federation) said that international cooperation was essential to achieve sustainable development, and his country was ready to work with a wide range of partners in that connection, including the IPU. Russia consistently promoted

development and had provided US\$ 800 million to developing countries in 2010. It granted special treatment to the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS) countries, and those countries had already received some US\$ 4.5 billion in soft loans. Russia was determined to maintain its efforts in that regard, and would continue to provide assistance to developing countries, particularly in Africa. It attached great importance to ensuring global food security, which would contribute to the achievement of target 1c of the MDGs: reduce by half the proportion of people who suffer from hunger, and agreed that a situation in which more than 1 billion people were suffering from hunger was unacceptable. He highlighted the importance of international cooperation within the framework of international instruments, including the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), the Kyoto Protocol, the Convention on Biological Diversity, the Vienna Convention for the Protection of the Ozone Layer, and the Montreal Protocol on Substances that Deplete the Ozone Layer. Lastly, he stressed that the elimination of poverty was in the interests of all countries represented at the IPU, since it would help ensure the development of the social and economic conditions necessary for the establishment of genuine and fair democracies.

Ms. MA LI (China) said that China was a developing country with a population of over 3 billion people. In order to give the children of future generations a chance of survival and development opportunities, it was working tirelessly to build an energy efficient and environment-friendly society. Efforts in 2009 had included the shutdown of a number of thermal plants, obsolete steel production units and air conditioning equipment, and the introduction of energy-saving light bulbs. Steps were also being taken to reduce energy consumption; which, per unit of GDP, had fallen by 14 per cent over the past four years, and carbon dioxide emissions had decreased by 13.3 per cent during the same period. Legislation had been adopted on issues including renewable energy resources, energy savings and water pollution, with a view to controlling climate change and promoting sustainable development. A series of measures on agricultural production and rural areas had also been adopted, and China was convinced that if the international community continued to act on the basis of common but differentiated responsibility within the framework of the UNFCCC and the Kyoto Protocol, it would be possible to secure the future of the children of the world.

Mr. V. BAYKOV (Belarus) said that the problem of the rational management of resources was a global one that needed to be addressed by all countries. Belarus was committed to developing a long-term strategy for greenhouse gas reduction and looked forward to the implementation by all countries of agreed measures to reduce anthropogenic emissions. Belarus had submitted a proposal to amend the Kyoto Protocol, which, if approved, would help reduce the time period between the first and second commitment periods. It was also calling for measures to protect woods and bogs, in particular peatlands, in order to mitigate the effects of climate change. His country thanked all the parties that had already ratified the amendment, and called on others to do so to enable Belarus, which could not yet participate in all aspects of the Protocol, to make an even greater contribution to the efforts to combat climate change.

Mr. Y. THOMA (Cyprus) said that one of the greatest challenges with respect to sustainable development was linking theoretical goals and policy recommendations to practical measures. Follow-up action to guarantee the successful implementation of agreed commitments and objectives must be undertaken at the local, regional, national and international levels. Steps must be taken now if sustainable development was to be ensured. His country, which had the highest percentage of installed solar collectors per capita worldwide, had used solar energy for many years for heating. It had recently launched programmes to promote the production of electricity from the sun, and it was estimated that a

significant percentage of the electricity produced in Cyprus in the future would come from solar power. Due to water scarcity and limited forestry resources, however, further attention needed to be given to the development of agricultural production in Cyprus. Parliamentarians had an important part to play, in particular by raising awareness of the essential role of the agricultural sector in ensuring environmental sustainability as the population continued to increase. Parliamentarians should also encourage rural policies and ensure that a dialogue on different agricultural production choices remained at the top of national and international agendas. Comprehensive and coherent political decisions encouraging all farmers to embrace sustainable development were now more imperative than ever.

Mr. P. TANBANJONG (Thailand) said that parliamentarians had a very important role to play in ensuring sustainable development. A major challenge to be faced was the growing ageing population. As a result of more effective public health policies and medical treatment, the number of people aged 60 or older was expected to increase from approximately 11 per cent of the population at present to 15 per cent in 2017, and Thailand had established national committees to support the national action plan for ageing citizens. The problem had been exacerbated by globalization, which, while bringing prosperity to countries, had also caused difficulties, including the fact that governments were obliged to bear the public health expenses of migrant workers.

Thailand must find ways to achieve sustainable development based on a green economy. The goal set in the 10th national economic and social development plan was the establishment of the "green and happiness society", which was based on a self-sufficient economy and people-centred development. The 11th economic and social development plan had emphasized the importance of low carbon development.

Mr. C. JARPA (Chile) said that the overexploitation of natural resources in Latin America had resulted in considerable migration from rural to urban areas. Furthermore, farmers from Latin America faced unfair competition from developed countries through the granting of subsidies. In some countries, agriculture had encroached on fragile ecosystems, exacerbating environmental imbalances and resulting in a direct impact on global warming. He underscored the importance of cooperation between developed and developing countries of the world, and highlighted the need for more widespread appropriate agricultural practices to prevent people, often women, children, indigenous peoples and migrants, from working in extremely precarious conditions. A new approach must be adopted in order to ensure the proper management of the planet's finite resources to the benefit of all humanity. In the absence of justice and equity, progress made would be weak and unsustainable over time. International organizations, therefore, had a duty to ensure that all countries bore a share of the cost of sustainable development proportionate to their responsibilities.

Ms. R. DIAB (Palestine), recalling the worrying estimated increase in global population by 2050 and the need to ensure self-sufficiency in food production, said that it was important to address the issue of climate change. Although Palestine was an agricultural country with a young population, its agricultural infrastructure had been destroyed, and much of its agricultural land had been taken by Israel. It faced shortages of water as some of the water resources had been channelled to Israeli land and others were polluted by solid waste, causing disease among the Palestinian population. She called upon the IPU to support Palestine so that it could collect its harvests without the confiscation and pollution of its land, and work towards achieving sustainable development.

Mr. A. RAZZI (Italy) said that all parliaments should have a common objective, namely poverty alleviation in partner countries, the achievement of the MDGs as well as promotion of

democracy, good governance, respect for human rights, fundamental freedoms and the rule of law. Efforts must also be made to promote sustainable development in all its aspects, particularly in the least developed countries (LDCs). Those countries should be encouraged to become involved in the global economy and contribute to the formulation of international measures to preserve the environment and promote sustainable development, particularly given the impact of climate change and biodiversity loss. All parliaments must respect development cooperation commitments undertaken within the framework of the United Nations and other international organizations. Efforts must be made to protect natural ecosystems from the negative impact of human activity, and citizens must be made aware of the importance of adopting behaviours that respected the environment.

The MODERATOR drew attention to the balance that must be struck between resources and population, and asked whether it was preferable to tailor resources to the population level, or to seek to restrict the population to a level that could be sustained by the earth's resources.

Mr. A. CHERRAR (Algeria), *co-Rapporteur*, said that the question as to how many people the earth could support had been asked as far back as the Middle Ages. Unfortunately, he could not provide a response, but noted that it would be linked to the behaviour of each and every individual. Another key element related to the way in which land was used, and he drew attention to farming techniques employed. States needed to legislate in areas including manufacturing rules and the use of pesticides, which in the long term could render land infertile. With regard to the equitable distribution of the benefits of development, he said that subsidies had enabled developed countries to foster agricultural production, which had lowered prices on international markets, and enabled countries that were not self-sufficient to access agricultural products at low prices. However, that trend had changed, and as the price of some agricultural products went up, it would become more profitable for developing countries to produce them. The world was different now; nations shared a common present and future, and incidents in one country could now affect all countries. Accordingly, all countries had a shared responsibility to identify solutions, particularly for the LDCs. Such international solidarity would ensure a fairer distribution of development.

Mr. U. HOFFMANN, *Economic Affairs Officer, United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD), Panellist*, said that the question posed by the moderator was extremely complex. Some considered that greater efficiency in the use of resources would counter an increase in population. However, it was important to take into account the greater resource requirements of a larger population, their environmental impact, and the challenges associated with ensuring food security for a growing population, particularly in the LDCs. In addition, in order to mitigate the effects of climate change, emissions would have to be reduced by 50 per cent in developing countries and 80 per cent in developed countries, which, in absolute terms, would require an increase in resource efficiency of a factor of between 5 and 10. However, in the event of 2 per cent growth in GDP, efficiency would have to be increased by factor of 30, which was not realistic. Particular attention should be given to the introduction of new technology to make agricultural production regenerative, enhance soil fertility and increase social benefits at the local level. Noting that a diet based more on meat than cereals was between 4 and 6 times more carbon-intensive than the diet of a vegetarian, he said that changes in consumption patterns should also be considered carefully.

Mr. A. MALIK (Pakistan) said that the only solution to the multiple crises the world had experienced in recent times was sustainable development for all. Parliamentarians had a responsibility to formulate and promote a sustainable development policy in order to preserve the environment for future generations. As population increased, the primary focus should be

on ensuring conservation and the optimum use of natural resources. To that end, techniques should be modernized, and he highlighted the merit of global sharing of knowledge and experience. The fragile ecosystems in various parts of the world and the effects of climate change attested to the gravity of the situation, and he drew attention in that regard to the recent floods in Pakistan. In addition, a number of countries, including Pakistan, were in danger of experiencing a shortage of basic food items, and he called for the implementation of sustainable agriculture practices, infrastructure development, access to more cost-effective and better quality inputs, and better trade opportunities. He concluded by underscoring that sustainable development for all peoples of the world could only be achieved through the joint action of all stakeholders.

Mr. L. AKOUN (Côte d'Ivoire), having drawn attention to the widespread practice of deforestation, which was not caused by local communities, but by powerful corporations, and to the wastage of existing resources, observed that farmers in developing countries did not receive a fair price for their produce. In addition, genetically modified food was an issue of concern that should be considered by the Rapporteurs.

Mr. A. CHERRAR (Algeria), *co-Rapporteur*, pointed out that traditional crops were not the most damaging for forests, since humans had an innate respect for nature. What did destroy forests and damaged biodiversity was the cultivation of soya, monocultures, biofuel crops and the logging industry. All national parliaments should legislate on the use of forests to ensure that the companies that used forestry resources were obliged to regenerate the forest and replant trees. With regard to fair agricultural prices, he said that as a result of higher prices of agricultural produce on global markets, African countries that had been obliged to produce monocultures in the past would go back to growing a greater variety of food products. The subject of genetically modified foods would undoubtedly be discussed by the IPU in the future. The genetic heritage of humanity should not be the property of any State or company, and legislation should be enacted to safeguard existing traditional genetic varieties. While it was not certain where genetic modifications would lead in the future, it was clear that they would deplete genetic biodiversity.

Mr. K. KITAGAMI (Japan) said that there was an increasing global demand for energy and minerals, and all countries had been seeking to secure a stable supply of natural resources. However, it was important to recognize that the global balance of supply and demand could be significantly destabilized and regional security threatened if actions taken to secure resources were aggressively pursued. Some resources, such as rare earth, were concentrated in only a few countries, and the balance between supply and demand could be adversely affected if the countries with such resources placed restrictions on their export. He called upon the international community to reprimand such activities. Moreover, the development of ocean floor resources, particularly in areas that extended into territorial waters of more than one country, must also be watched very closely so as not to undermine regional stability. For example, the maritime border line between Japan and China in the East China Sea had not yet been established, but China had started gas field development in areas on the Chinese side of the median line between both countries. The Japanese Government and people were seriously concerned about the possibility that natural gas from the seabed on the Japanese side might be pumped up by China's drilling, although the area under direct development was on the Chinese side. He recalled that, in June 2008, Japan and China had agreed on joint development in some areas of the East China Sea, and negotiations on the implementation of the agreements reached had already taken place. The Japanese Government was interested in the peaceful settlement of the issue and underscored that, when competition for securing

resources intensified, or when those resources were aggressively pursued, regional instabilities should not be fuelled by countries opting for unilateral action rather than dialogue.

Mr. F. ROEMAWI (Indonesia) said that the effects of climate change, the increasing human demand for natural resources, environmental degradation and rapid demographic growth were leading to the adoption of a more integrated approach to sustainable development planning. In that connection, the Indonesian House of Representatives had enacted a law on national long-term development that aimed to ensure that sustainable development remained a core issue in the development process and addressed the management of natural resources, agriculture production, and demographic change. Efforts concerning the agricultural sector should be driven by the desire to create conditions conducive to sustainable agriculture and rural development. Indonesia's agricultural strategies were based on five principles, namely developing agricultural infrastructure, such as rural irrigation, farms and roads; empowering farming associations and organizations; improving access to information and technology related to agro-business development; improving the availability of financial support for agriculture and farmers' access to rural capital resources; and increasing access for farmers to the wider market. The House of Representatives had adopted a number of instruments to promote the achievement of food self sufficiency, including a law on sustainable food farming that covered areas such as food assistance, nutrition intervention, boosting the production of small farmers and trade and tax policies. With regard to the issue of demographic change, he said that the human dimension could not be ignored in the formulation of policies concerning sustainable development. The House of Representatives had passed a law on population growth and family empowerment, underlying the strategic role of government in demographic issues, and empowering Indonesian families. The Indonesian Government was also revitalizing the most successful integrated health services in order to reach women and poor families in rural areas. Lastly, parliament had a key role to play in ensuring sustainable development through the management of natural resources, agricultural production, and demographic change. Indonesia, therefore, called for stronger cooperation among parliaments with a view to eliminating the barriers that blocked the flow of trade in agricultural products between developing countries and their developed partners, and to providing a better future for the next generation.

The delegate of NAMIBIA asked what could be done to prevent a conflict between the growing of crops for biodiesels and biofuels, and for food production.

The sustainable utilization of natural resources was a prerequisite for the sustained generation of income and the creation of wealth. Namibia's Vision 2030 sought to ensure the development of Namibia's natural capital and its sustained utilization for the country's social, ecological and economic wellbeing. Namibia was one of the driest countries in sub-Saharan Africa, and, therefore, faced particular difficulties with regard to its agricultural industry. However, the agriculture sector in Namibia was key to ensuring food security for the majority of the population, and certain actions were being taken to promote food security and self-sufficiency, including the implementation of green schemes and the management of natural resources. Parliamentarians should consider the significance of agriculture on the lives of people, and the sustained management of land was crucial in a country as dry as Namibia. Climate change, which could increase Namibia's ecological and economic vulnerability, constituted a long-term challenge to the country's environmental sustainability, and steps were being taken to develop a national climate change policy. The standing committee on climate change received regular updates from the relevant ministry to ensure that parliamentarians were fully aware of the action being taken by the executive. Parliaments should play an active role through regular oversight activities to monitor sustainable development. However, the

international community should work together to ensure that funding was available for agricultural production.

Mr. U. HOFFMANN, *Economic Affairs Officer, United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD), Panellist*, said that in order to replace 10 per cent of conventional gasoline or diesel with biofuels, some 30 per cent of total arable land would currently be required. The situation with regard to biofuel crops varied from region to region and country to country. Some countries, such as Brazil, produced high levels of certain crops, including sugar cane, that lent themselves to biofuel production. However, it would be ill-advised to apply the Brazilian approach universally. The focus in countries should be on sustainable agricultural production rather than on the needs of the transport industry. The production of biofuels should be locally targeted, for example to provide the fuel for local mechanization, and the decision on whether or not to grow such crops should be based on a number of factors, including the climatic conditions and the sustainability of the agricultural approach in general.

Mr. C. FROLICK (South Africa), referring to the need to ensure that sufficient funds were available for agriculture production, pointed out that parliamentarians were responsible for approving the national budgets, and also had a major say in the allocation of resources. If sustainable development was so important, parliamentarians should be engaged in a budget process to facilitate funding for farmer support and infrastructure development. Parliamentarians could also advocate increases in government funding for the implementation of regional, national and multinational climate change adaptation studies that took into account the environmental and socio-economic aspects of farming, and identified the current vulnerabilities of the agricultural systems. Parliamentarians could also encourage governments to commit considerably more financial resources to develop and support small-scale farmers, and implement holistic sustainable development programmes that included projects to address land tenure for people in the rural areas, renewable energy, and natural resource management. They could also influence government policy to provide food producers with greater access to capital and markets. In his country, further land reform programmes were necessary for the creation of other opportunities in rural areas. Lastly, he highlighted the importance of gender mainstreaming in the development agenda, and of developing programmes to enhance the involvement of women in the agricultural sector.

Mr. S. ALHUSSEINI (Saudi Arabia) underscored the importance of peace and security for sustainable development. States were taking a number of measures to ensure food security given the decline in global food reserves and the decrease in arable land, including agriculture investment beyond national borders. Noting that his country's energy policy was based on the stability of international markets, he said that Saudi Arabia had undertaken scientific research in areas such as energy, natural resources and water resources, and considered that it was possible to reduce energy costs. Referring to the draft report, he said that paragraph 59, which set out the actions national parliaments and parliamentarians were called upon to take, appeared to encourage subsidies. Caution should be exercised in that regard, given the problems agricultural subsidies could present for some countries and the ongoing debate on the issue of subsidies at the World Trade Organization (WTO). With regard to the comments by the delegate of Japan regarding the taxation of natural resources, he said that his country invested significantly in the management of its natural resources, but could not prevent their taxation by other countries.

Mr. A. CHERRAR (Algeria), *co-Rapporteur*, pointed out that the draft report had not defended the use of subsidies, but simply highlighted the importance of facilitating the access

of small farmers to credit at a favourable rate to enable the land to be farmed and help to prevent a rural exodus.

Ms. V. MUCHENJE (Zimbabwe) emphasized the importance of an integrated approach to promote development. As representatives of the people, parliamentarians should call upon the government to apply stiffer penalties to discourage communities from participating in activities that destroyed natural resources, such as the uncontrolled tree cutting for energy use and forest burning. In her country, programmes had been introduced to encourage communities to look after their natural resources. Parliamentarians were also considering the establishment of a minerals bureau to provide for a coordinated approach to the exploitation of minerals for the benefit of the nation. Efforts were also being made to create an environment conducive to foreign investment, which would help to improve infrastructure and the creation of employment. In Zimbabwe, like most African countries, the issue of adequate resources and a reliable infrastructure to support agriculture production was a major challenge. Her country had embarked on a land reform programme to redress the distribution of land to all citizens, especially the rural communities and was also giving those communities subsidized agricultural inputs in order to increase agricultural production. Parliamentarians were also advocating an allocation of at least 10 per cent of the national budget to the agricultural sector, which she hoped would be achieved in the near future.

Mr. R.A. CHIK (Malaysia), referring to paragraph 19 of the draft report, which stated that the expansion of farming land had resulted in massive deforestation, requested clarification on the link between climate change and deforestation. Paragraph 33 of the draft report stated that, in Malaysia, 87 per cent of deforestation was linked to the production of palm oil. However, he pointed out that burning was totally illegal in Malaysia now. Moreover, palm oil was being produced primarily for edible products and only 5 per cent was used to produce biofuels. He pointed out that some 62 per cent of the land in Malaysia was forested; that figure would rise to more than 70 per cent if the oil plant plantations, which contributed to photosynthesis, were also taken into consideration. He underscored the importance of new technologies for food production, and noted that with their use, the time taken to produce palm oil had fallen from approximately five years to 30 months. Lastly, consideration should also be given to the wastage of food in urban areas and in developed countries.

Mrs. A. SALAH (Tunisia) said that future generations would suffer as a result of current practices, and noted that pressure on agricultural land would lead to pressure on water and other resources. Policies implemented were leading to the fragmentation of local communities. Although her country was lagging behind in the achievement of the MDGs, it was trying to achieve equity across different sectors of society and among the various regions of the country. To that end, a number of approaches had been taken, and as a result, a growth rate of 3 per cent had been achieved, infant mortality had fallen to 18.4 per 1,000, and gender equality had become more discernible. Moreover, her country was fully aware of the need to continue to maintain a connection between sustainable development and the use of resources, and was looking into renewable energy and the protection of the environment. It was also seeking to benefit from the experiences of other nations, and was looking to develop long-term policies, as opposed to short-term thinking. She concluded by highlighting the impact of rural migration on urban development and food prices.

Ms. R. DASHTI (Kuwait) said that worldwide security had been gravely undermined by the fuel and food crises. Moreover, shortages of water and food continued to affect the policies adopted by various countries, and were among the main reasons for the migration of refugees from developing countries to the developed world. It was regrettable that, despite all of the

noble intentions expressed in international summits and the available funds, developing countries continued to face serious problems. Kuwait had opted to develop its own fund designed to provide assistance to the agricultural sector in developing countries. The developed world could not afford to disassociate itself from the problems of developing countries, and she called upon the developed countries to fulfil their commitments, in particular by providing 0.7 per cent of their GNP to Official Development Assistance (ODA).

Mr. E. RUBIO (Mexico), noting that many citizens had left Mexico because they could not live off the land, said that food self-sufficiency was a problem for many countries. The problem was exacerbated by government decisions to import crops rather than to grow them at a slightly greater cost, which resulted in a loss of land and labour. While consideration should be given to green issues, he said that steps to enable countries to achieve food self-sufficiency were of critical importance. If all countries made an effort to achieve that goal on the basis of their own comparative advantages, the planet would more likely be able to support a future population of 9 billion.

Noting that a hardwood tree took 20 years to grow, he said that reforestation was another serious problem. Trees would continue to be cut down, but reforestation was unlikely to take place unless it was an economically viable option.

Mr. F. OWONO NGUEMA (Gabon) expressed the hope that recognition of the fact that the earth was in serious danger would foster greater solidarity among the peoples of the world. The earth currently had two major green lungs, the Amazon and the Congo Basin, and the latter included his country. Gabon shared the concerns expressed in the draft report, and had established national parks across one third of its land area with a view to curbing greenhouse gas emissions and preserving ecosystems and biodiversity. He asked how other countries could be encouraged to use their land to mitigate the effects of climate change.

Mr. E.A. KAYEMBE (Malawi), recalling the estimated increase in world population by 2050, said that careful consideration should be given to meeting the population's needs given the finite resources of the earth. The Parliament in Malawi had supported the Government's initiatives to provide subsidies to small-scale farmers, and his country had succeeded in demonstrating that it was possible to feed a growing population through the use of modern agricultural technologies. Although it had managed to minimize issues related to soil erosion and land degradation, deforestation and reforestation remained a challenge, particularly in rural areas, due to a lack of alternative sources of energy. He called upon parliamentarians to develop legislation prioritizing rural electrification and heavy investment in the energy sector to avoid heavy reliance on forestry resources. The Rapporteurs should take an overall political view regarding demographic issues, since those issues depended not only on actions of the global community, but also on actions of national governments.

Ms. C. ELIAS (Angola) said that land was a scarce resource worldwide, particularly in Africa, and access to land was crucial in the fight against poverty. In many areas, the most productive land was located at the edge of tropical forests and savannahs, and farming was often carried out to their detriment, which had damaging sociopolitical, environmental and ecological implications. The concentration of populations in major cities and centres of development had been a cause for concern in many poor countries, particularly in sub-Saharan Africa, and policy measures that aimed to reduce levels of population growth had been implemented. Levels had already fallen slightly in certain countries, as a result of the wide availability of educational services and family planning. In addition, strategies were being implemented in some countries to reduce the central role of the State and promote the development of an open market economy, which would include reform of the agricultural

sector. Economic, fiscal and administrative measures should be taken under a democratic leadership with a view to influencing political change in a manner that was less committed to specific interests. New production technologies should be introduced as soon as possible. In addition, technical assistance programmes could help infrastructure development and have a strong impact on the agricultural sector and on the management of natural resources.

Ms. S.B. KABORI (Bangladesh) said that, in her country, agricultural development continued to be given the highest priority in national development policies. Her parliament worked closely with the government to protect the interests of farmers through the implementation of strategies concerning the timely and affordable provision of agricultural inputs, particularly fertilisers, irrigation methods and seeds. Agricultural loans and customized banking services for farmers were also provided. Furthermore, steps had been taken to enhance investment in agricultural research and to undertake appropriate measures to mitigate the impact of climate change and enhance the coverage of natural forest. The parliament also provided policy guidance to the Government, and helped it with its monitoring and oversight functions to ensure accountability with respect to the protection and use of national resources. Bangladesh's demographic profile was one of its key resources, and the government's development priorities for the youth of Bangladesh were welcome. As migration would continue to be a reality in an increasingly globalized world, it was in the collective interest to ensure that migration was properly managed and the rights of migrants protected. Migration was seen in some countries increasingly as an informed choice for self-development, and she agreed that the flow of migration could be minimized through investment in local development efforts.

Mrs. A.A. AL QUBAISI (United Arab Emirates) said that her country gave a considerable amount of financial assistance in order to promote sustainable development, agricultural production and food security, particularly in developing countries. It was also making efforts to mitigate the effects of climate change; it had had built the world's first carbon-neutral city and encouraged international research with a view to developing a cleaner world and saving energy. Parliaments had a role in ensuring sustainable development, including by encouraging governments to ratify relevant national and international conventions, and conducting a review of national legislation. Parliamentarians should also be encouraged to develop legislation to preserve natural resources and involve women in sustainable development efforts. Steps should be taken to make better use of water resources, and to consider the effects of energy use on the planet. The impact of natural disasters, particularly flooding, on agriculture should be considered, and infrastructure in rural areas reviewed. Obstacles must be removed and all the necessary steps to support agriculture must be taken. Lastly, human resources were an essential element of sustainable development, and she called for cooperation among all peoples.

Mr. J. HORVÁTH (Hungary) said that he had learned much from the exchange of views. The important issue of sustainable development encompassed a wide range of subjects, including agriculture, health, education, growth and employment. Parliamentarians should ensure that their discussions were translated into real legislative action, and he suggested that in the future, the issue of inter-parliamentary diplomacy for targeted, specific subjects should be placed on the agenda of the IPU.

Mr. K. AKHAMOUNTRY (Lao People's Democratic Republic) said that proper management of resources was necessary to ensure sustainable development, which was a challenge for all countries. With regard to the deterioration of land, he drew attention to the presence of cluster munitions, in particular unexploded bombs, that remained underground in some countries and could explode at any moment. His country was the worst of the 12 LDCs

affected by those munitions. He was pleased to report that the international community had not ignored the situation, and that the Convention on Cluster Munitions, which had already been signed by more than 100 countries, had entered into force on 1 August 2010. Noting that the first meeting of States Parties would be held in his country in November, he expressed the hope that that countries would work together on the issue of cluster munitions to ensure that the sustainable development of the planet was not threatened by those weapons.

Mr. H. TAJAM (Uruguay), referring to paragraph 25 of the draft report, agreed that the promotion of small-scale farming would help reduce poverty and increase food production. Part II of the document, on the role of parliamentarians in ensuring sustainable development, placed too much emphasis on the role of the financial system. While Uruguay recognized the importance of action to facilitate the access of small farmers to loans at preferential rates, he said that land policy was another important area that should be considered. In legislating on land policy, the government must intervene to distribute land so as to foster family farms and protect boundaries. In any event, governments must be proactive and legislate in an appropriate manner so as to make the best use of the land available. It was imperative that people in rural areas were given the resources they required to generate their own wealth, and that governments placed an emphasis on strategic policies.

Mr. A.S. AL-SHADADI (Yemen) said that economic and agricultural development was a matter of concern to all countries and peoples, in particular in developing countries. The international community must work together in the implementation of programmes to improve the social and living conditions in those countries, and integrate people into the labour force. Traditional farming practices should be used alongside new technologies in order to promote economic development. Steps must be taken to build partnerships with the international community and achieve the integrated use of resources, in particular water, in accordance with the legislation in force. Efforts must be made to prevent the pollution of arable land, carry out seawater desalination and adopt measures for arid areas. Integrated policies should be developed for coastal States, and the international community must help countries prepare regional plans that would preserve biodiversity at the local level. The international community should also intensify its efforts to improve urban planning and enhance regional networks.

Ms. H. AL TARRIF (Syrian Arab Republic) said that the demographic question was a very important issue for developing countries, one that must be addressed. Syria's population had grown slowly in the 19th century but, following a period of political stability, improved health and living conditions, had been growing by 1 million persons every two years to reach approximately 23 million. Problems associated with high population growth included unemployment, increased urban development and levels of pollution, which had led to species becoming extinct and rivers drying up. The water shortages experienced by her country were exacerbated by the Israeli occupation of the Golan Heights.

Mr. M. KOUCHAKZADEH (Islamic Republic of Iran) said that appropriate management of natural resources and agricultural products was a prerequisite for sustainable development. Population growth was also an issue that had to be addressed in an appropriate manner in order to safeguard the earth's resources. He hoped that the next IPU Assembly would have on its agenda the subject of cooperation among parliaments in the balanced, common use of natural resources.

Mr. A. MOLINA (Colombia) said that an increasing population would necessitate increased food production and innovation, cleaner and different modes of production, including perhaps genetically modified foods. Land use would change due to the need for

more housing and different sources of energy. While biofuels might constitute an alternative energy source, biofuel crops might compete with food crops. Colombia grew crops on its land, but was losing them because of the absence of a clear marketing strategy. Moreover, technical and financial barriers imposed by developed countries were making it difficult to export products. Noting that relevant legislation had been passed in his country, he said that sufficient social guarantees were still lacking, and the international community should provide economic resources to complement agricultural production in countries such as his own. Efforts to promote sustainable development and food self-sufficiency would produce more food; surpluses could be exported generating more revenue which, in turn, could be used for the conservation of ecosystems, which were not only the heritage of Colombia, but of the whole world.

Mr. S. TSOGWANE (Botswana), noting that the war against environmental degradation could not be won without addressing the high levels of poverty in developing countries, appealed to those countries to break the link between poverty and environmental degradation. He also appealed to the developing countries to ensure that HIV interventions were integrated into national plans and budget processes. Lastly, he appealed to the developed countries to remain committed to the Montreal Protocol on Substances that Deplete the Ozone Layer.

Ms. MA LI (China), responding to the comments made by the delegate of Japan, said that although she understood that China had rare natural resources, the extraction of those resources would damage the ecosystem, and China had adopted restrictive measures in line with WTO rules. The question of oil and gas resources in the East China Sea was a bilateral issue, and a discussion on sustainable development was not the appropriate forum in which it should have been raised. China attached great importance to its bilateral relations with Japan, and the issue should be dealt with through dialogue and consultation. It also attached significance to the agreement on the East China Sea it had concluded with Japan in 2008, and she pointed out that the oil and the gas field that China was developing was on the Chinese side, which was totally undisputed. China enjoyed sovereignty and jurisdiction over the oil field and its activities were entirely legal and legitimate.

Mr. K. PUTTERS (Netherlands), *substitute co-Rapporteur*, thanked the delegates for their input, and agreed that parliamentarians were agents of change for sustainable development. He would inform Ms. Ferrier of the comments made at the meeting. In his view, the report should also highlight the dangers of the overproduction and overuse of land as well as the importance of the gender issue. A comprehensive strategy for reform was required covering three main areas: identification of proper regulatory instruments, development of appropriate financial instruments, and development of communication tools to foster dialogue with local communities.

Mr. A. CHERRAR (Algeria), *co-Rapporteur*, thanked all the participants for their comments, which would be reflected in the final report to be presented in Panama. It was important for the international community to remain vigilant but not pessimistic; there were threats to humanity, but the resources, technologies and techniques necessary to overcome them were available. Although Africa was currently undergoing significant population growth, human development was also taking place in Africa, and there was no reason why it would not be able to bring about a more stable birth rate, as other areas of the world had done. Action should be taken to combat the "throw-away" society, and awareness should be raised of the risk of conflict over finite resources, in particular water.

Mr. U. HOFFMANN, *Economic Affairs Officer, United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD), Panellist*, said that he agreed that the question of access to or availability of resources was increasingly becoming a strategic issue that could threaten international security. Conflicts of interest were likely to heighten in the future, and it was important for parliamentarians to consider the issue in a cooperative manner.

The issue of food security in the context of sustainable agricultural development was an issue that deserved considerable attention. The strategy of relying exclusively on international agricultural markets had to be reviewed, and agriculture should be seen as an economic sustainability and social issue. Parliamentarians had a role to play in that regard, as well as in efforts to ensure that local communities and small-scale farmers were encouraged to provide enough food and agricultural materials for a vibrant local economy. Lastly, on the subject of justice in development, he said that the legitimate claim of many developing countries regarding the need to accelerate their development became a difficult issue after consideration of resource and environmental implications. Although there was a need for those countries to catch up, it would be very difficult for them to do so under a business as usual scenario. He called for creative thought so that countries could catch up in a sustainable manner.

The meeting rose at 5.45 p.m.

