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**Letter dated 26 September 2023 from the Representative of Cuba  
to the United Nations (Group of 77 and China) addressed to the  
Secretary-General**

I have the honour to transmit herewith the Ministerial Declaration adopted at the forty-seventh annual meeting of the Ministers for Foreign Affairs of the States members of the Group of 77 and China (see annex), held at United Nations Headquarters in New York on 22 September 2023.

On behalf of the Group of 77 and China, I would appreciate having the present letter and its annex circulated as a document of the General Assembly, under agenda items 9, 10, 13, 15, 16, 17, 18, 19, 20, 21, 22, 23, 24, 25, 28, 34, 35, 38, 42, 49, 50, 53, 59, 65, 69, 70, 72, 75, 122, 123, 134, 136, 138 and 139.

*(Signed)* Pedro Luis **Pedroso Cuesta**  
Ambassador

Special Representative and Coordinator for the  
Cuban Presidency of the Group of 77 and China

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**Annex to the letter dated 26 September 2023 from the Representative of Cuba to the United Nations (Group of 77 and China) addressed to the Secretary-General**

**Ministerial Declaration**

1. The Ministers for Foreign Affairs of the States members of the Group of 77 and China met on 22 September 2023, at the UN Headquarters in New York on the occasion of their forty-seventh annual meeting. The Ministers discussed the repercussions of current geo-political tensions, reviewed the world economic situation, discussed the on-going impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic, and the particular challenges faced by developing countries in the economic, social and environmental areas, recognizing that eradicating poverty in all its forms and dimensions, including extreme poverty, remains the greatest global challenge and an indispensable requirement for sustainable development, and adopted the following Declaration.

2. The Ministers reaffirmed full respect for the purposes and principles of the Charter of the United Nations and international law. They reaffirmed in this regard the need to respect the principles of equality among States, national sovereignty, territorial integrity and political independence of States and non-interference in their internal affairs. They also reaffirmed the need to respect the right to self-determination of peoples living under colonial or foreign occupation and other forms of alien domination.

3. The Ministers also reaffirmed the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, on the occasion of its 75th anniversary.

4. The Ministers reaffirmed that there can be no sustainable development without peace and no peace without sustainable development. They stressed the importance of building a culture of peace by strengthening multilateralism based on international law, developing friendly relations among nations, promoting peaceful settlement of disputes, and taking other appropriate measures to strengthen universal peace and to ensure the fulfilment, promotion and protection of all human rights, including the right to development. They recognized that peace is not only the absence of conflict, but also requires a positive, dynamic participatory process where dialogue is encouraged and conflicts are solved in a spirit of mutual understanding and cooperation.

5. The Ministers stressed that those purposes and principles inspire the full commitment to multilateralism and the search for a more just and equitable international economic system that offers opportunities to raise the standard of living of our peoples.

6. The Ministers reiterated that the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, the Addis Ababa Action Agenda, the Paris Agreement adopted under the UNFCCC, the New Urban Agenda and the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction, as well as major outcome documents in relation to countries in special situations, shall be implemented in their totality, and the integrity of the commitments enshrined in them shall be honored, in line with the principles of multilateralism and international cooperation.

7. The Ministers stressed the critical importance of multilateral and international cooperation as relevant tools to tackle humanity's challenges and reaffirmed their full support to the strengthening of the multilateral system, particularly of the UN system. They also stressed the need to increase the representation and voice of developing countries in international affairs, institutions and mechanisms.

8. The Ministers highlighted the values, achievements and multilateral spirit of the United Nations. More importantly, they stressed that the international community needs to recognize the UN's pivotal importance in supporting countries to tackle present and future problems and challenges facing humankind, and arriving at their solutions within an overarching framework agreed to multilaterally, in a democratic and equitable way, and inspired by common interests and aspirations of "we the peoples of the United Nations" who need to work, cooperate and exist together in harmony, solidarity and peace.

9. The Ministers reaffirmed the universality of the 2030 Agenda and its comprehensive, far-reaching, people-centred and transformative set of Sustainable Development Goals and targets, guided by the principle of leaving no one and no country behind.

10. The Ministers recalled the adoption of General Assembly resolution [74/306](#) of 11 September 2020, entitled "Comprehensive and coordinated response to the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic" and recognized the importance of its implementation, and also recalled resolutions [74/270](#) of 3 April 2020, [74/274](#) of 21 April 2020, [74/307](#) of 15 September 2020, [75/4](#) of 5 November 2020, [75/17](#) of 1 December 2020, [75/130](#) of 21 December 2020, [75/156](#) of 16 December 2020, and [75/313](#) of 29 July 2021.

11. The Ministers expressed solidarity with all countries in the battle against the multidimensional effects of the COVID-19 pandemic and saluted the dedicated and hard-working healthcare professionals, medical researchers and other frontline workers bearing the brunt of the response to the crisis; while also recognizing the contribution of health volunteers in working to support the prevention, detection and reporting of COVID-19, they stressed the need to address the COVID-19 pandemic and recovery process through a global response based on unity, solidarity and renewed multilateral and international cooperation among States, peoples and generations that enhances the ability and resolve of States and other relevant stakeholders to fully implement the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

12. The Ministers stressed that countries around the world continue to grapple with multiple crises including COVID-19, climate change and current geopolitical tensions which have created additional challenges on eradication of poverty, food security, energy security, cost of living (inflation), and access to concessional financing, undermined the achievement of the SDGs, disproportionately impacted the recovery efforts particularly of developing countries and reversed development gains of at least a decade. In this regard, the Ministers reaffirmed their commitment to take urgent actions needed for coordinated and comprehensive multilateral response to the developmental challenges and the need to support the national efforts of developing countries to build resilience against future shocks.

13. The Ministers reaffirmed the need to ensure that developing countries have the necessary fiscal space for recovery and achieving the SDGs, noted the increasing financing gap and underlined that bridging this gap is essential to move towards recovery. This would require, amongst other measures, debt treatment, enhanced financing mechanisms including innovative financing, fulfillment of ODA commitments, access to concessional finance by all developing countries, as well as larger greater FDI. In this regard, they reaffirmed the essential need to channel unutilized quotas of existing and newly allocated SDRs from developed countries with strong external positions to the developing countries most in need of liquidity and regional development banks. The Ministers took note of the G20 commitment to step up efforts to implement adequate mechanisms such as the Common Framework in a timely, orderly and coordinated manner.

14. The Ministers expressed concern that the COVID-19 pandemic has exacerbated the challenges faced by people in vulnerable situations, including children, youth, persons with disabilities, people living with HIV/AIDS, older persons, indigenous peoples and local communities, displaced persons, refugees and migrants, and is deepening already existing inequalities and risks reversing the progress in achieving gender equality and the empowerment of all women and girls in recent decades.

15. The Ministers stressed that an inclusive and sustainable and resilient recovery must also ensure the universal, affordable and equitable access to not only COVID-19 vaccines, therapeutics and diagnostics, but also to related health materials, equipment and technologies, including through technology transfer, in accordance with WTO rules, and scaling up of local and regional manufacturing capacities in developing countries. The Ministers noted the Ministerial Decision at the 12th Ministerial Conference of the World Trade Organization on the agreement on trade related aspects of Intellectual Property Rights. The Ministers welcomed the establishment of a Financial Intermediary Fund (FIF) for Pandemic Preparedness, and Response (PPR), to improve the existing prevention preparedness and response to health emergencies financing system and mobilize additional resources for increased investments in pandemic Prevention, Preparedness, and Response (PPR).

16. The Ministers stressed the importance of ensuring global and equitable access to safe, effective, equitable and affordable COVID-19 vaccines at affordable prices and recognized that they should be made global public goods to help overcome the COVID-19 pandemic worldwide and recover the momentum for sustainable development and therefore welcomed the UN General Assembly resolution entitled “Ensuring equitable, affordable, timely and universal access for all countries to vaccines in response to the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic” piloted by the Republic of Azerbaijan on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement. They also stressed the importance of equitable, efficient and timely access to and distribution of preventive tools, laboratory testing, reagents and supporting materials, essential medical supplies, new diagnostics, drugs and future COVID-19 vaccines. The Ministers also called for greater sharing of information and technology for the detection, prevention, treatment and control of the pandemic, and recognized initiatives in this regard, such as the access to COVID-19 Tools Accelerator (ACT-A), Friends of the COVAX Facility, the COVID-19 Technology Access Pool (C-TAP) and relevant pledging appeals.

17. The Ministers committed to achieving a speedy, inclusive, sustainable and resilient recovery and building a better future, as well as pandemic preparedness and the prevention and detection of and response to any future outbreak, putting people at the center of the response, protecting our planet and achieving prosperity through, inter alia, targeted measures to eradicate poverty in all its forms and dimensions, including pandemic- or conflict-induced poverty, relapse into poverty, multidimensional poverty. The Ministers further committed to promote stable food supply chains, ensure daily livelihoods, strengthened health systems and achievement of universal health coverage, enhanced digital connectivity, high-quality education and life-long learning opportunities, productive employment and job creation, sustainable and resilient infrastructure, increased domestic and foreign investment, sustainable consumption and production patterns, strengthened climate adaptation and mitigation capacities, conservation of biodiversity, strengthened means of implementation.

18. The Ministers recognized that substantial digital divides and data inequalities exist within and among countries and regions, and between developed and all developing countries, and that many developing countries lack affordable access to information and communications technologies, and urged Member States and other relevant stakeholders to accelerate the catalytic role that digital technologies play in

reducing the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on education, health, communication, commerce and business continuity and to take concerted action to further digital governance and economy, scientific research, emerging technologies and new data sources and to build resilient, inclusive and integrated data and statistical systems, under the leadership of national statistical offices, that can respond to the increased and urgent data demands in times of disaster and ensure a path towards the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals.

19. The Ministers called on the international community and all relevant stakeholders to scale up cooperation and resource mobilization to support developing countries in their efforts to mitigate the impact of school closures due to the COVID-19 pandemic, including for the poorest, women and girls, persons with disabilities, migrants, refugees, displaced persons, indigenous peoples and local communities, in accordance with national circumstances, and to facilitate the continuity of education for all through, inter alia, connectivity support, remote and lifelong learning opportunities.

20. The Ministers called upon Member States to prevent the harmful effects of the pandemic on children by mitigating the damaging socioeconomic impacts, including by ensuring the continuity of child-centred services on an equal access basis, upholding the right of the child to education and supporting education that is inclusive, equitable and of quality by implementing appropriate measures, including by supporting families in ensuring the return of children, in particular girls and children in vulnerable situations, to school, when it is safe to do so, in the immediate aftermath of the pandemic, and while in confinement, to support school systems, teachers and families in ensuring a reliable source of daily nutrition and using accessible and inclusive distance-learning solutions to close the digital divide, while protecting children from violence, abuse and exploitation in digital contexts, and recalling that no child shall be subjected to arbitrary or unlawful interference with his or her privacy and family.

21. The Ministers took note of the statement dated 28 April 2020 of the Group of Least Developed Countries on the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) and called upon development partners, international organizations and other stakeholders to support the least developed countries in its implementation.

22. The Ministers took note of the statement dated 10th July 2020 of the Alliance of Small Island States on the COVID-19 pandemic and emphasized the need for relevant major stakeholders, inter alia, the World Bank Group, the International Monetary Fund, multilateral and regional development banks, bilateral creditors and other private creditors, to take immediate and substantial actions that will allow SIDS to manage the unfolding crisis caused by the COVID-19 pandemic.

23. The Ministers expressed concern about the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on middle-income countries and underlined the need to work together to protect the development gains thus far achieved, and to build back better in the context of the Decade of Action and Delivery amidst COVID-19. In this regard, the Ministers noted the 8th Ministerial Meeting of the Like-Minded Group of Countries Supporters of Middle-Income Countries held on 21 September 2023, which adopted the Ministerial Declaration to support and advance sustainable development in middle-income countries, and recalls the requests and mandates given to the UN system to address the specific challenges of middle-income countries.

24. The Ministers recognized the outcomes of the virtual Extraordinary G20 Summit under the presidency of Saudi Arabia convened on 26 March 2020, and its call for provision of immediate resources to combat the impacts of COVID-19 including launching the debt service suspension initiative (DSSI) and the decision of the G20 Finance Ministers and Central Banks Governors meeting convened on 14 Oct 2020 to

extend the initiative. The Ministers recommend the full and transparent implementation by all official bilateral creditors of the Group of 20 Debt Service Suspension Initiative along with its extension until December 2021, and the orderly, timely and effective implementation of the Common Framework for Debt Treatments Beyond the Debt Service Suspension Initiative, adopted at the extraordinary leaders' summit hosted by Saudi Arabia on COVID-19 and the work under the presidency of Italy. The Ministers noted that at least USD 12.7 billion of total debt was deferred, under the G20 DSSI, between May 2020 and December 2021, benefitting fifty (50) countries so far.

25. The Ministers recalled the convening by the Government of the Cooperative Republic of Guyana, on 29 October 2020, of the virtual Flagship Event under the theme "Maintaining a Low Carbon Development Path towards the 2030 Agenda in the Era of COVID-19" on the occasion of Guyana's 2020 Chairmanship of the Group of 77 and China, which recognized that both climate change and COVID-19 can impact progress towards the Sustainable Development Goals. The Ministers noted that The Flagship Event recognized that a few countries have pioneered workable, home grown models that have incentivized moving to a low carbon growth trajectory while also addressing emission reduction and removal. Guyana's efforts in this regard are recognized through its Low Carbon Development Strategy (LCDS 2030) and payment for forest climate services model between Guyana and Norway which has incentivized sustainable forest management and avoided deforestation. This represents the first national scale model of REDD+ and one of the first national level strategies on low carbon development.

26. The Ministers stressed the need for global solidarity and multilateral cooperation to increase vaccines production and distribution, on regional and global levels. They opposed vaccine nationalism and rejected any vaccine divide, or any attempt to politicize vaccine cooperation, and recognized the need to ensure non-discrimination and equity for all, given limited global access and inequitable distribution of COVID-19 vaccines. The Ministers also called on the international community to address misinformation, counter vaccine hesitancy, and launch public information campaigns to raise people's awareness on the importance and safety of COVID-19 vaccines.

27. The Ministers reiterated that poverty eradication in all its forms and dimensions is a central imperative of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and emphasized the need to address poverty in all its forms and dimensions in order to truly leave no one behind, focused in particular on the needs of the poorest and most vulnerable. In this regard, they reaffirmed their commitment to work tirelessly for the full implementation of this Agenda by 2030 in a balanced and integrated manner to achieve sustainable development in its three dimensions and building on the achievements and lessons learned of the Millennium Development Goals and seeking to address their unfinished business. The Ministers emphasized that the international community must address the challenges and needs faced by developing countries, especially countries in special situations, in particular, African countries, least developed countries, landlocked developing countries and small island developing States as well as specific challenges faced by many middle-income countries, conflict and post-conflict countries and countries and peoples living under foreign occupation.

28. The Ministers recognized the importance of promoting socioeconomic development in rural areas as an effective strategy at the global level for the eradication of poverty, including extreme poverty. They stressed that, in many developing countries, poverty is still overwhelmingly concentrated in rural areas, and in this regard, recognized the importance of considering in national plans and policies rural-focused poverty eradication strategies and measures, including increasing investments that bolsters productive capacities and structural transformation of rural

economies, bridging the digital divide and improving access to basic services to reduce inequalities.

29. The Ministers recalled that the SDGs are integrated and indivisible and balance the three dimensions of sustainable development, and in this regard underlined that all SDGs should be treated equally when reviewed in inter-governmentally agreed outcomes.

30. The Ministers commended all the countries that presented voluntary national reviews to highlight the steps taken to implement the 2030 Agenda at the 2023 HLPF, convened under the auspices of ECOSOC. The Ministers reaffirmed the importance of voluntary national reviews as a mean to facilitate the sharing of experiences, including successes, challenges and lessons learned, with a view to accelerating the implementation of the 2030 Agenda.

31. The Ministers recalled that the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development reaffirms all the principles of the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development, held in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, in 1992, in particular the principle of common but differentiated responsibilities. They further reaffirmed that the implementation of the 2030 Agenda should be guided by the principles in accordance with its paragraph 74.

32. The Ministers noted with concern that, despite significant effort, the current pace and scope of implementation of the 2030 Agenda is still quite distant from achieving sustainable development for all, in particular for the poorest and most vulnerable.

33. The Ministers stressed that developing countries continue to face unprecedented challenges that hinders their ability to recover from the socio-economic impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic and the multiple crises facing the world. At the mid-way point on our journey to 2030, a preliminary assessment of the roughly 140 targets with data show that only about 12% of the SDGs are on track. In addition, the world is back at hunger levels not seen since 2005; 575 million people will still be living in extreme poverty in 2030 and only about one third of countries will meet the target to halve national poverty levels.

34. The Ministers expressed deep concern over the current state of global food insecurity, which is exacerbating humanitarian needs and increasing the risk of famine around the world, especially in developing countries. They also recognized that the number of people affected by hunger globally rose to between 691 and 783 million in 2022, an increase of about 122 million than in 2019, before the outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic.

35. The Ministers welcomed the UN General Assembly resolution [76/264](#) of 27 May 2022, entitled “State of Global Food Insecurity”, and reiterated its call upon the international community to urgently support countries affected by the food security crisis through coordinated actions, including the provision of emergency food supplies, food programmes, financial support, and increased and diversified agricultural production, and to promote a universal, rules-based, open, non-discriminatory and equitable multilateral trading system under the World Trade Organization; The resolution also called upon the international financial institutions to find urgent, affordable and timely solutions to support developing countries, in particular those highly indebted, in responding to the food security crisis and achieving SDG 2, through, but not limited to, facilitating, as appropriate, access to debt relief, concessional finance and grants.

36. The Ministers called for enhanced cooperation in such areas as food production, storage, transport, processing, and food loss and waste reduction, and improve food

security, nutrition and food self-sufficiency of developing countries, especially the least developed countries.

37. The Ministers stressed that development should be inclusive and provide benefits for all, and reaffirmed the importance of respecting the development paths independently chosen by different countries, respecting the right of all countries to equal participation in international affairs and to development, the need to address development concerns of developing countries with concrete actions, and reduce inequality among and within countries, leaving no country and no person behind.

38. The Ministers reiterated the continued unwavering commitment of the Group of 77 to further translating ambitions set out in the 2030 Agenda into real action. They stressed that implementing the 2030 Agenda at all levels requires provision of means of implementation, and a revitalized global partnership, which puts development front and center in accordance with SDG 17. They stressed in this regard the urgent need to foster balanced, inclusive and equal global development partnership and emphasized that further support is needed from developed countries especially regarding the transfer of technology, capacity building and financing to developing countries.

39. The Ministers expressed their deep concern about the significant impacts of the current challenging global environment on national efforts to implement the 2030 Agenda, including not only economic factors, natural disasters, climate change, environmental degradation, humanitarian crises and conflicts. The Ministers stressed the need for concrete and immediate action to create the necessary enabling environment at all levels for the achievement of the 2030 Agenda.

40. The Ministers emphasized once again the urgent need for a strengthened and renewed global partnership for development, based on the recognition that national leadership and ownership of development strategies should be a guiding principle of all UN activities including those at the country level. The entire UN system as well as the Bretton Woods Institutions and bilateral donors should align their cooperation programmes with the national development strategies with a view to making the optimum contribution to the realization of national development strategies.

41. The Ministers underlined the importance of comprehensive follow-up and review at the global level, as well as the regional level as appropriate, in order to assess progress in the implementation of the 2030 Agenda, ensuring that its overall objectives of poverty eradication in all its forms and dimensions and achieving sustainable development are duly attained. In this regard, they took note of General Assembly resolution [70/299](#) of 29 July 2016 on the Follow-up and Review of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development at the Global Level which underscores the shared vision and aspiration of all States members of the United Nations and States members of the specialized agencies for the crucial path set forth to assess progress in the implementation of the 2030 Agenda. They reiterated and reaffirmed that the implementation and the follow-up and review of the 2030 Agenda must include and address the severe difficulties faced by countries and peoples living under colonial and foreign occupation and strive to remove the obstacles to the full realization of their right to self-determination and right to development, which adversely affect their economic and social development, as well as their environment and their ability to achieve the sustainable development goals, and ensure that they will not be left behind.

42. The Ministers recalled the reaffirmation by the 2030 Agenda of the need to respect the territorial integrity and political independence of States.

43. The Ministers reaffirmed that the imposition of coercive economic measures, including unilateral sanctions, against developing countries does not contribute to

economic and social development, including dialogue, cooperation and understanding among countries.

44. The Ministers reiterated their firm belief that all states and stakeholders should devote themselves collectively to the pursuit of “win-win” cooperation for global development on the basis of extensive consultation, joint contribution and shared benefits, which can bring huge gains to all countries and all parts of the world in building a community of shared future for humankind.

45. The Ministers recognized the important role of connectivity in promoting policy synergies, trade facilitation, infrastructure connectivity, financial cooperation and people-to-people exchange at the subregional, regional and global levels, which are some key areas in achieving sustainable development.

46. The Ministers recognized the global scenario has changed dramatically since the adoption of the 2030 Agenda. The gap between developed and developing countries has continued to widen over these last years and even deepened as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic, with the consequent deterioration of the well-being of our populations. In this regard, the Ministers took note of the south-south initiatives that are aimed at bridging the development gap and in accelerating the 2030 Agenda and its SDGs.

47. The Ministers stressed that investment in sustainable, resilient and quality infrastructure is critical for an inclusive and equitable COVID-19 recovery and for acceleration towards achieving the Sustainable Development Goals. The investment gap for the achievement of the 2030 Agenda is growing and investment in quality infrastructure in developing countries declined. Public financing should be scaled up to catalyse private investments in sustainable and resilient infrastructure that will help to achieve the 2030 Agenda and its Goals, the Addis Ababa Action Agenda, the Paris Agreement, the Sendai Framework and the New Urban Agenda.

48. The Ministers called upon all relevant stakeholders, building on existing mechanisms and facilities, to place a focus on diagnostics for infrastructure needs and help identify and address gaps and financing requirements, especially in developing countries, and to create an enabling environment that takes into account resilience, adaptation to and mitigation of climate change. They recognized the importance of the full utilization of the United Nations development system, the World Bank other multilateral institutions in addressing the capacity and funding gaps and building a pipeline of bankable, sustainable quality, resilient infrastructure projects. They agreed to explore innovative platform approaches to coordinate, scale up and channel public and private finance and technical assistance for quality, reliable, sustainable and resilient infrastructure development.

49. The Ministers recalled the International Year of Creative Economy for Sustainable Development 2021 and recognized the important role of creative economy, known as “orange economy” in a number of countries, as a driver for inclusive and sustainable development growth that may assist developing countries in achieving SDGs and, in this regard, reaffirmed the importance to create enabling environment for the promotion of creative economy, among others by encouraging creativity, innovation and entrepreneurship, supporting the development of cultural institutions and cultural industries, providing technical and vocational training for culture professionals and increasing employment opportunities in the cultural and creative sector. In this regard, the Ministers took note of the report submitted to the UN General Assembly at its seventy-seventh session on the implementation of the resolution entitled International Year of Creative Economy for Sustainable Development 2021.

50. The Ministers looked forward to the International Year of Millets 2023 and recognized the important contribution of millets to the cultivation of nutritious foods in climate-adverse environments and reiterated the urgent need to raise awareness of the climate-resilient and nutritional benefits of millets and to advocate for diversified, balanced and healthy diets through the increased sustainable production and consumption of millets, noting the importance of sustainable farming and production practices to the livelihoods of millions of rural farm families and small family farmers around the world.

51. The Ministers emphasized that digital cooperation can contribute to the implementation of the 2030 Agenda and achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals, and, in this regard, were committed to achieve universal and meaningful digital connectivity, which is important for developing countries to bridge the digital divides. They also recognized that UN can play a key role in enhancing digital cooperation by enhancing greater organizational and human capacity on digital issues and improving its ability to respond to Member States' need for technology transfer and capacity building and in this regard took note of multilateral and regional initiatives targeted towards this goal, and welcomed the establishment of the Digital Cooperation Organization (DCO).

52. The Ministers reaffirmed that, the important issues pertaining to digital cooperation remain, inter alia: inclusive digital economy, including the creation of capacities for MSMEs, digital capacity building, access to digital networks and digital era connectivity, technology transfer, investment in digital infrastructures, data protection, artificial intelligence, digital literacy, combatting the use of information technology for criminal purposes, avoiding Internet fragmentation, countering the proliferation of disinformation and misinformation, fostering e-learning and outlining shared principles for a digital future for all to achieve the 2030 Agenda. In this regard, the Ministers took note of the report of the Secretary-General entitled "Road map for digital cooperation".

53. The Ministers looked forward to the development of a global digital compact through an open, transparent and inclusive intergovernmental process. The Ministers reiterated the need for a close correspondence of the world summit on information society, including its general review process World Summit on the Information Society (WSIS+20), and the Global Digital Compact (GDC).

54. The Ministers underlined that the UN Decade of Family Farming (2019–2028), aims to raise the profile of the role of family farming in contributing to the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and to the achievement of food security and improved nutrition.

55. The Ministers reaffirmed their commitment to strengthen international environmental governance in line with paragraph 88 of the outcome document of the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development, entitled "The future we want" in order to promote a balanced integration of the economic, social and environmental dimensions of sustainable development, as well as coordination within the United Nations system, and recognized the importance of the outcome of the special session to commemorate UNEP@50 held in Nairobi on 3 and 4 March 2022.

56. The Ministers stressed that financing for development is key to the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. They highlighted the importance of assessing progress, identifying obstacles and challenges to the implementation of the financing for development outcomes, addressing new and emerging topics of relevance to the implementation of the Addis Ababa Action Agenda as the need arises, and providing policy recommendations for action by the international community, in particular regarding the support of developed countries for developing countries.

57. The Ministers welcomed the 2023 ECOSOC Forum on Financing for Development, a crucial platform for financing for development, held from 17 to 20 April 2023 and called for the full implementation of its inter-governmentally agreed conclusions and recommendations.

58. The Ministers called on the United Nations system, in consultation with the international financial institutions, to develop transparent measurements of progress on sustainable development that go beyond per capita income, building on existing initiatives as appropriate. These should recognize the multidimensional nature of poverty and the social, economic and environmental dimensions of domestic output and structural gaps at all levels. In this regard, the Ministers underscored the importance of achieving concrete progress in this issue.

59. The Ministers reaffirmed the urgent need for the following actions:

(a) The reform of the international financial architecture, including international financial institutions and multilateral development banks governance reform, especially of IMF and the World Bank, to strengthen the voice and participation of developing countries.

(b) An improved sovereign debt architecture, with the meaningful participation of all developing countries.

(c) Scaling up debt swaps for SDGs, including debt swaps for climate and nature to allow developing countries to use debt service payments for investments in sustainable development and taking multilateral measures to standardize the use of these mechanisms.

(d) Renewed commitments from developed countries to meet their ODA targets.

(e) Supporting the rules based multilateral trading system, including through the fulfilment of long-standing pending negotiating issues, such as agricultural trade reform, and working toward the necessary WTO reform, strengthening the special and differential treatment for developing countries as a multilateral principle and ensuring transfer of technology to deliver on sustainable development.

(f) The urgent need to eliminate immediately all laws and regulations with extraterritorial impact and all other forms of coercive economic measures, including unilateral sanctions, against developing countries. The Ministers emphasized that such actions not only undermine the principles enshrined in the Charter of the UN and international law but also severely threaten the freedom of trade and investment.

(g) Support to structural transformation and to enhance productive capacities for building diversified, resilient, and sustainable economies that can generate decent and productive employment.

(h) Investments in areas such as infrastructure, innovation, technology, and skills development, as well as support for small and medium-sized enterprises.

(i) Preventing the illicit financial flows that drain resources from developing countries.

(j) Enhancing international cooperation on tax matters, including the development of inclusive and effective platforms to design and discuss international tax rules and norms at the UN.

(k) Advancing in the establishment of the set of measures of progress on sustainable development that complement or go beyond gross domestic product to inform access to concessional finance and technical cooperation for developing countries through a UN-led intergovernmental process in consultation with all

relevant stakeholders, which will also require increased investment in national statistical systems, in data collection, and in capacity building for national statistical agencies.

(l) Scaled up investments in digital infrastructure, connectivity, education, skills-training and capacity-building to ensure that developing countries can take better advantage of the digital economy.

60. The Ministers recalled the convening, on 15 and 16 of December 2022, of the G77 Ministerial Conference under the theme “Achieving the SDGs: Addressing Present Challenges and Building Resilience Against Future Crises” on the occasion of Pakistan’s 2022 Chairmanship of the Group of 77 and China.

61. The Ministers invited the international community and all relevant stakeholders, without prejudice to ongoing support, to cooperate and mobilize resources and expertise, including through financial and in-kind assistance, as well as direct aid to host countries, refugee populations and countries of origin of refugees, with a view to enhancing the capacity of and reducing the heavy burden borne by countries and communities hosting refugees and displaced persons in accordance with the purposes and principles of the Charter of the United Nations, while fully respecting the humanitarian principles of humanity, independence, neutrality and impartiality for humanitarian action.

62. The Ministers underscored the need to provide fiscally sustainable and nationally appropriate social protection systems and measures for all, including floors, well designed, efficiently operated, responsive to shocks and sustainable in the long term, stressing that investing in quality, accessible, affordable, reliable, sustainable and resilient infrastructure, including transport, energy, water and sanitation for all, is vital to the achievement of many of our goals. In this regard, the Ministers recalled the second United Nations Global Sustainable Transport Conference and its documents, including Beijing Statement, held in Beijing, China, from 14 to 16 October 2021, which aimed at achieving sustainable transport.

63. The Ministers reaffirmed the paramount importance of Official Development Assistance (ODA) in supporting the sustainable development needs of developing countries, in particular countries in special situations and those facing specific challenges.

64. The Ministers reaffirmed that ODA will remain the main channel for international cooperation, stressed its critical role and urged developed countries to fulfill their unmet ODA commitments to developing countries, in keeping with their previous undertakings, and to scale up those efforts to play a meaningful role in eradicating poverty in all its forms and dimensions, including to achieve the national target of 0.7 per cent of gross national income for official development assistance (ODA/GNI) to developing countries and 0.15 to 0.20 per cent of ODA/GNI to least developed countries. They noted that donor countries have shifted more ODA resources to funds for hosting and processing refugees within donor countries themselves in recent years. This shift in ODA resources towards humanitarian and crisis situations is not consistent with long-term and sustainable approach to financing development needed to achieve 2030 Agenda targets. The Ministers reaffirmed that ODA should be aligned with national priorities and development strategies of the recipient countries. The Ministers were concerned by the failure to increase ODA to the countries most in need, as well as the declining trend in the share of country programmable aid in ODA.

65. The Ministers emphasized the need for grant finance and highly concessional finance for least developed countries, and the need to consider grant finance and highly concessional finance for other vulnerable countries, such as landlocked

developing countries and small island developing States. They acknowledged that ODA and other concessional finance are still important for a number of middle-income countries.

66. The Ministers reiterated that international development cooperation, especially North-South cooperation, remains a fundamental catalyst to sustainable development. As North-South cooperation is the main channel of development financing, the international community must uphold the principle of “common but differentiated responsibilities” (CBDR) and push North-South cooperation to continue to play its key role. Developed countries should bear the primary responsibility in financing for development.

67. The Ministers reiterated their position that South-South cooperation is not a substitute for, but rather a complement to, North-South cooperation and reaffirmed that South-South cooperation is a collective endeavor of developing countries. The Ministers emphasized that South-South cooperation deserves its own separate and independent promotion, as reaffirmed in the Nairobi 2009 outcome document and at the Buenos Aires 2019 outcome document. In this context, the Ministers stressed that South-South cooperation and its agenda must be driven by the countries of the South and which continue to be guided by principles set out in the outcome document of Nairobi 2009 and Buenos Aires 2019 and the set of 14 guiding elements for South-South cooperation contained in the Declaration adopted on the occasion of their thirty-second Annual Ministerial Meeting held at UN Headquarters in New York on 26 September 2008.

68. The Ministers welcomed the leader’s Political Declaration adopted at the G77 and China Summit on “Current development challenges: The Role of Science, Technology and Innovation”, held in Havana, Cuba, from 15–16 September 2023, which highlights positions of the Group on these issues. The Ministers congratulated the government and the people of Cuba for the hospitality shown during the Summit, as well as for the preparation, organization and hosting of this important event.

69. The Ministers further recognized the significant contribution of South-South cooperation in the area of trade and its ability to promote sustainable development among developing countries. In this regard, they reaffirmed the importance of strengthening South-South trade cooperation arrangements, including preferential trade and investment arrangements and the Global System of Trade Preferences among Developing Countries. In this connection, the relevant United Nations organizations, including UNCTAD, must continue to support developing countries in deepening and enlarging South-South trade integration, regional, sub-regional and interregional economic integration and cooperation arrangements.

70. The Ministers also underlined the need to strengthen South-South and triangular cooperation on access to science, technology and innovation by creating synergies, developing joint research and venture programs in areas like food security and nutrition, pandemic prevention and vaccines and artificial intelligence, among others, as well as boosting resources for scientific and research institutions of the South.

71. The Ministers welcomed the development of an initial conceptual framework for the measurement of South-South cooperation, which marks a breakthrough in its measurement, as well as the role of United Nations Conference on Trade and Development co-custodianship in undertaking the work on this framework, including on capacity-building, led by countries from the global South and building on country-led mechanisms. The Ministers encouraged developing countries to report to UNCTAD to support the further improvement of the conceptual framework.

72. The Ministers recalled the convening of the Second UN High-level Conference on South-South Cooperation in Buenos Aires from 20 to 22 March 2019, and

reiterated their commitment to the full and effective implementation of BAPA+40 outcome document, building on the Buenos Aires Plan of Action and the Nairobi outcome document, especially in the context of the implementation of the 2030 Agenda and the recovery of the COVID-19 pandemic, which requires unwavering solidarity and international cooperation more than ever. The Ministers also reaffirmed their support for the High-level Committee on South-South Cooperation, and welcomed decisions 21/1 and 21/2 adopted during its twenty-first session, held from 30 May to 2 June 2023.

73. The Ministers reiterated their strong support to the mandate of the United Nations Office for South-South Cooperation (UNOSSC) and stressed that the Office is the articulator of South-South cooperation in the United Nations system. They appreciated the countries of the South who have stepped up their cooperation with UNOSSC. In this context, the Ministers called on the UNOSSC to strengthen its support to south-south cooperation projects.

74. The Ministers took note of the handbook on integrating South-South cooperation and triangular cooperation in the voluntary national reviews elaborated by the UN Office for South-South cooperation in cooperation with the co-chairs of the Group of Friends of the voluntary national reviews Morocco and the Philippines.

75. The Ministers reiterated the invitation to the Member States to come forward with an offer to host the thirteenth session of the Intergovernmental Follow-up and Coordination Committee on South-South Cooperation (IFCC-XIII) in 2024. They also invited Member States to host regularly high-level meetings of the Group on key issues of interest to the South, as well as sectoral meetings in various fields of cooperation including South-South forums for parliamentarians, mayors, youth, media and civil society and other thematic meetings as envisaged in the Doha Plan of Action adopted by the Second South Summit held in Doha, Qatar, from 12 to 16 June 2005, and look forward to the continued support of the UN Office for South-South Cooperation in this regard.

76. The Ministers noted that the year 2023 marked the fortieth anniversary of the establishment of the Perez-Guerrero Trust Fund for South-South Cooperation (PGTF). Impact of PGTF has been widespread, directly benefitting 141 Member States and collectively all of them through projects implemented by regional and international institutions of the South. The Ministers also commended the work of its committee of experts and invited Member States to expand the resources of PGTF through increased voluntary contributions, aimed at preserving and enhancing the response capacity of the PGTF to the growing and pressing demands for support of South-South cooperation activities.

77. The Ministers further noted the ongoing preparations for the Third South Summit to be held in Kampala, Uganda from 21st to 23rd January 2024 and recalled the historic importance of this largest gathering of the Global South.

78. The Ministers welcomed the Ministerial Meeting on South-South Cooperation that took place on 7 March 2023 in Doha, Qatar, on the margins of the second part of the Fifth United Nations Conference on the Least Developed Countries. They reiterated their support for the implementation of the Doha Programme of Action (DPoA) within the framework of South-South Cooperation.

79. The Ministers reaffirmed that international cooperation among developing countries, in addition to North-South cooperation, is an effective instrument for optimizing developing countries' capacities and potential to promote development through sharing of knowledge, technical advances, skills and expertise across a broad range of sectors in our countries. They expressed the urgent need to promote further initiatives on regional and sub-regional cooperation to enhance economic

development. In this regard, it is important to increase interregional cooperation and integration in the six areas of action of the DPoA by providing technical cooperation and capacity building to developing countries.

80. The Ministers noted the various experiences and home-grown approaches to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals and reiterated the importance of learning and sharing of best practices including through North-South, South-South and Triangular Cooperation including, among others, through the Global South-South Development Expo, Thailand's initiative on "Sufficiency Economy Philosophy (SEP) for SDGs Partnerships", as well as the importance of concrete collaboration between Member States and the United Nations Office for South-South Cooperation, including the South-South-in-Action series on Thailand's application of the SEP, Bangladesh's citizen-friendly public service innovation, Cuba's best practices in health, education, climate change and disaster reduction, and agriculture sectors, UAE's best practices through the Global South-South Development Expo, the launch of the francophone network of actors for South-South and tripartite cooperation in Morocco on 18 July 2018, and China's training seminar on South-South Cooperation and the Global Development Initiative, and Brazil's Centers for Vocational Training. They also noted other experiences that enhance South-South Cooperation, inter alia, PETROCARIBE by Venezuela, and the Singapore Cooperation Programme by Singapore.

81. The Ministers recognized the important role of the South Centre as think tank of the countries of the South and emphasized its importance in enhancing South-South Cooperation through promoting solidarity and mutual understanding among the countries and peoples of the South, as well as providing the intellectual and policy support required by developing countries for collective and individual action in the international arena.

82. The Ministers reaffirmed the importance of triangular cooperation, and acknowledges that triangular cooperation is aimed at facilitating, supporting and enhancing South-South initiatives, through the provision of, inter-alia, funding, capacity-building, technology transfer as well as other forms of support, at the request of developing countries, in line with the principles of South-South cooperation, and must be led by the countries of the South.

83. The Ministers underlined that while developing countries seek to maximize their domestic public resources in order to achieve 2030 Agenda, through broadening the tax base, there is a need to continue addressing the international dimension of taxation. Furthermore, ODA in support of domestic resource mobilization remains small. In this regard, the Ministers called on the developed countries to continue to increase their contributions to revenue mobilization capacity building of the developing countries.

84. The Ministers reiterated the need to strengthen international cooperation on tax matters, recognizing with concern that there is still no single global inclusive forum for international tax cooperation at the intergovernmental level. They reiterated the need to fully upgrade the Committee of Experts in Tax Matters to an intergovernmental body with experts representing their respective governments. The Ministers stressed that the most relevant issues are the challenges posed by the lack of international tax cooperation, the existing illicit financial flows and tax evasion. They reiterated that appropriate emphasis must be placed on an enabling global environment and global partnership for development, balanced against the increased emphasis being placed on domestic resource mobilization. In this regard, they underlined that it is counterproductive to highlight the importance of domestic resource mobilization in developing countries, while at the same time not robustly tackle areas that impede their ability to capture necessary resources.

85. The Ministers noted with appreciation that, in response to the call of the Addis Ababa Action Agenda, the Republic of India was the first developing country to make a voluntary contribution to the Trust Fund for International Cooperation in Tax Matters, the only such contribution since its establishment, and reiterated their appeal to Member States, relevant organizations and other potential donors to consider contributing generously to the Trust Fund for International Cooperation in Tax Matters established by the Secretary-General in order to supplement regular budgetary resources, and invited the Secretary-General to intensify efforts to that end.

86. The Ministers acknowledged the ongoing discussion for a consensus-based solution on tax measures in response to the digitalization of the economy and stress the need for thorough analysis of its implications for developing countries and the need for the voices of developing countries to be prioritized in all tax norms setting processes.

87. The Ministers noted with concern the steady increase in the illicit flow of funds, particularly from developing countries, and the negative impact it poses with respect to the realization of the Sustainable Development Goals, the rule of law and the security of nations. The Ministers recognized that States continue to face challenges in the recovery and return of stolen assets owing to, inter alia, differences in legal systems, the complexity of multi-jurisdictional investigation and prosecution, divergent interpretations of the provisions of the Convention and relevant legal instruments, lack of familiarity with the mutual legal assistance procedures of other States parties and difficulties in identifying and exposing the flow of the proceeds of corruption and illicit financial flows. The Ministers expressed concern that a large proportion of the proceeds of corruption, including those emanating from transnational bribery-related cases, have yet to be returned to the countries of origin. The Ministers emphasized the importance of strengthening good practices on assets return, and strengthening international coordination of illicit financial flows based on existing mechanisms.

88. The Ministers urged all States to scale up the level of cooperation to curb illicit financial flows and recover the proceeds of crime, including embezzled public funds, stolen assets and unaccounted-for assets that are found in safe havens, and to demonstrate strong commitment to ensuring the return of such assets to the countries of origin. The Ministers also urged the international community to enhance its support for the efforts of Member States to develop and strengthen capacities in various areas, inter alia, their national tax authorities, legal and regulatory institutions, businesses and financial institutions, and for increased public awareness to enhance accountability mechanisms and help to combat illicit financial flows. In addition, the Ministers called upon States to consider the possibility of waiving or reducing to the barest minimum the processes and costs of the recovery of assets, in particular by reducing the administrative and legal bottlenecks in the recovery of illicit assets.

89. The Ministers stressed the importance of eliminating safe havens that create incentives for the transfer abroad of stolen assets and illicit financial flows. They reiterated their commitment to working to strengthen regulatory frameworks at all levels to further increase transparency and the accountability of financial institutions, the corporate sector and public administrations. The Ministers reaffirmed that they would strengthen international cooperation and national institutions to combat money-laundering and the financing of terrorism. They welcomed the Riyadh initiative for enhancing international anti-corruption law enforcement cooperation as part of which the Global Operational Network for Anti-Corruption Law Enforcement Authorities (GlobeE Network) was established under the auspices of the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime.

90. The Ministers emphasized the importance of improving investment and financing into sectors that are critical to accelerating the achievement of the 2030 Agenda in developing countries. They encouraged in this regard, private and public sectors investors to take steps to address SDG investment gaps.

91. The Ministers stressed that the private sector should contribute in mobilizing resources needed to finance sustainable development, including through blended finance, where applicable. They emphasized the need for accountability and transparency as well as the commitment towards a long-term approach.

92. The Ministers called on the international community to align financial markets with sustainable development. They underlined that States should demonstrate their willingness to implement the commitments they have made, both in the national and international levels, in order to create the necessary conditions and the enabling environment for private resources to be adequately channelled towards long-term sustainable development goals. Foreign direct investment must be increased and become more long-term oriented and aligned with national development priorities to support developing countries in implementing the SDGs.

93. The Ministers recalled the holding of UNCTAD 15 in Barbados from 3–7 October 2021 and the adoption of the Bridgetown Ministerial Declaration and renewed their commitment to support UNCTAD as the major UN voice for the South in order to fulfill its mandate as envisaged by our Group in the Joint Declaration of 15 June 1964. The Ministers reiterated the role of UNCTAD as the focal point within the United Nations system for the integrated treatment of trade and development and interrelated issues in the areas of finance, technology, investment and sustainable development, and in contributing to supporting the implementation of the 2030 Agenda, to carry developing countries' voice within the United Nations and beyond.

94. The Ministers noted that the year 2024 will mark the sixtieth anniversary of the Group of 77 and of UNCTAD from which the Group was born, and in that context underscored the historical significance of such commemoration and called for working together with UNCTAD with the aim to organize a meaningful celebration of both anniversaries and launching of the process of preparation of UNCTAD 16.

95. The Ministers emphasized that international trade is an engine for inclusive economic growth and poverty eradication as well as an important source to finance development and achieving sustainable development. In this context, the Ministers stressed the significance of the principle of special and differential treatment for developing countries in harnessing the developmental benefit of international trade, to facilitate the integration of their economies to the multilateral trading system and the fulfillment of the obligations and commitments under the World Trade Organization (WTO). The issues of particular concern to developing countries should be addressed, especially as related to sectors of special interest to them with a view to enhance their capacities to finance development and to diversify their economies.

96. The Ministers stressed the importance to work to build an open and steady recovery of world economy, step up macro-economic policy coordination, and create a peaceful, stable, open and inclusive environment for international development.

97. The Ministers reaffirmed the central role of the WTO in today's global economy, and their commitment to ensure full implementation and enforcement of existing WTO rules, as well as their determination to work together to further strengthen the WTO. They also reaffirmed that the WTO provides the multilateral framework of rules governing international trade relations, an essential mechanism for preventing and resolving trade disputes, and a forum for addressing trade related issues that affect all WTO members. They remained firmly committed to a universal rules-based,

transparent, non-discriminatory, open, transparent and inclusive multilateral trading system as embodied in the WTO.

98. The Ministers welcomed the ongoing efforts to fully operationalize the African Continental Free Trade Area, whose secretariat is in Accra, Ghana and the commencement of actual trading under the Agreement aimed at doubling intra African trade to strengthen Africa's resilience, COVID-19 recovery and achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals.

99. The Ministers acknowledged the outcomes of the 12th Ministerial Conference (MC12) (Geneva, June 2022), in particular the Multilateral Agreement on Fisheries Subsidies, and looked forward to completing in the near future the additional disciplines of the agreement on the prohibition of certain forms of fisheries subsidies, that contribute to overcapacity and overfishing, and taking a decision on the extension of the MC12 Ministerial Decision on the TRIPS Agreement to cover the production and supply of COVID-19 diagnostics and therapeutics. The Ministers welcomed the decision to exempt the World Food Programme food purchases from export prohibitions or restrictions and supported to continue the WTO negotiations to further reform agricultural trade rules, with a view to achieve concrete and positive results at the 13th Ministerial Conference, in accordance with the long-standing and pending WTO mandates.

100. The Ministers maintained that a successful conclusion of the Doha Development Round launched in 2001 can only be achieved if the outcomes thereof, significantly address the imbalances and inequities in the multilateral trading system. It is a matter of deep concern that the Doha Development Agenda, which aims at addressing the systemic imbalances in the multilateral trading system and ensuring more integration of the developing countries in international trade, has not been concluded.

101. Furthermore, in the spirit of globalization and interdependence, the Ministers reiterated the need to achieve an outcome that strengthens the multilateral trading system under the WTO and continues to fight all forms of protectionism. They expressed their deep concern with the increase in the unilateral and protectionist measures, which run counter to the spirit and rules of the WTO and the purposes and principles of the UN, and that will not only undermine the multilateral trading system, but also will lead to negative impact on access of the developing countries' exports to the global markets.

102. The Ministers reaffirmed that the WTO dispute settlement system is a cornerstone of the MTS and promotes predictability in international trade. They noted with concern the impasse in the selection process for new Appellate Body Members that can paralyze the dispute settlement system and undermine the rights and obligations of all Members, and therefore urged all Members to engage constructively to address this challenge as a matter of priority.

103. The Ministers emphasized the importance of facilitating the accession of developing countries to the WTO, recognizing the contribution that their accession would make to the rapid and full integration of those countries into the multilateral trading system. They urged in this regard the acceleration of the accession process on a technical and legal basis and in an expeditious and transparent manner for developing countries that have applied for membership in the WTO, and reaffirmed the importance of the Organization's decision WT/L/508/Add.1 of 25 July 2012 on accession by the least developed countries.

104. The Ministers reaffirmed their full support to the rules-based multilateral trading system with the WTO at its core and reaffirmed their commitment to work constructively with all WTO Members on the necessary reform of the Organization, with a view to better addressing current and future challenges in international trade,

thus enhancing its relevance and effectiveness. The reform must, inter alia, preserve the centrality, core values and fundamental principles of the WTO, and consider the interests of all its members.

105. The Ministers stressed that emerging debt challenges and vulnerabilities have intensified across developing countries in recent years and noted with concern that, several developing countries are fiscally constrained in generating resources needed for implementation of the 2030 agenda due to their debt burdens. The pandemic has also resulted in the overall growth in debt levels in virtually all developing countries, due to increased spending to provide economic stimulus, increased health spending, or as a result of a substantial decline in revenues. The Ministers underlined the need to explore the means and instruments needed to achieve debt sustainability as well as the necessary measures to reduce the indebtedness of the developing countries.

106. The Ministers recognized that borrowing is an important tool for financing investment critical to achieving sustainable development and noted with concern that public and private debt levels and vulnerabilities have continued to rise in a growing number of developing countries. The Ministers noted with concern that there are risks of a potential renewed cycle of debt crises and economic disruption that would pose severe additional challenges to the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals.

107. The Ministers recognized that a large gap between public resources and financing needs persists in many countries and is widening in the wake of the pandemic. The Ministers reaffirmed the importance of debt restructurings being timely, orderly, effective, fair and negotiated in good faith. The Ministers reiterated that debtors and creditors must work together to prevent and resolve unsustainable debt situations. Maintaining sustainable debt levels is the responsibility of the borrowing countries; however, they acknowledge that lenders also have a responsibility to lend in a way that does not undermine a country's debt sustainability.

108. The Ministers expressed concern over the increasing debt vulnerabilities of developing countries, the tightening of global financial conditions, and in this regard, emphasized the urgency for additional actions and further initiatives to strengthen the international financial architecture for long-term debt sustainability. While appreciating the historic allocation of \$650bn SDRs, they encouraged countries with strong external positions to voluntarily channel at least \$250bn special drawing rights to all developing countries in need including through multilateral and regional development banks. They also stressed that inaccurate credit ratings can impact the cost of borrowing and the stability of the international financial system. The Ministers stressed that, given their role in either facilitating or hampering progress on debt treatment and affecting the cost of borrowing, it would be important that credit rating agencies ensure that their ratings are objective, independent and based on accurate information and sound analytical methods. The Ministers encourage transparency from credit rating agencies to consider adapting the use of criteria to extraordinary circumstances.

109. The Ministers recalled that the 2008 world financial and economic crisis highlighted the regulatory gaps in the international financial system. The structural reform of the international financial system and the relevant institutions is urgently needed to avoid recurrence of crises that could have severe negative impacts on the economies of the developing countries.

110. Moreover, the Ministers reiterated the prerequisite of making the international financial system and the relevant institutions more responsive to the needs and concerns of developing countries including broadening and strengthening the participation in the global economic governance and the international economic decision-making.

111. The Ministers highlighted resolution 69/319, which further established that sovereign debt restructuring processes should be guided by basic international principles of law, such as sovereignty, good faith, transparency, legitimacy, equitable treatment and sustainability. The resolution reflected the continued concerns about the long-term debt sustainability in the context of a continued global economic fragility.

112. The Ministers stressed that the reform of the international financial architecture cannot be postponed any longer. There is an urgent need to broaden and strengthen the voice and participation of developing countries in international economic decision-making. This implies further governance reform in IFIs, especially the IMF and the World Bank; improved global sovereign debt architecture with the meaningful participation of developing countries; urgent rechannelling of unutilized Special Drawing Rights (SDRs) to developing countries and a new allocation of SDRs; inclusive and effective platforms to design and discuss international tax rules and norms at the UN; urgent and sizeable recapitalization of the Multilateral Development Banks to meet the significant financial needs of developing countries; and rationalizing the role of credit rating agencies.

113. The Ministers emphasized that the importance of adopting science, technology and innovation strategies as integral elements of national sustainable development strategies to help promote innovation-driven development, economic recovery and poverty eradication and to strengthen knowledge-sharing and collaboration and the importance of scaling up investments in science, technology, engineering and mathematics, and digital literacy education, e-commerce for farmers and enhancing technical, vocational and tertiary education, distance education and training and lifelong learning opportunities, and of ensuring equal access for all women and girls and encouraging their participation therein.

114. The Ministers reaffirmed that science, technology and innovation, including information and communication technologies, have become central to addressing global challenges and are one of the driving mechanisms of the transformation to accelerate progress towards the achievement of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and its Sustainable Development Goals. They called on the international community to strengthen solidarity and cooperation, speed up efforts to harness scientific and technological achievements to accelerate sustainable development, and unleash new impetus for innovation-driven growth.

115. The Ministers emphasized that a governance system based on science, technology and innovation is essential to identify problems and find effective solutions aimed at sustainable economic development, environmental conservation, poverty reduction and inequality. In this context, they further stressed that technology transfer is one of the core priorities of the developing countries in implementing the 2030 Agenda. They reiterated the need to accelerate the transfer of technology to developing countries on favorable terms including on concessional and preferential terms. It is key to strengthen strategic partnerships between countries of the North and the South so as to contribute to the sharing of knowledge, innovation and transfer of technology.

116. The Ministers stressed the need to enhance capacity-building at all levels as an essential prerequisite to achieving sustainable development and poverty eradication. In this regard, they called upon developed countries to step up support to developing countries in order to help them fulfill their capacity-building gap.

117. The Ministers stressed that technology transfer is one of the core priorities of the developing countries in implementing the 2030 Agenda. They reiterated the need for developed countries to accelerate the transfer of technology to developing countries on favorable terms, including on concessional and preferential terms.

118. The Ministers reaffirmed that enhancing capacity building in science, technology and innovation is fundamental for the progress of the developing countries in implementing the 2030 Agenda. In this regard, there is an urgent need for allocation of financing for the fulfillment of the Technology Facilitation Mechanism's (TFM) mandate. They recalled however that limitations in the capacity and speed of fixed-broadband connections in the developing countries will affect the quality and functionality of this development tool and widen the already existing inequalities. They expressed support initiatives and forums, such as the "Partnership in Action on STI for the SDGs Roadmaps", initiated by the Interagency Task Team (IATT) on STI for the SDGs.

119. The Ministers stressed that climate change is one of the greatest challenges of our time and its widespread, unprecedented impacts disproportionately burden all developing countries and in particular the poorest and most vulnerable among them. Extreme weather events and slow on-set events affected the environment, the economy and society and reversed hard-earned developmental gains, increasing the adverse impact on people and local communities. They reiterated the objective of the UNFCCC, and its principles, including the principle of equity and common but differentiated responsibilities and respective capabilities, in the light of different national circumstances, while recognizing the need for an effective and progressive response to the urgent threat of climate change on the basis of the best available scientific knowledge and in the context of sustainable development and efforts to eradicate poverty.

120. The Ministers reaffirmed that the Paris Agreement, adopted under the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), is the collective achievement of all Parties, and seeks to enhance the implementation of the Convention, in accordance with its objectives, principles and provisions, in particular equity and common but differentiated responsibilities and respective capabilities, in the light of different national circumstances, needs and priorities and the right to development, in the context of sustainable development and efforts to eradicate poverty and leave no one behind. It is also essential to maintain focus on the implementation of existing commitments by developed countries in the pre-2020 period, acknowledging that the Doha Amendment to the Kyoto Protocol has entered into force on 31 December 2020. They stressed that global effort to fight climate change is an irreversible process that cannot be overlooked nor postponed.

121. The Ministers stressed the importance of support, in particular finance as a cornerstone to ensure the success and effective implementation of the Paris Agreement and of the provision of adequate, predictable and sustainable financial resources by developed countries to developing countries, in line with the UNFCCC and its Paris Agreement, to enhance developing countries actions in mitigation, adaptation and loss and damage response and addressing the specific needs of developing countries. Developing countries are already making significant efforts and enhanced support will allow for higher ambition in their actions. All developed countries should communicate their mandatory climate finance projections by COP27 covering pledges for the next 1 to 2 years, as agreed in Article 9 paragraph 5 of the Paris Agreement, to provide more predictability for developing country climate action. The Ministers expressed their deep concern regarding the shortfalls in resources of the financial mechanism of the UNFCCC which represents less than 2% of global climate finance flows, in particular the GCF and the GEF and the Adaptation Fund. They expressed regret that the resource allocation for climate change focal area under the GEF-8 STAR allocations declined drastically. They stressed the importance of the GCF's second replenishment and reiterated their call to developed countries to contribute the replenishment.

122. The Ministers stressed that providing and mobilizing new, adequate and predictable financing will be critical for sustainable, climate-resilient and inclusive global recovery and development. To this end, they proposed provision and mobilization of larger concessional assistance to developing countries, especially those which require the fiscal space and liquidity, to save lives and livelihoods and stabilize economies; as well as early action to ease unsustainable debt burdens; the voluntary re-allocation of at least \$250 billion of the newly created SDRs by countries with strong external positions to the developing countries in need; larger lending by the multilateral development banks' balance sheets; reduction in the market borrowing costs through mechanisms such as the Liquidity and Sustainability Facility (LSF); timely fulfillment by the developed countries of their commitment to mobilize USD \$100 billion annually of climate finance through 2025 and the continuation of negotiations to agree on an ambitious, transparent and fit-for-purpose new collective quantified goal on climate finance from a floor of USD \$100 billion per year, aiming to scale up the provision and mobilization of resources to developing countries in mitigation, adaptation and loss and damage; and access for developing countries to private capital for climate and sustainable development projects. They also underlined that, it is vital that the recovery promote a sustainable global economy, in particular by investment in sustainable, quality and resilient infrastructure, which will also create decent jobs and reduce poverty.

123. In this context, the Ministers reaffirmed the urgent need for the climate change agenda to be fully implemented in accordance with the UNFCCC and its Paris Agreement and upholding the principle of equity and common but differentiated responsibilities and respective capabilities. In this regard, it is critical to materialize the urgent and timely provision and mobilization of resources by developed countries to developing countries to tackle climate change.

124. The Ministers emphasized that the provision of climate finance by developed countries is insufficient, and the gap between the growing and evolving needs of developing countries and the support available is widening by the day. The Ministers also called upon developed countries to significantly increase the provision and mobilization of climate finance, particularly for adaptation and resilience as well as loss and damage, for a progression beyond previous efforts. However, they stressed that climate finance must not be double counted as official development assistance and must therefore be considered as new and additional to such assistance. The Ministers expressed their concern that the commitment by developed countries to jointly mobilize at least US\$ 100 billion per year by 2020 has not been met and therefore called on developed countries to honor their commitment and jointly mobilize financial resources of at least USD 100 billion per year to assist developing countries in their climate change actions with respect to both mitigation and adaptation and loss damage response, taking into account the needs and priorities of developing countries and to compensate for the deficit in delivering their commitment in the past decade. The Ministers also highlighted the urgent need for substantive outcomes on the new collective quantified goal on climate finance at the UNFCCC COP 28 with a view to set a new collective quantified climate finance goal for developed countries to mobilize climate finance from a floor of USD 100 billion per year by 2024, taking into account the needs and priorities of developing countries. The Ministers called for the provision of grants and other highly concessional forms of finance by developed countries to address the specific needs of developing countries according to their own national priorities and policies.

125. The Ministers remained concerned that the current provision of climate finance for adaptation remains insufficient to respond to worsening climate change impacts in developing country Parties and echoed request at the COP26 in Glasgow to developed countries to significantly increase their provision of adaptation finance,

including by doubling adaptation finance from 2019 levels by 2025 with the aim of achieving a balance between mitigation and adaptation. They also called for a standalone “Implementation Plan” for how the crucial decision on doubling adaptation funding by 2025 is being executed by developed nations. They reiterated the importance of the adequacy and predictability of adaptation finance, including the value of the Adaptation Fund in delivering dedicated support for adaptation and expressed disappointment that USD 230 million of the USD 356 million pledges to the Adaptation Fund has not been delivered, and urged developed countries to deliver on their pledges and called on the formal replenishment of the Adaptation Fund.

126. The Ministers recognized the importance of the global goal on adaptation for effective implementation of the Paris Agreement, and welcomed the launch of the comprehensive two-year Glasgow-Sharm El-Sheikh work programme on the global goal on adaptation and urged its finalization and adoption at UNFCCC COP 28.

127. The Ministers also called for increased action to address loss and damage and the adverse effects of climate change from extreme and slow onset events, including through the Warsaw International Mechanism for Loss and Damage associated with Climate Change Impacts and the financial mechanism of the Convention.

128. The Ministers welcomed the convening of COP27 at Sharm El-Sheikh, Egypt and urged the timely implementations of its decisions including the Sharm El-Sheikh implementation plan.

129. The Ministers welcomed the historic decision at COP27 to establish the Loss and Damage Fund and called for its full operationalization at COP28, under the Financial Mechanism pursuant to Article 11 of the Convention, to provide new financial support under Article 9 of the Paris Agreement, in addition to adaptation and mitigation finance from developed countries, to developing countries to address loss and damage.

130. The Ministers stressed the need for the provision of new, additional, adequate, and predictable grant-based funding to the Loss and Damage Fund by developed countries to address impacts of slow onset and extreme events, including rehabilitation, recovery, and reconstruction in developing countries. They also stressed that the Loss and Damage Fund is a stand-alone operating entity of the Financial Mechanism of the Convention and its Paris Agreement and be guided by and accountable to both the COP and CMA. The Ministers emphasized that the Loss and Damage Fund is the centerpiece of the new loss and damage funding arrangements.

131. The Ministers encouraged all parties to fully implement the Paris Agreement and parties of the UNFCCC that have not yet done so to deposit their instruments of ratification, acceptance, approval or accession, where appropriate, as soon as possible. They also highlighted the importance to hold the increase in the global average temperature to well below 2 °C above pre-industrial levels and to pursue efforts to limit the temperature increase to 1.5 °C above pre-industrial levels, recognizing that this would significantly reduce the risks and impacts of climate change. Parties aim to reach global peaking of greenhouse gas emissions as soon as possible, recognizing that peaking will take longer for developing countries Parties, and to undertake rapid reductions thereafter in accordance with the best available science, so as to achieve a balance between anthropogenic emissions by sources and removals by sinks of greenhouse gases in the second half of this century, on the basis of equity, and in the context of the 2030 Agenda for sustainable development and efforts to eradicate poverty. The Ministers underscored that limiting global warming to 1.5 °C requires rapid, deep and sustained reductions in global greenhouse gas emissions, including reducing global carbon dioxide emissions by 45 per cent by 2030 relative to the 2010 level and to net zero around mid-century, as well as deep

reductions in other greenhouse gases, and further recognizes that this requires accelerated action in this critical decade, on the basis of the best available scientific knowledge and equity, reflecting common but differentiated responsibilities and respective capabilities and in the context of sustainable development and efforts to eradicate poverty and leave no one behind. The Ministers also stressed that the Developed countries should continue taking the lead by undertaking economy-wide absolute emission reduction targets and support shall be provided to developing countries for the implementation as per article four of the Paris Agreement.

132. The Ministers stressed that these principles are fundamental for developing countries. They emphasized that the balanced package in the Paris Agreement with respect to mitigation, adaptation, the provision of the means of implementation and support to developing countries, enhanced transparency, and international cooperation must be upheld and are not to be renegotiated nor reinterpreted. They called on developed countries to fill deficiencies in their implementation of their pre-2020 commitments, undertake and increase the economy-wide absolute emission reduction targets in their NDCs and scale up their provision of support to developing countries.

133. The Ministers expressed their deep concern on recent developments in some developed countries in relation to fulfilling their commitments under the Paris Agreement. They stressed that the global effort to combat climate change is an irreversible process that should not be undermined or weakened, and highlighted the expectation that developed countries should fulfill their leadership role through more ambitious mitigation targets and financial support to developing countries in line with priorities of developing countries.

134. The Ministers emphasized that developed countries shall continue to take the key leading role on mitigation by undertaking and increasing economy-wide absolute emission reduction targets for their pledges and nationally determined contributions (NDCs). For developing countries adaptation to climate change is a priority, and a key component of the implementation of the Paris Agreement. In this regard adequate capacity-building, transfer of technology and financing support for developing countries according to historic responsibilities and common but differentiated responsibilities and respective capabilities for climate action is critical and should be based on and respond to national needs, and foster country ownership. The process of capacity-building must be participatory, country-driven, and cross-cutting. Enhanced financial and technological support coupled with knowledge and skills transfer from developed countries will allow for effective implementation and enhanced ambition of developing countries. The Ministers reaffirmed that measures to combat climate change, including unilateral ones, should not constitute a means of arbitrary or unjustifiable discrimination or a disguised restriction on international trade.

135. The Ministers called for a commitment by developed countries to fund the extra costs of all climate mitigation projects voluntarily undertaken by developing countries. and emphasized the urgency of scaling up action and support, including finance, capacity building and technology transfer, to enhance adaptive capacity, strengthen resilience and reduce vulnerability to climate change in line with the best available science, taking into account the priorities and needs of developing country Parties.

136. The Ministers welcome the convening of COP28 from 30 November to 12 December 2023 in Dubai, United Arab Emirates. The Ministers highlighted the importance of reflecting the commitment of all Parties to fully implement the Paris Agreement within their respective responsibilities and capabilities with developed countries taking the lead both on action and support, in line with the UNFCCC.

137. The Ministers looked forward to the Global Stocktake of the Paris Agreement scheduled to take place at UNFCCC COP28, in UAE.

138. The Ministers also stressed the importance of the Decision taken at UNFCCC COP 27 to establish a work programme on just transition pathways. They highlighted the importance of adequate means of implementation for developing countries to be provided and facilitated by developed countries as per their responsibilities under the Convention and its Paris Agreement, to undertake concrete action and address all aspects of just transition and based on equity and common but differentiated responsibilities and respective capabilities, in light of different national circumstances. Therefore, they called on the international community to look into all options and solutions towards promoting just and inclusive transition pathways.

139. The Ministers having recognized that the importance of planet Earth and its ecosystems, are our home and that “Mother Earth” is a common expression in a number of countries and regions, noting that some countries recognize the rights of nature in the context of the promotion of sustainable development, and expressing the conviction that, in order to achieve a just balance among the economic, social and environmental needs of present and future generations in an equitable manner, it is necessary to promote harmony with nature.

140. The Ministers expressed their appreciation for the convening of the dialogue on Harmony with Nature held during the seventy-seventh session of the General Assembly.

141. The Ministers called for the implementation of holistic and integrated approaches to sustainable development, in its economic, social, and environmental dimensions, that will guide humanity to live in harmony with nature and lead to efforts to restore the health and integrity of the Earth’s ecosystems.

142. The Ministers recalled the common determination to protect the planet from degradation, including through sustainable consumption and production, ensuring that people everywhere have the relevant information and awareness for sustainable development and lifestyles in harmony with nature. The Ministers stressed the need to accelerate implementation of the 10-Year Framework of Programmes on Sustainable Consumption and Production (SCP) Patterns with developed countries taking the lead while providing adequate support for developing countries. They further stressed that developing countries need financial and technical assistance to strengthen their scientific and technological capacity to move towards more sustainable patterns of consumption and production.

143. The Ministers recognized that protecting ecosystems and avoiding harmful practices against animals, plants, microorganisms and non-living environments contributes to the coexistence of humankind in harmony with nature. The Ministers further recognized the importance of promoting efforts in the area of ecosystem restoration, as an integral part of the promotion of the environmental dimension of the 2030 Agenda.

144. The Ministers recognized the need for a broader, systemic and a more people-centered preventive approach to disaster risk, that disaster risk reduction practices need to be multi-hazard and multi-sectoral, inclusive and accessible in order to be efficient, effective, and that to achieve the 2030 Agenda disaster risk reduction must be integrated at the core of development and finance policies, legislation, and plans. In this regard, the Ministers recalled the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015–2030, reaffirming that developing countries are disproportionately affected by the impacts of disasters, in particular the LDCs, SIDS, LLDCs and African countries, as well as MICs facing specific challenges, need particular attention in view of their higher vulnerability and risk levels, which often greatly exceed their

capacity to respond to and recover from disasters, and recognizing also that similar attention and appropriate assistance should also be extended to other disaster-prone countries with specific characteristics, such as archipelagic countries, as well as countries with extensive coastlines. The Ministers also recognize the health aspects of the Sendai Framework and stress the need for resilient health systems.

145. The Ministers appreciated the regional platforms for Disaster Risk Reduction held in Jamaica, Kenya, Morocco, Australia and Uruguay and welcomed the 7th Global Platform held in Bali, Indonesia on 23rd to 28th May 2022, and recognized the importance of their outcomes in strengthening commitment to achieve the target Sendai, and looked forward to the regional platforms for Disaster Risk Reduction to be held in 2024.

146. The Ministers recalled General Assembly Resolution [A/RES/76/119](#) dated 9 December 2021 regarding Agenda item 87 “Protection of persons in the event of disasters” whereby the Assembly takes note once again of the draft articles on the protection of persons in the event of disasters presented by the International Law Commission, takes note of the views and comments expressed in the debates of the Sixth Committee on this topic and a working group of the Committee to be convened for four full consecutive days at the seventy-eighth and seventy-ninth sessions of the General Assembly.

147. The Ministers welcomed the convening of the high-level meeting of the General Assembly on the midterm review of the implementation of the Sendai Framework in New York on 18 and 19 May 2023 and noted its Political Declaration.

148. The Ministers reaffirmed that developing countries need adequate, sustainable and timely provision of support, including through finance, technology transfer and capacity-building from developed countries and partners tailored to their needs and priorities, as it is reflected in the principles of the Sendai Framework. In this context, the Ministers reaffirmed the need to implement the Sendai Framework in the context of poverty eradication efforts.

149. The Ministers also stressed that recent events have demonstrated the negative impact of unilateral coercive measures, particularly on developing countries, during recovering efforts from disasters. They urged all States to refrain from promulgating and applying such measures.

150. The Ministers reiterated that urgent and significant actions are needed to reduce the degradation of natural habitats, halt the loss of biodiversity, protect and prevent the extinction of threatened species. They also reaffirmed the necessity of fair and equitable sharing of benefits arising from the utilization of genetic resources and from digital sequence information on genetic resources as well as the contribution from Indigenous Peoples and local communities whose traditional knowledge, including traditional knowledge associated to genetic resources, and practices are relevant for the conservation and sustainable use of biological diversity. In that regard, the Ministers urged the international community to strengthen its efforts to halt the biodiversity loss and protect ecosystems including increasing the provision of financial, technological and capacity building support to developing countries necessary to implement the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework and in line with the provisions of the Convention.

151. The Ministers emphasized that biodiversity, and the ecosystem functions and services it provides, support all forms of life on Earth and is fundamental to human well-being, a healthy planet and economic prosperity for all and underpin our human and planetary health and well-being, economic growth and sustainable development.

152. The Ministers welcomed the fifteenth meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention, as well as the meetings of the Conference of the Parties serving as

the meetings of the Parties to the Protocols to the Convention, held in Kunming, China and Montreal, Canada,, under the theme “Ecological civilization: building a shared future for all life on Earth”, took note with appreciation of the adoption of the Kunming Declaration. They also welcomed the Pre-COP of Biodiversity, held in Colombia on 30 August 2021.

153. The Ministers welcomed the adoption of the historic Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework at the fifteenth meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention in December 2022, and its 23 action-oriented global goals and targets for 2030 and its 2050 Vision for Biodiversity and highlighted the need to achieve more equitable governance within multilateral funding institutions, in particular the Global Environment Facility.

154. The Ministers called for accelerate ecosystem restoration increase the provision and mobilization of means of implementation to developing countries to ensure the strengthened action on biodiversity, including through the implementation of the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework, and reduce pollution. The Ministers urged developed countries to fulfill their commitments under the Convention on the provision of means of implementation to developing countries, including the goal to mobilize at least \$20 billion per year by 2025 and to mobilize at least \$30 billion per year by 2030 as agreed in the GBF, as well as to strengthen capacity-building and development, access to and transfer of technology, and access to innovation and technical and scientific cooperation.

155. The Ministers called for transformative actions from all relevant stakeholders to strive towards the swift and full implementation of all the goals and targets of the KMGBF, including by accelerating the implementation of strengthened national biodiversity strategies and action plans and the alignment of national targets with the KMGBF. The Ministers also called for adequate and sufficient means of implementation for developing countries to ensure the full implementation of the Convention to halt biodiversity loss, including by providing and mobilizing new, additional and predictable financial resources, technological and capacity building, to support the effective implementation of the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework. They welcomed the financial commitments and initiatives that have been announced from governments, organizations and private sector that contribute to biodiversity and keep the political momentum towards a successful Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework with the aim of building a community of all life on earth.

156. The Ministers reaffirmed the necessity of fair and equitable sharing of benefits arising from the utilization of genetic resources and from digital sequence information on genetic resources. They welcomed the increase in parties to the Nagoya Protocol.

157. The Ministers expressed their deep concern about the continuous illicit poaching and trafficking of wildlife, with nearly 7,000 species of animals and plants reported in illegal trade, which continues to thwart conservation efforts. Strong international and local action is still needed to curtail the illegal trade in certain species, particularly ivory. Ministers highlighted, in this regard, the importance of the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora COP19 in Panama in November 2022.

158. The Ministers recalled the importance of oceans for sustainable development as embodied in Agenda 21, the Johannesburg Plan of Implementation, various decisions taken by the former Commission on Sustainable Development, as well as the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, including Goal 14 Conserve and sustainably use the oceans, seas and marine resources. The Ministers further recalled that, in this context, targets related to means of implementation including target 14.a, related to increasing scientific knowledge, developing research capacities and transferring

marine technology in order to improve ocean health and to enhance the contribution of marine biodiversity to the development of developing countries, in particular SIDS and LDCs, are crucial for the achievement of sustainable development.

159. In this context, the Ministers welcomed the convening of the 2nd UN Conference to Support the Implementation of Sustainable Development Goal 14: Conserve and sustainably use the oceans, sea and marine resources for sustainable development and its Political Declaration, which, inter alia, reaffirmed the Political Declaration adopted at the first conference, and further welcomed the decision of the General Assembly to convene the third United Nations Conference to support the implementation of Sustainable Development Goal 14 in 2025.

160. The Ministers welcomed the decision by UNEA 5.2 to convene an intergovernmental negotiating committee to develop an international legally binding instrument on plastic pollution, including in the marine environment, which could include both binding and voluntary approaches, based on a comprehensive approach that addresses the full lifecycle of plastic, taking into account, among other things, the principles of the Rio Declaration on Environment and Development, as well as national circumstances and capabilities. The Ministers underscored the importance of securing an ambitious international legally binding instrument to end plastic pollution, including in the marine environment, while acknowledging that some legal obligations arising out of a new instrument will require capacity-building and technical and financial assistance in order to be effectively implemented by developing countries and countries with economies in transition.

161. The Ministers stressed that the actions required to address the threat to the Oceans have been identified. There is a need to urgently mobilize the means of implementation, such as financing, technology transfer, and capacity building, as well as to enhance scientific knowledge and research, especially to assist developing countries in protecting and restoring the Oceans. They underlined the need to fully understand and better manage the multiple aspects of oceanic sustainability, ranging from sustainable fisheries, ecosystem health and prevention of marine pollution. The Ministers reaffirmed the need for an institutional framework to accelerate the implementation of SDG 14.

162. The Ministers welcomed the adoption of the Agreement under the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea on the Conservation and Sustainable Use of Marine Biological Diversity of Areas beyond National Jurisdiction (BBNJ Agreement).

163. The Ministers welcomed the opening for signature of this important Agreement on 20 September 2023 and called upon all States and regional economic integration organizations to consider signing and ratifying, approving or accepting the BBNJ Agreement at the earliest possible date to allow its entry into force. They stressed the importance of the BBNJ Agreement in ensuring the conservation and sustainable use of marine biological diversity of areas beyond national jurisdiction. They also stressed the need for a wide participation of developing countries in the new Agreement to improve their representation and guarantee equal partnership, in order to increase their participation in international decision-making under the BBNJ Agreement. They noted with appreciation Chile's offer to host the Secretariat of the BBNJ Agreement under the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea on the conservation and sustainable use of marine biological diversity of the areas beyond national jurisdiction.

164. The Ministers recognized that the legal status of non-parties to the Convention or any other related agreements with regard to those instruments is not affected by the BBNJ Agreement as established in its Article 5 paragraph 3, or the legal status of

parties to the Convention or any other related agreements with regard to those instruments, as agreed by the General Assembly in paragraph 10 of resolution [72/249](#).

165. The Ministers welcomed the inclusion of the principle of common heritage of humankind in as one of the principles that parties shall be guided by to achieve the objectives of the BBNJ Agreement, including the access and sharing of benefits of marine genetic resources (MGRs). They are of the view that this principle provides a legal foundation for a fair and equitable regime that would allow all countries to benefit from the potential that marine biodiversity represents in terms of global food security and economic prosperity, and to address the challenges of conservation and sustainable use of MGRs of areas beyond national jurisdictions.

166. The Ministers emphasized that capacity building and transfer of technology should be promoted and carried out on fair and most favorable terms, including on concessional and preferential terms to developing countries. Furthermore, they highlighted the importance of encouraging international cooperation at all levels, including North-South/South-South and triangular cooperation and partnerships with relevant stakeholders.

167. The Ministers stressed the need for mandatory and voluntary funding, in support of the implementation of the BBNJ Agreement, to enable developing States to fulfill their obligations and secure their rights in the conservation and sustainable use of marine biological diversity of the ocean in marine areas beyond national jurisdiction. The Ministers stressed that the financial resources under the BBNJ Agreement shall be adequate, accessible, new and additional and predictable.

168. The Ministers underlined that desertification, land degradation and drought are major environmental, economic and social challenges for global sustainable development.

169. The Ministers expressed their deep concern about the continuous trend of land degradation in which about one fifth of the Earth's land surface covered by vegetation showed persistent and declining trends in productivity. They stressed that in some cases, advanced stages of land degradation are leading to desertification. In this context, it is significant to continue combatting desertification, restoring degraded land and soil, including land affected by desertification, drought and floods, especially in developing countries. The Ministers recognized that the Land Degradation Neutrality Fund, a unique public-private partnership, is an innovative model that can be replicated and provide a vehicle for the increased commitment of private capital to sustainable land management and restoration.

170. The Ministers also expressed deep concern on the magnitude, frequency and intensity of droughts as well as their economic and human costs. Noting with appreciation the ongoing implementation of the Drought Initiative adopted by the Conference of the Parties, the Ministers committed to pursue efforts to develop and implement national drought management policies, as well as the establishment and strengthening of comprehensive drought monitoring, preparedness and early warning systems.

171. The Ministers welcomed the 15th session of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention to Combat Desertification held in Abidjan, Côte d'Ivoire, from 9 to 10 May 2022, and its outcomes. The Ministers noted with appreciation the adoption of Abidjan Call as well as Abidjan Legacy Program tabled by the president of Côte d'Ivoire to address drought and preserve and restore terrestrial ecosystem, reverse land degradation and halt the loss of biodiversity. They welcomed the offer made by the government of the kingdom of Saudi Arabia to host the 16th session of the conference of the parties to the convention in Riyadh from 2 to 13 December 2024.

172. The Ministers encouraged partners and developed countries to increase their efforts and transfer of technology and the provision of funds oriented to addressing desertification, land degradation and drought, particularly in support of the national efforts of affected countries. They called for the enhancement of national and international, bilateral and multilateral financial flows to strengthen synergies between conservation and sustainable development LDN actions.

173. The Ministers recognized sand and dust storms as a serious challenge to sustainable development in the affected countries and regions. They called upon the United Nations system to play its role in advancing international cooperation and support to combat sand and dust storms and invited all relevant bodies, agencies, funds and programmes of the United Nations and all other related organizations to integrate into their respective cooperation frameworks and operational programmes measures and actions aimed at combating sand and dust storms, including the following measures: enhancing capacity-building at the national level; the development and implementation of regional and sub-regional programmes and projects; the sharing of information, best practices and experiences and the transferring of technology; efforts to control and prevent the main factors of sand and dust storms; and the development of early warning systems as tools. They also stressed the importance of addressing the socioeconomic and environmental challenges of the affected countries in the context of the SDGs.

174. The Ministers recognized that sand and dust storms is an issue of international concern, the costs of which are measured in economic, social and environmental terms, continues to grow, it negatively affects the achievement of 11 of the 17 Sustainable Development Goals and their means of implementation and noting with concern that sand and dust storms may exacerbate the symptoms of respiratory diseases such as COVID-19, and may complicate and prolong the recovery from the disease in addition to the other negative impacts that can be associated with respiratory disorders such as asthma, tracheitis, pneumonia and silicosis, which may lead to Chronic Obstructive Pulmonary Disease (COPD) and cardiovascular and heart disorders in addition to eye and skin irritation and can also spread other diseases, such as meningitis; and taking into account that a reduction in cardiovascular and respiratory disease, as comorbidities linked to COVID-19-related deaths, can produce significant health benefits, when mitigating measures are taken, therefore Requested the Secretary-General to further encourage the United Nations Coalition on Combating Sand and Dust Storms to conduct its priority activities as identified by the Coalition's five working groups, which are knowledge-sharing, capacity building, training, awareness-raising, and support the formulation of national, regional and interregional plans, to mitigate sand and dust storm hazards, and to encourage the Coalition to enhance resource mobilization efforts so as to increase voluntary contributions to the Coalition and its member agencies.

175. The Ministers welcomed the convening of the International Conference on Combating Sand and Dust Storms held in Tehran, 9–10 September 2023, and took note of the ministerial declarations of the conference.

176. The Ministers recognized that the UN Forum on Forests, with its universal membership and comprehensive mandate, plays a vital role in addressing challenges and issues relating to forests in a holistic and integrated manner and in promoting policy coordination and cooperation to achieve the sustainable management of all types of forests and of trees outside forests. They encouraged other forest-related forums, initiatives and processes to cooperate with the Forum to achieve sustainable forest management.

177. The Ministers stressed that the full implementation of Global Forest Goal 4 and its five associated targets constitutes a common aspiration to deliver a real impact on

the ground, to catalyze and facilitate the mobilization of increased, predictable and sustaining financing from all sources, including in ODA, to adequately carry out sustainable forest management at all levels, in particular for developing countries. They reiterated that the adequate and timely implementation of the UNSPF is fundamental for developing countries. In this regard, they highlighted the important issue of financing and the need to recognize major gaps on current allocation of resources. The Ministers also recognized the adoption of the African Union five-year continental Green Recovery Action Plan 2021–2027 and the ongoing implementation of the Great Green Wall initiative and called for enhanced financial and other support at national and regional levels to meet the objectives of afforestation and sustainable forest management.

178. The Ministers called on the international community to restore degraded forests and substantially increase afforestation, reforestation and conservation globally. While protecting areas in forest and terrestrial ecosystems is on the rise and forest loss has slowed, other facets of terrestrial conservation continue to need accelerated efforts to protect biodiversity, land productivity and species and genetic resources.

179. The Ministers emphasized that water is critical for sustainable development and the eradication of poverty and hunger and is indispensable for human development, health and wellbeing and a vital element in achieving the SDGs and other relevant goals in the social, environmental and economic fields.

180. The Ministers expressed their deep concern that lack of access to a safe drinking water source, basic sanitation and sound hygiene, water-related disasters, water scarcity and water pollution might be further exacerbated by urbanization, population growth, desertification, drought, glacial retreat and other slow onset and extreme weather events and climate change, as well as by the lack of capacity to ensure integrated water resource management. They stressed that developing countries need enhanced international finance, capacity building and transfer of environmentally sound technologies to achieve efficiency in water management and reiterated that ODA for the water sector should be increased.

181. The Ministers expressed their concerns that water stress is above 70 percent in some countries, including Northern Africa, sub-Saharan Africa, Western Asia and Central and Southern Asia and South America, as well as the Lake Chad Region, which provides strong indication of future water scarcity. The Ministers acknowledged the additional challenges facing countries suffering from water scarcity and concerned with the impacts of such challenges including, inter-alia, on their ability to achieve the SDGs.

182. The Ministers recalled that the International Decade “Water for Sustainable Development” 2018–2028 aims to further cooperation and partnership at all levels in order to help achieve internationally agreed water-related goals and targets, including those contained in the 2030 Agenda. The Ministers welcomed the convening of the United Nations Conference on the Midterm Comprehensive Review of the Implementation of the Objectives of the International Decade for Action, “Water for Sustainable Development”, 2018–2028, from 22 to 24 March, 2023 and recognized the leading role of Tajikistan in this regard.

183. The Ministers recognized that the World Water Forum, since it first convened in Marrakesh, Morocco, in 1997, has contributed to international dialogue on water and has promoted local, national and regional action on integrated and sustainable water resources management worldwide and welcomed the 9th World Water Forum held in Dakar, Senegal, from 22 to 27 March 2022 and acknowledged its declaration. The Minister looked forward to the 10th World Water Forum to be held in Bali, Indonesia, from 18–24 May 2024.

184. The Ministers welcomed the High-Level International Conference on the International Decade for Action “Water for Sustainable Development”, 2018–2028 held in Tajikistan 6 to 9 June 2022 which served as a platform for soliciting and consolidating inputs in preparation of the United Nations Conference on the Midterm Comprehensive Review of the Implementation of the Objectives of the International Decade for Action, “Water for Sustainable Development”, 2018–2028 in 2023 in New York.

185. The Ministers reiterated the need to commit to improving cooperation across borders, in transboundary waters, in accordance with applicable international law.

186. The Ministers recalled the commitment to step up efforts on all fronts to tackle desertification, land degradation, erosion and drought, biodiversity loss and water scarcity, which are seen as major environmental, economic and social challenges for global sustainable development.

187. The Ministers welcomed in this regard, the endorsement by the African Heads of State and Government of the Inter-Basin Water Transfer Initiative, as a Pan African project to restore Lake Chad and promote its navigation, industrial and economic development, and encouraged relevant UN entities and development partners to support such African-oriented initiatives for stabilization, recovery and climate resilience in the region.

188. The Ministers took note of the Water Action Agenda.

189. The Ministers stressed the necessity of ensuring universal access to affordable, reliable and renewable energy for all and the need for strengthened political will and increased levels of investment and action by all stakeholders to increase access to clean energy research and technology, according to national plans and policies, and with a view to transfer the relevant technologies to the developing countries. They reiterated that international cooperation should be strengthened to assist developing countries in achieving this target as well as in developing regional interconnectivity, expanding infrastructure and upgrading technology for supplying renewable and sustainable energy services for all in developing countries. The Ministers took note of the Bali COMPACT, as the outcome of G20 Energy Transitions Ministerial Meeting, held on September 2, 2022, hosted by Indonesia.

190. The Ministers noted with appreciation that the transformation of the world’s energy systems is being accelerated by advances in technology, rapid declines in the cost of renewable energy, deployment of least-cost decentralized solutions, policy support, new business models and sharing of best practices. In this regard, they welcomed the establishment of the International Solar Alliance as an international organization. They note with appreciation the work of the Global Energy Interconnection Development and Cooperation Organization (GEIDCO) and of the International Renewable Energy Agency (IRENA) and the Biofuture Platform. The Ministers took note of the G-20 Ministerial meeting on energy and its outcomes, held on September 28, 2020, hosted by Saudi Arabia.

191. The Ministers further reaffirmed their support to sustainable, modern and affordable energy access and recognized the importance of stable and secure global energy supply chains in accordance with national needs, for developing countries, in particular for Least Developing Countries, LLDCs, Small Island Developing States and MICs. They expressed their will to tackle the energy access challenge by identifying the specific needs of each country by mobilizing technical, financial assistance and tools to deploy sustainable energy solutions to tackle the energy access deficit. Economic disruptions related to COVID-19 crisis have made it even harder for developing countries to reach Goal 7, with the largest decline in energy investment on record in 2020.

192. The Ministers affirmed that States have, in accordance with the Charter of the United Nations and the principles of international law, the sovereign right to exploit their own resources pursuant to their own environmental and developmental policies, and the responsibility to ensure that activities within their jurisdiction or control do not cause damage to ecosystems of other States or of areas beyond the limits of national jurisdiction. They reaffirmed the importance of the protection of planet Earth and its ecosystems as our common home and that “Mother Earth” is a common expression in a number of countries and regions.

193. The Ministers also reaffirmed that the right of peoples and nations to permanent sovereignty over natural wealth and resources must be exercised in the interest of their national development and of the well-being of the people of the State concerned.

194. While emphasizing the sovereignty of their countries and peoples over their natural wealth, the Ministers are also aware of the duty to respect protect, conserve and sustainably manage and use these resources and ensure the conditions for nature and ecosystems to have the capacity to regenerate, for the benefit of present and future generations. The Ministers also recognized that the sustainable use of natural resources is an effective way to achieve economic growth in harmony with nature while contributing to the eradication of poverty in all its forms and dimensions and environmental degradation.

195. The Ministers reiterated the importance of promoting and taking concrete action for the full, effective and timely implementation of the New Urban Agenda adopted in Quito, Ecuador, at all levels while urging the United Nations development system to maintain support for its implementation. They recalled that many cities are facing challenges in managing population growth, ensuring there is adequate housing and resilient infrastructure to support these growing populations, and addressing the environmental impacts of expanding cities and vulnerability to disasters. The Ministers reaffirmed the significance of ensuring access for all to adequate, safe and affordable housing and basic services and improving living conditions in slums.

196. The Ministers welcomed the convening of the Second UN-Habitat Assembly, in Nairobi, Kenya, from 5–9 June, 2023 and its outcomes.

197. The Ministers reaffirmed that eradicating poverty in all its forms and dimensions is the highest priority and the overarching objective of the repositioning of the UN development system (UNDS) to deliver on the 2030 Agenda. In this regard, they reiterated that it is of the utmost importance that the operational activities for development of the UN development system take into account the need to build, promote, and strengthen the capacity of developing countries in their efforts to address long-term sustainable development at the national level.

198. The Ministers highlighted that while the current geopolitical tensions are challenging, there are also always opportunities to come together in international solidarity. Hence, they reiterated the call, made by the Group for all Member States to not turn their backs on our collective action through the UN development pillar. They stressed that prioritization of emergency responses must not come at the expense of immediate and long-term development investments as this undermines the ability to address root causes of crises. Humanitarian responses should not be financed by defunding development solutions. In many ways, cutting funding for development is the opposite of what the world needs.

199. The Ministers highlighted that the UN Development System has a key role to play in supporting countries in achieving the SDGs and overcoming their development challenges. and expressed appreciation for the efforts by the repositioned UNDS in helping the developing countries in this regard. The Ministers stressed that in order to respond effectively to the multiple and interlinked crises

facing developing countries, there is a dire need for the UNDS to have access to predictable, adequate, and sustainable financial resources, and reiterated their concern regarding recent trends of major cuts in core allocation for development.

200. The Ministers reaffirmed that the operational activities for development of the UN system should provide a key contribution to the implementation of the ambitious and transformational 2030 Agenda through the strengthening of national capacity. They also reaffirmed that strengthening the role and capacity of the UNDS to assist countries in achieving their development goals requires continued improvement in its effectiveness, efficiency, coherence, inter-agency efforts and impact, along with a significant increase in resources. In this regard, the fundamental characteristics of UN operational activities for development must retain, among others, their universal, voluntary and grant nature, their neutrality and their multilateralism, as well as their ability to respond to the development needs of programme countries in a flexible manner. Moreover, operational activities should be carried out for the benefit of recipient countries, at the request of those countries, and in accordance with their own national policies and priorities for development.

201. The Ministers recognized the efforts being made and stressed that all the mandates contained in the General Assembly resolutions [71/243](#), [72/279](#), [73/248](#), [74/238](#), [75/233](#), [76/4](#) and ECOSOC resolutions [E/RES/2019/15](#), [E/RES/2020/23](#), [E/RES/2022/25](#) and [E/RES/2023/31](#) should continue to be translated into actionable commitments across the UNDS entities, and transparency, accountability and national ownership and leadership must be ensured during the whole process of implementation.

202. The Ministers emphasized that the UN Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework, formerly known as UNDAF, should be prepared and finalized in full consultation and agreement with national governments, through an open and inclusive dialogue between the host Government and the UNDS in accordance with national development policies, plans, priorities, and country needs, and the criteria regarding the presence and the composition of the United Nations country teams should be determined based on country development priorities and long-term needs.

203. The Ministers noted the progress made in reinvigorating the RC System and emphasized that it should increasingly be development-focused, with eradication of poverty in all its forms and dimensions as its overarching objective, and that geographical and gender balance should be addressed to enhance the representation of the developing countries in the system, especially on the selection of RCs and recruitment of UNDCO staff.

204. The Ministers also reiterated the request to ensure that all Resident Coordinators are provided with necessary training and support by the UN, including in particular to Resident Coordinators who also serve as Humanitarian Coordinators or Deputy Special Representatives of the Secretary-General, to ensure that they are well-prepared and equipped to work and support Governments in countries facing humanitarian emergencies and countries in conflict and post-conflict situations.

205. The Ministers reaffirmed that ODA is a critical source of funding the UNDS and urged traditional donors to come forward with the required funds to the Special Purpose Trust Fund and to address the current gap in funding.

206. The Ministers noted the advancements made in the revamping of the Regional Level and emphasized the importance of a more region-by-region approach. They continued to look forward to improving the regional level in a very transparent way, while embracing their uniqueness and their strengths. In this regard, the Ministers reiterated that special efforts must be made to preserve the regional architecture that functions well, including, where applicable, the U.N. Regional Economic

Commissions, as they serve as important hubs in the advancement of national and regional priorities.

207. The Ministers reaffirmed the role of the UNDS in particular UN-DESA to support the inter-governmental UN processes and enhance the capacity of developing countries to implement the 2030 Agenda, with a view to addressing national needs, priorities and challenges.

208. The Ministers reiterated their call upon the UNDS to continue to support developing countries, in particular countries in special situations and those facing specific challenges, in their efforts to achieve internationally agreed development goals and their development objectives. The Ministers stressed that the UNDS should continue to enhance its support for the implementation of the Doha Programme of Action for the LDCs for the Decade 2022–2031, the SIDS Accelerated Modalities of Action (SAMOA) Pathway and the Vienna Programme of Action for LLDCs for the Decade 2014–2024, as well as the African Union Agenda 2063 and the programme of the New Partnership for Africa’s Development, all of which are integral to the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, and called upon the entities of the United Nations development system to integrate and mainstream them fully into their operational activities for development. These specific programmes of action for LDCs, LLDCs, SIDS and African countries must remain the most important entry points for the international community to focus its attention and resources to assist these groups of countries.

209. The Ministers reiterated the call to the United Nations development system to continue to support developing countries in their efforts to achieve internationally agreed development goals and their development objectives, and requested the system to address the special challenges facing the most vulnerable countries and, in particular, African countries, least developed countries, landlocked developing countries and small island developing States, the need for special attention to countries in conflict and post-conflict situations and countries and peoples under foreign occupation, as well as the specific challenges facing the middle-income countries, in line with the Addis Ababa Action Agenda of the Third International Conference on Financing for Development and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

210. The Ministers requested the United Nations development system to continue to develop its support to middle-income countries facing specific challenges in all their diversity, and recognized that a gradual shift from a traditional model of direct support and service provision towards a greater emphasis on integrated high-quality policy advice, strengthening institutions, capacity development and support for the leveraging of partnerships and financing is needed, and recalled the invitation to the United Nations Sustainable Development Group, under the leadership of the Secretary-General, to develop a joint framework of collaboration with multilateral development banks to improve synergies at the regional and country levels, including specific attention to middle-income countries, as set out in the Secretary-General’s road map for financing the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, 2019–2021.

211. The Ministers stressed that the call contained in the 2030 Agenda to reduce inequality within and between countries, as well as promoting inclusive, just and equitable societies is critical to empower people, in particular the most vulnerable. The Ministers underlined that in adopting the 2030 Agenda, with the pledge to “leave no one behind”, the international community reaffirmed that tackling inequality is vital to all the efforts to build sustainable, prosperous and peaceful societies and thus committed to ensuring that the goals and targets were met for all nations and peoples and for all segments of society, reaching those furthest behind first.

212. The Ministers stressed that the interlinkages among the SDGs, and addressing the well-being and the rights of youth, women and girls, indigenous peoples, persons with disabilities, older persons, migrants, refugees and those in vulnerable situations, are a prerequisite for achieving the 2030 Agenda.

213. The Ministers reiterated their full commitment to gender equality and the empowerment of all women and girls and welcomed the measures taken by the G77 countries to promote the empowerment of women and girls, as well as progress made by women and girls in many fields around the world. However, they noted that poverty, inequality, violence and discrimination linger in the world's current affairs, particularly affecting women and girls, especially those living in countries affected by armed conflict and living under colonial administration and foreign occupation, unilateral coercive measures or unilateral economic, financial or trade measures not in accordance with International Law and the Charter of the United Nations.

214. The Ministers reaffirmed that an environment that maintains world peace and promotes and protects human rights, the democracy and the peaceful settlement of disputes, in accordance with and principles of non-threat or use of force against territorial integrity or political independence and of respect for sovereignty, as set forth in of the Charter of the United Nations, is an important factor for the advancement of women.

215. The Ministers emphasized the mutually reinforcing relationship among women's economic empowerment and the full, effective and accelerated implementation of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action and the gender-responsive implementation of the 2030 Agenda. They acknowledged the important contribution of women and girls to sustainable development and reiterated that women's economic empowerment not only helps to fulfill women's rights, fosters gender equality and improves the lives and wellbeing of women, but it also accelerates achievement across other development outcomes. They reaffirmed in this regard that gender equality and the empowerment of all women and girls and women's full and equal participation and leadership in the economy and as partners for development are vital for achieving sustainable development, promoting peaceful, just and inclusive societies, enhancing sustained, inclusive and sustainable economic growth and productivity, ending poverty in all its forms and dimensions everywhere and ensuring the well-being of all throughout their life course.

216. The Ministers recognized that violence and discrimination against women and girls continue to be a major obstacle to the achievement of women's empowerment and gender equality. They emphasized the need for measures to prevent and eliminate all forms of gender violence, in particular femicide, and to ensure that, girls, youth, indigenous, Afro-descendant, migrant, older and women with disabilities, are not subject to multiple or aggravated forms of violence and discrimination.

217. The Ministers recognized the vast potential of young people to contribute towards sustainable development and social cohesion and noted that unavailability of quality employment in most developing countries not only blocks the successful transition of young people from school to decent jobs, but also impedes economic growth and development as a whole. Therefore, it is important that efforts at every level are taken to improve the quality of and access to education, and to enhance the acquisition of skills for youth towards decent work.

218. The Ministers encouraged the international community, including the UN and development agencies, while taking into consideration the sovereign right of all countries to develop their own national legislation and policies, in accordance with international law, to enhance their support to education, training and skills development for youth.

219. The Ministers recognized the commitment made to strive to provide children and youth with a nurturing environment for the full realization of their rights and capabilities, helping our countries to reap the demographic dividend, including through safe schools and cohesive communities and families.

220. The Ministers took note with appreciation of the Buenos Aires Declaration on Child Labour, Forced Labour and Youth Employment adopted in November 2017.

221. The Ministers recalled that 2021 marked the 20th Anniversary of the adoption of the Durban Declaration and Programme of Action.

222. The Ministers expressed their commitment to the accelerated implementation of the Durban Declaration and Programme of Action adopted by the World Conference against Racism, Racial Discrimination, Xenophobia and Related Intolerance. In this regard, they reiterated their opposition to all forms of racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance in all parts of the world and expressed deep concern on the resurgence of contemporary forms of racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia, and related intolerance in all parts of the world. They reaffirmed that all forms of racism, discrimination and xenophobia as well as foreign occupation among others constitute serious violations of human rights, which should be rejected through all political and legal means. They condemned all forms of racism, and discrimination spread through the new communications technology, including the Internet.

223. The Ministers noted the Programme of Activities for the Implementation of the International Decade for People of African Descent, including the establishment of a forum to serve as a consultation mechanism, the elaboration of a draft UN declaration on the rights of people of African descent and the adoption and implementation of policies and programmes to combat racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance faced by people of African descent.

224. The Ministers recognized the importance of interreligious and intercultural dialogue and its valuable contribution to promoting social cohesion, peace and development, and called upon the international community to consider, as appropriate and where applicable, interreligious and intercultural dialogue as an important tool in efforts aimed at achieving peace and social stability and the full realization of internationally agreed development goals. They welcomed in this regard all international, regional and national initiatives aimed at promoting interreligious, intercultural and interfaith harmony and combating discrimination against individuals on the basis of religion or belief.

225. The Ministers welcomed the 2022–2032 International Decade of Indigenous Languages to draw world attention to the critical loss of indigenous languages and the urgent need to preserve, revitalize, promote indigenous languages and recognized the work carried out by UNESCO in this regard.

226. The Ministers recognized the positive contribution of migrants to inclusive growth and sustainable development in countries of origin, transit and destination.

227. The Ministers stressed that migration is an enabler of development. The roles and responsibilities of the countries of origin, transit and destination should be appropriately balanced. It is crucial to cooperate internationally to ensure safe, orderly and regular migration involving full respect for human rights and the humane treatment of migrants, regardless of their migration status, refugees and displaced persons. Such cooperation should also strengthen the resilience of communities hosting refugees, particularly in developing countries.

228. The Ministers recognized that international migration is a multidimensional reality of major relevance to the development of origin, transit and destination countries that must be addressed in a coherent, comprehensive and balanced manner.

They endeavoured to increase cooperation on access to and portability of earned benefits, enhance the recognition of foreign qualifications, education and skills, lower the costs of recruitment for migrants and combat unscrupulous recruiters, and smuggling of migrants, in accordance with national circumstances and legislation. They further endeavored to implement effective social communication strategies on the contribution of migrants to sustainable development in all its dimensions, in particular in countries of destination, in order to combat racism, racial discrimination and xenophobia, facilitate social integration and protect migrants' human rights through national frameworks. They reaffirmed the need to promote and protect effectively the human rights and fundamental freedoms of all migrants, especially those of women and children, regardless of their migration status.

229. The Ministers expressed their commitment to protecting the human rights of migrant children, given their vulnerability, particularly of unaccompanied as well as separated migrant children, and to providing for their health, education and psychosocial development, ensuring that the best interests of the child are a primary consideration in policies of integration, return and family reunification.

230. The Ministers welcomed the Intergovernmental Conference to Adopt the Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration held in Marrakesh, Morocco, on 10 and 11 December 2018 and took note of convening of first International Migration Review Forum from 16 to 20 May 2022, and adoption of Progress Declaration as a whole, without a vote by the General Assembly on 7 June 2022.

231. The Ministers reaffirmed General Assembly Resolution [46/182](#), which remains the global framework for humanitarian assistance and coordination, and the guiding principles for the provision of humanitarian assistance, namely humanity, impartiality, neutrality and independence as well as the need for promotion and respect for international humanitarian law.

232. The Ministers reaffirmed the necessity for the UN system and other relevant stakeholders to continue to enhance the coordination of emergency humanitarian assistance in order to effectively address the needs of the increasing number of people affected by humanitarian emergencies.

233. The Ministers also underlined that response to humanitarian emergencies must be based on respect for the principles of international law, namely the sovereignty, territorial integrity and non-interference in the internal affairs of States. In this context, they stressed that international cooperation, technical and financial support from States, as well as the UN remain indispensable. At the same time, they noted that the response must be channelled in a way that does not undermine or replace the national or local mechanisms already put in place but rather strengthen them to afford governments the ability to respond promptly and more effectively and make significant and positive change for affected communities. In this regard, the Ministers recalled the primary role of affected states in humanitarian assistance, as well as national leadership in the initiation, organization and coordination of humanitarian assistance.

234. The Ministers stressed, in light of growing humanitarian needs, the importance of increased and predictable humanitarian financing through innovative and diversified means from other States is becoming more urgent to assist developing countries in enhancing their capacities and mobilizing their own resources. They also stressed the importance of ensuring that humanitarian assistance reaches its intended beneficiaries.

235 The Ministers reaffirmed that humanitarian emergencies arising out of natural and man-made disasters and other causes and the outbreak of epidemics, and other

global health threats, deserve to be given adequate attention by the International Community.

236. The Ministers reaffirmed that relief, recovery, rehabilitation, reconstruction and longer-term development are different means to the one ultimate end and their complementarity should be underscored to ensure effective coordination of humanitarian assistance. While acknowledging that there is a need to narrow the humanitarian-development divide, they stressed that the line that separates their mandates and priorities must not be blurred. The Ministers reiterated their firm conviction that there is a new way of working that brings them closer together while allowing them to do their respective functions in accordance with their comparative advantages in an integrated and coordinated manner.

237. The Ministers recalled that in the 2030 Agenda, the international community committed to strengthen efforts to address the burden of non-communicable and communicable diseases, including ending HIV/AIDS, Tuberculosis, Malaria and Hepatitis as part of Universal Health Coverage, to address the social and economic determinants of these epidemics and support the research and development of new vaccines.

238. The Ministers also underlined that in the 2030 Agenda the international community committed to reduce by one third premature mortality from non-communicable diseases through diagnosis, prevention and treatment and promote mental health and well-being throughout their life course, by addressing the risk factors as well the social and economic ones.

239. The Ministers noted with concern that non-communicable diseases pose an enormous burden on all countries. However, these costs are particularly challenging for developing nations, especially as they have to face exorbitant costs of health technologies. They underlined that the global response to non-communicable diseases remains an area of particular challenge since the current level of progress is insufficient to meet the 2030 Agenda's relevant goals and commitments made under the high-level meetings of the UN General Assembly on non-communicable diseases. Lack of capacity and near zero increase in ODA to address the issue as well as the protection of NCDs policies from commercial and other vested interest of the industry continued to be key challenges.

240. The Ministers welcomed the convening of the High-Level Meeting of the General Assembly to end Tuberculosis at the United Nations Headquarters on the 22nd of September 2023. In this regard, the Ministers recalled that in the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, the international community committed to ending tuberculosis epidemic, achieve Universal Health Coverage, address the social and economic determinants of the epidemic and support the research and development of new vaccines and medicines for the communicable and non-communicable diseases. The Ministers further highlighted the need to promote efforts to support developing countries in achieving SDG3, including through enhanced official development assistance, financial and technical support and support to research, development and innovation programs in developing countries, in addition to facilitating the transfer of technology and know-how.

241. The Ministers emphasized the need to promote access to quality health care, including to affordable, safe, effective and quality medicines, diagnostics and other technologies, including health technologies. In this regard, the Ministers reaffirmed the political declarations of the High-Level meeting on Universal Health Coverage of 2019 and 2023.

242. The Ministers recognized that generic drugs have played a key role in ensuring access to medicines in the developing world. They have called on all parties to

urgently remove all obstacles that limit the capacity of countries to use, to the full extent, the TRIPS flexibilities, as confirmed by the Doha Declaration on TRIPS and Public Health, as well as acknowledge the need to effectively implement the Global Strategy and Plan of Action on Public Health as important tools to help develop national capacities in developing countries in order to strengthen public health and ensure the universal access of the population to medicines and medical technologies without any kind of restriction to specific diseases.

243. The Ministers underscored the need to ensure that all research and development efforts should be needs-driven, evidence-based and guided by the principles of affordability, effectiveness and efficiency and equity, and should be considered as a shared responsibility. In this regard, they have stressed on the importance of delinking the cost of investment in research and development from the price and volume of sales so as to facilitate equitable and affordable access to new medicines, diagnostic tools, vaccines, as well as other innovative care and prevention approaches results to be gained through research and development, as highlighted in previous health-related political declarations.

244. The Ministers recalled the 2023 Session of the Humanitarian Affairs Segment of ECOSOC.

245. The Ministers welcomed the convening of the High-Level Meeting of the General Assembly on Pandemic Prevention, Preparedness and Response, held at the United Nations Headquarters on 20 September 2023. In this regard, the Ministers affirmed the need for timely, urgent and continued leadership, global solidarity, increased international cooperation and multilateral commitment and with support from relevant United Nations entities and other relevant international and regional organizations, to implement coherent and robust national, regional and global actions, driven by science and the need to prioritize equity, to promote and protect human rights, including the right to development, through inter alia the timely, equitable and unhindered access to medical countermeasures and health technologies, for developing countries to strengthen pandemic prevention, preparedness and response, and fully address the direct and indirect consequences of future pandemics and to ensure that developing countries are not left behind.

246. The Ministers welcomed the adoption of UN General Assembly resolution [76/301](#) of 2 September 2022, and modalities resolution [77/275](#) of 2 March 2023, which decided to hold a one-day High-Level Meeting of the General Assembly on Pandemic Prevention, Preparedness and Response to be informed by and aligned with the work of the Intergovernmental Negotiating Body to draft and negotiate a WHO convention, agreement or other international instrument on pandemic prevention, preparedness and response. In this regard, they look forward to the adoption of a concise and action-oriented political declaration, which is co-facilitated by the Kingdom of Morocco.

247. The Ministers emphasized that transnational corporations have a responsibility to respect all human rights and fundamental freedoms and should refrain from causing environmental degradation and environmental disasters and affecting the well-being of peoples.

248. The Ministers recalled with appreciation the decision of the Human Rights Council, in its resolution [26/9](#), to establish an Open-ended Intergovernmental Working Group on Transnational Corporations and Other Business Enterprises with Respect to Human Rights (OEIGWG). The Ministers took note of the presentation of a draft international legally binding instrument to regulate, in international human rights law, the activities of transnational corporations and other business enterprises, both focusing on the victims of business-related human rights abuses.

249. The Ministers expressed their concern about the seriousness of the problems and threats to the stability and security of societies posed by corruption. In that regard, the Ministers stressed the need to implement recognized the recommendations included in the Political Declaration approved during the United Nations General Assembly Special Session on Corruption that took place in June 2021, entitled “Our common commitment to effectively addressing challenges and implementing measures to prevent and combat corruption and strengthen international cooperation.” The Ministers also recognized the importance of implementing Resolution 9/2 of the Conference of the States Parties to the Convention Against Corruption that took place in Sharm El-Sheik in December 2021, entitled “Our common commitment to effectively addressing challenges and implementing measures to prevent and combat corruption and strengthening international cooperation: follow-up to the special session of the General Assembly against corruption”.

250. The Ministers reiterated their support to the UN Programme of Assistance in the Teaching, Study, Dissemination and Wider Appreciation of International Law established by General Assembly resolution 2099 (XX) of 20 December 1965 for the purpose of contributing to greater knowledge of international law as a means of strengthening international peace and security and promoting friendly relations and cooperation among States. They recalled that the Programme and its components are one of the cornerstones of the efforts of the UN to promote international law and that jurists, academics, diplomats and other public officials from developing countries greatly benefit from the regional courses of international law, fellowships, publications and the Audiovisual Library of International Law. The Ministers further welcomed the inclusion of resources under the programme budget for the current year for the organization of the International Fellowship Programme, Regional Courses in International Law for Africa, for Asia-Pacific and for Latin America and the Caribbean each year and for the continuation and further development of the UN Audiovisual Library of International Law. They also expressed their commitment to include the seminars and regional training on international treaty laws and practice and the legal publications and training materials, as well as the necessary funding for the Hamilton Shirley Amerasinghe Memorial Fellowship, in the budget of the UN.

251. The Ministers reiterated their commitment to intensify international efforts directed at safeguarding cyberspace and promoting its exclusive use for the achievement of peaceful purposes and as a vehicle to contribute to both economic and social development. They highlighted that international cooperation in accordance with domestic law and as far as international obligations require, as well as in full respect of human rights, and considering the needs of the demanding country, the importance of promoting capacity building and sustainability of the projects of cooperation, is the only viable option for fostering the positive effects of information and communications technologies, preventing their potential negative effects, promoting their peaceful and legitimate use and guaranteeing that both scientific and technological progress are directed at preserving peace and promoting the welfare and development of humanity.

252. The Ministers reaffirmed that the Fifth Committee of the General Assembly is the sole Main Committee of the Organization entrusted with responsibilities for administrative, financial and budgetary matters. In this regard, the Ministers requested that any budgetary, financial and administrative matters, including those related to the establishment of a peacekeeping operation or a special political mission, be discussed solely in the framework of the Fifth Committee, in conformity with the Charter of the United Nations.

253. The Ministers expressed their serious concern at the financial health of the Organization, in particular the deep and persistent liquidity problems in the regular budget and, while recognizing the need to extend sympathetic understanding to those

temporarily unable to meet their financial obligations as a consequence of genuine economic difficulties, and commending Member States of the UN who have made real efforts to reduce their outstanding contributions despite facing difficulties at home, they urged all Member States of the UN to pay their assessed contributions in full, on time, and without conditions, in particular those Member States of the UN who, for political reasons, consistently and deliberately withhold payments.

254. The Ministers reiterated the importance of avoiding the late settlement of payments to troop and police contributing countries, most of which are developing countries. This creates a situation whereby the developing countries, several of which are financially challenged, are in fact subsidizing peacekeeping operations. In this regard, recognized the positive impact of the management of cash resources from active peacekeeping missions as a pool for the timely settling of these payments, which should remain a priority of the organization.

255. The Ministers stressed that borrowing from the accounts of closed peacekeeping missions is not a good budgetary practice.

256. The Ministers recognized the efforts led by the Secretary-General on management reform and took note of the adoption of resolution [A/72/266 B](#) by the General Assembly. They emphasized that reforms should result in better mandate delivery, enhanced transparency, accountability, efficiency and oversight. They underscored the centrality of the implementation of the 2030 Agenda, as well as the need to monitor and evaluate mandate implementation. They stressed the importance of addressing gender parity and balanced geographical representation at all levels of the Secretariat and ensuring fair and equitable access to UN procurement opportunities for developing countries.

257. The Ministers reiterated that the goal of equitable geographic representation is a Charter obligation as reflected in Article 101, paragraph 3, and called for appropriate measures towards attaining that goal. They urged in this regard the Secretariat to implement a comprehensive strategy to ensure equitable geographic representation through the increase of the representation of developing countries, in particular at senior levels, in order for the UN to have a truly global Secretariat adequately representing the diversity of its membership, a condition necessary for the UN to succeed in implementing its global mandates.

258. The Ministers reaffirmed that any Secretariat and management reform efforts, including on its budget process, must not be intended to change the intergovernmental, multilateral and international nature of the Organization, but must strengthen the ability of Member States of the UN to perform their oversight and monitoring role and that prior consideration by and approval of Member States of the UN is essential in all cases where the measures to be implemented fall under the prerogatives of the Assembly. In this regard, they recall resolution [66/257](#). They also reaffirmed the right of the entire membership of the United Nations to pronounce itself on the administration of the Organization, including on budgetary matters, and the need for continuous interaction and dialogue between the Secretariat and the General Assembly aimed at fostering a positive environment for the negotiations, the decision-making process and the implementation of the reform measures.

259. The Ministers strongly supported the oversight role performed by the General Assembly, as well as its relevant intergovernmental and expert bodies, in planning, programming, budgeting, monitoring and evaluation. In this context, they renewed their commitment to strengthen the role of the Committee for Programme and Coordination. The Ministers reaffirmed the importance of ensuring the preservation of the sequential nature of the review processes of the proposed programme budget. The Ministers also urged the rest of the membership of the UN to actively participate in the sessions of the Committee.

260. The Ministers reaffirmed the importance of the strategic framework as the principal policy directive of the Organization and that its content should fully reflect the mandates approved by Member States of the UN, including the UN financial rules and regulations.

261. The Ministers reaffirmed the importance of preserving the budget methodology, the established budgetary procedures and practices and the rules and regulations governing the budget process, and stressed that the level of resources to be approved by the General Assembly must be commensurate with all mandated programmes and activities in order to ensure their full and effective implementation. In this sense, they underlined that the existing recosting methodology is a fundamental and integral element of the budgetary methodology agreed in the General Assembly and affirmed that the existing recosting methodology ensures that mandated activities are not negatively impacted by currency fluctuations and inflation.

262. The Ministers underlined that the current methodology for the preparation of the scale of assessments reflects changes in the relative economic situations of the Member States of the UN. The Ministers further reaffirmed the principle of “capacity to pay” as the fundamental criterion in the apportionment of the expenses of the United Nations and rejected any change to the elements of the current methodology for the preparation of the scale of assessments aimed at increasing the contributions of developing countries. In this regard, they emphasized that the core elements of the current methodology of the scale of assessment, such as base period, Gross National Income, conversion rates, low per capita income adjustment, gradient, floor, ceiling for LDCs and debt stock adjustment must be kept intact and are not negotiable.

263. The Ministers stressed that the current maximum assessment rate, or ceiling, had been fixed as a political compromise and is contrary to the principle of the capacity to pay and is a fundamental source of distortion in the scale of assessments. In this context, they urged the General Assembly to undertake a review of this arrangement, in accordance with paragraph 2 of General Assembly resolution 55/5 C.

264. The Ministers emphasized that organizations which have an enhanced observer status at the United Nations giving them the rights and privileges usually only applied to Observer States, such as the right to speak in the general debate of the General Assembly and the right of reply, should also have the same financial obligations to the UN as Observer States. In this context, they urged the General Assembly to consider a decision on an assessment for such organizations.

265. The Ministers affirmed that the current principles and guidelines for the apportionment of the expenses of peacekeeping operations approved by the General Assembly in its relevant resolutions should constitute a basis for any discussion on the peacekeeping scale. In this regard, the Ministers stressed that the peacekeeping scale must clearly reflect the special responsibilities of the permanent members of the Security Council for the maintenance of peace and security. The Ministers also recalled that the economically less developed countries have limited capacity to contribute towards the budgets of peacekeeping operations. In this context, the Ministers emphasized that any discussion on the system of discounts applied to the peacekeeping scale should take into account the conditions of developing countries whose current positions must not be negatively affected. The Ministers stressed, in this regard, that no member of the Group that is not a permanent member of the Security Council, should therefore be categorized above level C.

266. The Ministers expressed their concern for the growing restrictive nature of “earmarked” contributions within different UN entities, such as UNDP, UNFPA, UNOPS and UNICEF among others. They also emphasized that regular resources are the bedrock of those entities and are essential to maintain and fulfill their universal mandate and work. Hence, the declining trend of regular resources and a high

concentration of earmarked funds put the organization at risk of not having the capacity to deliver on its programmes. The Ministers appealed to assure stable and predictable contributions and noted the important need to emphasize the quality, flexibility, predictability, transparency and alignment of such contributions.

267. The Ministers emphasized the importance of the United Nations collaborating and coordinating with regional and sub-regional actors and in this regard urged the Secretary-General to use his reform initiatives as an enabling tool for the deepening of the partnership, cooperation and coordination between the United Nations and UN recognized inter-governmental regional and sub-regional actors in accordance with relevant mandates and memoranda of understanding (MOUs).

268. The Ministers looked forward to the upcoming UN Peacekeeping Ministerial Meeting scheduled to take place in Accra, Ghana in the last quarter of 2023, and encouraged the participation of all Member States. They noted that the Ministerial meeting which is the first to be held in the continent of Africa would provide an opportunity for participants to share insights into innovative ways to make modern day peacekeeping operations more effective and responsive to the security challenges of our time including the deteriorating security situation in some parts of Africa and globally.

269. The Ministers recalled the special needs of Africa and recognized that, while economic growth had improved, there was a need to sustain the recovery, which was fragile and uneven, to face the ongoing adverse impacts of multiple crises on development and the serious challenges that these impacts posed to the fight against poverty and hunger, which could further undermine the achievement of the internationally agreed development goals in Africa, including Agenda 2063 and the SDGs and the unfinished business of the MDGs.

270. The Ministers reiterated the call on the international community and development partners to support development activities and initiatives in order to strengthen African efforts in addressing the root causes of conflict in the continent and stressed the urgent need for the UN system to support the efforts of African countries to achieve durable peace and sustainable development in Africa.

271. The Ministers noted with great concern the multidimensional impact of the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic on African countries, including significant impacts on poverty, food security, education, unemployment, trade, disrupted supply chains, tourism and financial flows, as well as its social impacts, including violence against women and girls, causing more challenges for African countries to achieve the 2030 Agenda and Agenda 2063, and recognized the great efforts made by African countries in combating the COVID-19 pandemic to save lives and achieve sustainable, inclusive and resilient recovery.

272. The Ministers expressed profound concern that the commitment to doubling aid to Africa by 2010, as articulated at the summit of the Group of Eight held in Gleneagles, United Kingdom, had not been entirely reached and in this regard stressed the need to make rapid progress in order to fulfill that and other donors' commitments to increasing aid through a variety of means, including the provision of new additional resources and the transfer of technology to and the building of capacity in African countries, and to supporting their sustainable development. They called for continued support for Africa's development initiatives, including Agenda 2063 and its 10-year plan of action, the New Partnership for Africa's Development and the Programme for Infrastructure Development in Africa. On the other hand, they welcomed the support that some developing countries had extended to Africa through South-South and triangular cooperation programmes.

273. The Ministers underlined the need to address the economic, social and environmental impact of climate change, desertification and land degradation in Africa, and highlights the importance of supporting the implementation of initiatives aimed at enhancing agriculture resilience in Africa, in particular the Comprehensive Africa Agriculture Development Programme and other initiatives launched under the leadership of the African Union Commission such as the Great Green Wall and the Land Policy Initiative, as well as initiatives launched by African countries such as the Adaptation of African Agriculture and the Security, Stability and Sustainability initiatives.

274. The Ministers welcomed the Beijing Declaration and the FOCAC Beijing Action Plan (2019–2021) adopted by the African countries and China at the 2018 Beijing Summit of the Forum on China-Africa Cooperation, covering fields such as industrial promotion, infrastructure connectivity, trade facilitation, health care and green development, which give strong impetus to the implementation of the Agenda 2063 and the 2030 Agenda. The Ministers also welcomed the Extraordinary China-Africa Summit on Solidarity against COVID-19, held on 17 June 2020 and the Eighth Ministerial Conference of FOCAC, held on 29 and 30 November 2021 in Dakar, Senegal and its outcomes including China-Africa Cooperation Vision 2035, Dakar Declaration and Dakar Action Plan.

275. The Ministers welcomed the First Part of the Fifth United Nations Conference on the Least Developed Countries, held on 17 March 2022, at which the Doha Programme of Action of Least Developed Countries for the Decade 2022–2031 was adopted. The Ministers recalled the Doha Programme of Action which was endorsed by the General Assembly in its resolution [76/258](#) of 1 April 2022, in which the Assembly called upon all the relevant stakeholders to commit to implementing the Programme of Action.

276. The Ministers stressed that the timely and full implementation of the Doha Programme of Action will help the LDCs to address the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic as well as the resulting negative socio-economic impacts, return to a pathway to achieve the SDGs, address climate change challenges, and makes strides towards sustainable and irreversible graduation.

277. The Ministers emphasized that the implementation of the Doha Programme of Action for the decade 2022–2031 (DPoA), constitutes an opportunity to place the LDCs at the center of international cooperation and foster the prosperity and wellbeing of their population. They stressed that, as it coincides with the remaining years of action to achieve the 2030 Agenda and its SDGs, its implementation will require a robust international cooperation and partnership on the basis of mutual trust and benefit, focusing on the needs of least developed countries.

278. The Ministers stressed the need to first confront the unsustainable debt burden in many LDCs and take urgent and necessary measures to reduce the debt situation if they are to return to normalcy. Second, it is imperative that developed countries meet their ODA commitments. These countries must fulfill their historic commitment to allocate between 0.15% and 0.20% of their GDP to ODA for the least developed countries.

279. The Ministers also emphasized the need to enhance technology transfer and capacity building, as well as technological and scientific cooperation from developed countries to LDCs to promote sustainable development in its three dimensions and the full implementation of the 2030 Agenda. There is an urgent need to consolidate the LDCs' involvement in global economic, social, environmental decision-making processes and address the structural problems aggravated by the current unjust economic order.

280. The Ministers reaffirmed that it will also provide an opportunity for improvement of the partnership of the international community in support of the LDCs in search of their prosperity.

281. The Ministers stressed that the success of the new Program of Action will depend highly on the LDCs ownership and leadership to develop and implement policies effectively according to their national priorities and strategies. Nevertheless, national efforts of LDCs should be complemented by supportive global programs, and technical cooperation in integrated measures and policies through enhanced, predictable, definite and targeted support aimed at expanding their development opportunities.

282. The Ministers welcomed the progress made over the past decade with respect to graduation and stress that continued support and incentives will be important to accelerate the number of least developed countries reaching the graduation thresholds and for ensuring sustainable and irreversible graduation with momentum. The Ministers reaffirmed the DPoA target to enable 15 additional least developed countries to meet the criteria for graduation by 2031.

283. The Ministers reiterated that ODA continues to be the largest and a critical source of external financing for the development of the LDCs and that it provides a buffer to weather the impacts of the unstable and volatile global economic environment. They expressed their deep concern that overall share of ODA to LDCs in donor's GNI is only 0.08 per cent in 2019, while noting that as per the preliminary data in 2021 net bilateral aid flows from DAC countries to the group of least developed countries were USD 33 billion, and increased by 2.5% in real terms compared to 2020. They also recalled the provisions of the Addis Ababa Action Agenda that encouraged ODA providers to consider setting a target to provide at least 0.20 per cent of ODA / GNI to LDCs and expressed encouragement to those providers that are allocating at least 50 per cent of their ODA to LDCs. They called upon all development partners to fulfil these targets.

284. The Ministers noted with concern that the share of LDCs in world exports of goods and commercial services stands only at 0.93% in 2021, which is further away from the target of 2 percent of global exports called for in the Doha Programme of Action and target 17.11 of the SDGs. We are also concerned that the COVID-19 pandemic and associated restrictions have interrupted a decade of rapid services exports growth in LDCs. In 2020, LDC services exports dropped by 35% to USD 27.9 billion, from USD 43.0 billion in 2019. The decline was largely driven by collapsing LDC travel exports and a contraction of exports of the transport sector. The Ministers also reaffirmed that fulfilling the commitments of the ministerial decisions of the WTO for duty-free and quota-free market access for all products from all least developed countries for the least developed country preferential rules of origin was urgently needed to reverse the decline in the global trade share of those countries. In addition, fulfilling those commitments would also contribute to the achievement of the target contained in the DPoA and the 2030 Agenda of doubling the share of LDCs in global export. In that regard, it is important that at least 50 percent of the Aid for Trade by development partners be allotted to the LDCs. The Ministers called for significant progress on LDCs issues, preferential rules of origin and the application of the LDCs' services waiver at the 12th WTO Ministerial Conference.

285. The Ministers expressed concern that, despite minor signs of recovery the latest global financial and economic crisis, have contributed to undermining development in all developing countries and recalled that the modest development gains, in particular those in the LDCs made over the years are being reversed, pushing a larger number of their people to extreme poverty. The Ministers expressed their concern

that, under the current growth trajectory, nearly 35 per cent of the population in LDCs could remain in extreme poverty by 2030. Many LDCs continue to be lagging behind in meeting most of the internationally agreed development goals, including the unfinished business of the MDGs.

286. The Ministers expressed deep concern that LDCs are disproportionately affected by a variety of systemic shocks, including the global financial and economic crisis, excessive commodity price volatility, health epidemics, natural disasters and other environmental shocks. These shocks not only halt the pace of economic progress and deteriorate poverty, but also undermine the capacity of LDCs to achieve the 2030 Agenda. In this regard, the Ministers underlined the need for establishing a comprehensive multi-stakeholder resilience-building mechanism for LDCs, leveraging the existing measures and initiatives.

287. The Ministers stressed the need for the international community to remain vigilant in monitoring the debt situation of the LDCs as five of them are in debt distress and twenty-two are at high risk of debt distress situation and the ratio of debt service to exports sharply worsened in the last decade. The Ministers called upon the international community to continue to take effective measures, preferably within existing frameworks, when applicable, to address the debt problem of those countries, including through coordinated policies aimed at fostering debt financing, debt relief, debt restructuring and sound debt management, as appropriate, for the multilateral and bilateral debt owed by the LDCs to creditors, both public and private. They reiterated their commitment to work through existing initiatives, such as the Heavily Indebted Poor Countries Initiative. They reaffirmed the importance of transparency in debt management. The Ministers underlined that the debt sustainability framework for the LDCs should systematically take into account their structural constraints and longer-term investment requirements for the implementation of the SDGs.

288. The Ministers welcomed the operationalization of the Technology Bank for the least developed countries, and the inauguration of its headquarters in Gebze, Turkey and emphasized the need to sustain its financing in order to fulfill its potential to foster productive capacity, structural transformation, poverty eradication and sustainable development. They also called upon all relevant stakeholders to ensure continued financial and in-kind support for the effective functioning of the Technology Bank.

289. The Ministers recognized the special development needs and challenges of LLDCs arising from their landlockedness, remoteness from world markets and geographical constraints that impose serious impediments for export earnings, private capital inflow and domestic resource mobilization of LLDCs and therefore adversely affect their overall sustainable development and expressed concern that their efforts towards sustainable development are affected by the frequent falling of commodity prices and that the LLDCs are highly exposed to climate change and disproportionately affected by its adverse impacts and furthermore noted that the adverse global economic conditions, including stalled growth, surging inflation, excessive volatility of energy and food prices, supply chain disruptions and elevated shipping and trade costs, are constraining landlocked developing countries to recover from the socioeconomic impacts of COVID-19 pandemic and are at risk of further marginalization from global trade and global value chains.

290. The Ministers called upon the development partners, transit countries and international organizations to mainstream the Vienna Programme of Action and establish special facilities for the LLDCs, as appropriate, to assist them with execution and scaling-up of trade facilitation initiatives and effective implementation of the Trade Facilitation Agreement, and invited multilateral financial and development institutions and regional development banks to establish dedicated

infrastructure funding for the LLDCs. The Ministers noted the outcome of the Twelfth WTO Ministerial Conference that mandated the WTO Trade Facilitation Committee to hold a Dedicated Session on transit issues annually until the next review of the Trade Facilitation Agreement is completed in 2026 to discuss best practices, as well as the constraints and challenges faced by all landlocked WTO Members. The Ministers also noted the declaration adopted at the LLDC Ministerial Meeting held on the sidelines of UNCTAD XV on 2 September 2021, the declaration adopted at the LLDC Meeting of Ministers of Trade in preparation for the 12th WTO Ministerial Conference on 4 November 2021 and the outcome of the LLDC Ministerial Transport Conference held in Awaza, Turkmenistan, on 15–16 August 2022.

291. The Ministers stressed that as the LLDCs head into the final stretches of the 2030 Agenda and the Vienna Programme of Action, efforts towards both need to be reoriented to incorporate the long-term impact of COVID-19, building of more equal, inclusive and sustainable institutions and the nurturing of resilient economies. Towards this end, a transformative recovery aimed at reducing vulnerability to future crises and ensuring that LLDCs can make the necessary progress towards achieving the SDGs and respond to the ambition and the urgency of the Vienna Programme of Action is paramount.

292. The Ministers reaffirmed their strong commitment to the implementation of the Vienna Declaration and the Vienna Programme of Action for LLDCs for the decade 2014–2024, and encouraged the LLDCs, transit countries, their development partners, the UN system and all other actors to implement the actions that have been agreed upon in the Vienna Programme of Action, in its six priority areas, namely: fundamental transit policy issues; infrastructure development and maintenance; international trade and trade facilitation; regional integration and cooperate on; structural economic transformation; and means of implementation; in a coordinated, coherent and expeditious manner. Furthermore, the Ministers reaffirmed that the Vienna Programme of Action is integral to the 2030 Agenda and welcomed in this regard the Political Declaration adopted at the high-level mid-term review of the implementation of the Vienna Programme of Action for the LLDCs held on 5–6 December 2019 in New York and took note with appreciation of the Roadmap adopted on 23 September 2020 during the LLDC Ministerial Meeting.

293. The Ministers welcomed the decision of the General Assembly to hold the third United Nations Conference on Landlocked Developing Countries in 2024, to undertake a comprehensive review of the implementation of the Vienna Programme of Action and to formulate and adopt a renewed framework for international support to address the special needs of landlocked developing countries and to strengthen partnerships between the landlocked developing countries and transit countries and their development partners. The Ministers also welcomed the decision by the General Assembly on the modalities, including the venue, duration and specific dates of the Third UN Conference on LLDCs and called upon the LLDCs, transit and partner countries to actively engage in the negotiation of the new programme of action at be adopted at the third United Nations Conference on LLDCs.

294. The Ministers welcomed the convening of the Africa regional midterm review meeting of the Vienna Programme of Action for the LLDCS for the decade 2014–2024 in Marrakech, Morocco, in March 2019. They also welcomed the convening of the three regional review meetings held in preparation of the Third UN Conference on LLDCs; for the African region in Gaborone, Botswana in May 2023; for the Latin America region in Asuncion, Paraguay in July 2023 and for the Euro-Asia region in Bangkok, Thailand in August 2023. They underlined the progress and challenges in the implementation of the Vienna Programme of Action in Africa and called for stronger regional cooperation on transit policies and greater support in areas including

connectivity in transport, energy and information and communication technologies infrastructure, export diversification, value addition and trade facilitation.

295. The Ministers emphasized the importance of fostering strong synergy and coherence in the implementation of the 2030 Agenda, the Addis Ababa Action Agenda and the Vienna Programme of Action and encouraged coordination and coherence in the follow-up of their implementation. The Ministers stressed that the availability of and use of accessible, timely, reliable and high-quality disaggregated data to measure poverty in all its forms and dimensions as well as progress on sustainable development underpin the efforts to leave no one behind and called upon the development partners and international organizations to assist LLDCs in building and strengthening their official national capacities for data collection, disaggregation, dissemination and analysis. They called upon a revitalized Global Partnership based on renewed and strengthened partnerships between landlocked developing countries and the transit countries, their development partners and other stakeholders for the full, successful and timely implementation of the Vienna Programme of Action in line with the Political Declaration of the High-level Midterm Review on the Implementation of the Vienna Programme of Action for Landlocked Developing Countries for the Decade 2014–2024 as well as the Roadmap for accelerated implementation of the VPOA.

296. The Ministers reaffirmed that SIDS remain a “special case” for sustainable development in view of their unique and particular vulnerabilities, including their small size, remoteness, narrow resource and export base, external economic shocks, and exposure to global environmental challenges, including to a large range of impacts from climate change and more frequent and intense natural disasters. Climate change and its adverse impacts continue to pose a significant risk to SIDS and their efforts to achieve sustainable development and, represent the gravest threat to their survival and viability, including through the loss of territory.

297. The Ministers acknowledged that Small Island Developing States continue to be greatly affected by the pandemic, even before the pandemic the Midterm Review of the SAMOA Pathway found that SIDS faced many difficulties in achieving the 2030 agenda and the full implementation of the SAMOA Pathway. They stressed the need for a tailored response in order to better assist these small states.

298. The Ministers further stressed the urgency of finding additional solutions to the major challenges facing small island developing States in a concerted manner so as to support them in sustaining the momentum realized in implementing the Barbados Programme of Action, the Mauritius Strategy, the Samoa Pathway and achieving the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. There is also the need for greater support to SIDS by the UN system and more broadly the international community, and in this regard, they took note of the recently concluded Regional and Interregional Preparatory Meetings for the 4th International Conference on SIDS which brought together SIDS, the UN System and the broader international community.

299. The Ministers remained concerned with the process for graduating of SIDS from least developed country status, and called upon the international community, especially the Committee for Development Policy, to give due consideration to the unique and particular vulnerabilities of SIDS as it considers their graduation from least developed country status and further recognized that those SIDS that are middle- and high-income countries face specific challenges to achieving sustainable development, despite this income categorization, they are not homogenous, and SIDS continue to be extremely vulnerable to environmental and economic shocks, and are highly dependent on external markets.

300. The Ministers noted with appreciation the updates provided by the High-level Panel on the Development of a Multidimensional Vulnerability Index for Small

Islands Developing States, and looked forward to the final report of the Panel to the General Assembly and finalization and adoption of the multidimensional vulnerability index.

301. The Ministers continued to underscore the value of genuine and durable partnerships as a means of supporting the sustainable development of SIDS, which are monitored by the SIDS Partnership Framework, and recalled the establishment of a SIDS Partnership Award and noted that Award ceremony on 11 July 2023 during the Annual Global Multi-Stakeholder SIDS Partnership Dialogue.

302. The Ministers acknowledged the close interlinkages between the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the SAMOA Pathway. In addition, they urged full and effective implementation of both agendas, including the fulfilment of the provisions of all means of implementation. In this regard, the Ministers also encouraged other initiatives and programmes in support of the sustainable development priorities of SIDS. This includes the further strengthening of global partnerships for SIDS in priority areas of the SAMOA Pathway in order to ensure its timely, effective and full implementation. and in this regard, they noted with appreciation the many initiatives already spearheaded by countries of the South.

303. The Ministers welcomed the convening of the fourth International Conference on Small Island Developing States that is scheduled to be held in Antigua and Barbuda from 27 to 30 May 2024, under the theme SIDS#4: Charting the course towards resilient prosperity. They noted that SIDS4 is taking place amid unprecedented global challenges and therefore must deliver the transformation needed to ensure SIDS are able to achieve sustainable development and build resilience to external shocks. Therefore, the Ministers called on the international community to show solidarity and support for SIDS during the preparatory process of the Fourth SIDS Conference and the elaboration of the next 10-year SIDS Programme of Action.

304. The Ministers recalled that middle-income countries are still home to most of the world's people living in poverty and inequalities and gaps still remain. They continue to face significant challenges to achieve sustainable development. The Ministers reiterated the urgent need to identify ways and means to ensure that the diverse and specific development needs of MICs are appropriately considered and addressed, in a tailored fashion, in their relevant strategies and policies, with a view to promoting a coherent and comprehensive approach towards individual countries. In this context, the UNDS must improve its support to different country contexts, including how to provide efficient, effective, more coordinated and better and focused support to MICs. The Ministers welcomed the convening of the High-Level Meeting of the General Assembly during the 77th session to discuss the gaps and challenges of middle-income countries in the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, with a focus on the environmental dimension of sustainable development and on how to revamp development cooperation with Middle-income countries.

305. The Ministers recognized the importance of addressing the specific challenges facing MICs. In order to ensure that achievements made to date are sustained, efforts to address ongoing challenges should be strengthened through the exchange of experiences, improved coordination and better and focused support, aligned with MICs' specific needs and priorities, from the UNDS, the international financial institutions, regional organizations and other stakeholders. The Ministers also acknowledged that ODA and other concessional finance are still important for a number of these countries and have a role to play for targeted results, taking into account the specific needs of these countries. In this regard, the Ministers highlighted the need to make all institutional arrangements necessary to support MICs within the UN system and its respective mandates, in particular through a comprehensive UN

system-wide and long-term strategy aimed at facilitating sustainable development cooperation and coordinated support towards MICs.

306. The Ministers welcomed the UNIDO Strategic Framework for Partnering with Middle-Income Countries adopted in Resolution GC.18/Res.9 of 7 November 2019 of the General Conference of the United Nations Industrial Development Organization, entitled Inclusive and Sustainable industrial development in middle-income countries. The Ministers welcomed further the convening of the Special meeting on the implementation of SDG 9 in MICs on the margins of HLPF 2023.

307. The Ministers welcomed the mapping exercise conducted by the Secretary-General to provide a detailed overview of the current support available to middle-income countries in order to consider developing a comprehensive system-wide response plan, where appropriate, aimed at better addressing the multidimensional nature of sustainable development and facilitating sustainable development cooperation and coordinated and inclusive support to middle-income countries based on their specific challenges and diverse need.

308. The Ministers called for special attention to Middle Income Countries in their transition to higher income levels countries, considering that Middle Income Countries are exposed to a greater risk of being eliminated as recipient countries of development cooperation and financial flows, with a high degree of concessionality coming from the Multilateral development banks and donor countries and that Official Development Assistance remains as an important source for supporting their development process and National Development.

309. The Ministers reaffirmed that the middle-income countries (MICs) face significant challenges to achieve sustainable development, as they are home to 62% of the global poor. As recognized by the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, many MICs are confronted by specific challenges such as climate change, debt distress, fiscal deficits, increasing public and corporate debt, tax avoidance, trade protectionism, and heavy reliance on the tourism sector, shrinking foreign direct investments, large influx of refugees, fragmented social and economic structures, with a significant share of employment in informal or low-productivity sectors, increased vulnerability to future pandemics, and other global challenges.

310 The Ministers recognized that the COVID-19 pandemic has placed middle-income countries, including those moving into higher income, at risk of losing many of their hard-won gains in development and that more needs to be done for a sustainable recovery with regard to resource mobilization efforts, poverty eradication, food security, universal health coverage, health systems strengthening and pandemic response and preparedness, returning children to school, gender equality and the empowerment of all women and girls, the promotion of decent jobs and social protection, achieving debt sustainability, the reduction of inequalities, closing digital divides and enhancing North-South, South-South and triangular cooperation.

311. The Ministers recognized that the repercussions of the COVID-19 pandemic continue to exacerbate Middle-Income Countries vulnerabilities. While advanced economies were able to respond forcefully to the pandemic, due to their monetary and fiscal capacity, proposals were made by the international community to support the poorest countries via the Debt Service Suspension Initiative, through the Common Framework for Debt Treatment beyond the DSSI and through the support of international financial institutions. Forgotten between these extremes are the middle-income countries. The World Bank estimates that 82 percent of the total new global extreme poor will be in MICs. The Ministers also reiterated their call to the multilateral development banks to explore ways to ensure that their assistance best addresses the opportunities and challenges presented by the diverse circumstances of middle-income countries.

312. The Ministers welcomed the convening by the President of the Economic and Social Council of a specific segment on the challenges and needs of Middle-income countries to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals and a sustainable recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic, for the first time during the 2023 High-Level Political Forum on sustainable development, and call on the upcoming presidencies of the ECOSOC to continue this good practice to advance the priorities of Middle-Income Countries at the United Nations.

313. The Ministers reaffirmed that sustainable development cannot be realized without peace and security, and that peace and security will be at risk without sustainable development. In this regard, they further recognized that the countries in conflict and post-conflict situations, in particular among least developed countries, and countries and peoples living under foreign occupation have specific structural challenges and require context-specific approaches, including targeted national policies and international support measures to address these challenges and to support peacebuilding, State-building activities and sustainable development. The Ministers took note of the principles set out in the New Deal for Engagement in Fragile States by the Group of Seven Plus, countries that are, or have been, affected by conflict.

314. The Ministers reaffirmed that the right of self-determination is a primordial right that anchors the United Nations. For developing countries, it has been and continues to be a beacon of hope for all those who struggle under the weight of occupation. In this context, in the implementation and the follow-up and review of 2030 Agenda, the international community must not forget the severe difficulties faced by peoples living under colonial and foreign occupation and strive to remove the obstacles to the full realization of their right to self-determination, which adversely affect their economic and social development and their ability to achieve and implement the sustainable development goals, and ensure that they will not be left behind.

315. The Ministers reaffirmed, in accordance with the Charter of the United Nations, the need to respect the territorial integrity and political independence of States.

316. The Ministers reaffirmed their unwavering support for the just cause of Palestine and solidarity with the Palestinian people. They reaffirmed their principled and long-standing support for the right of the Palestinian people to self-determination and the achievement of their legitimate national aspirations, including for freedom, independence, justice, peace and dignity in their independent State of Palestine, with East Jerusalem as its capital. The Ministers expressed deep regret about the absence of a political horizon for bringing an end to the Israeli occupation and achieving the rights of the Palestinian people and the two-State solution based on the pre-1967 borders, in accordance with the relevant United Nations resolutions, the Madrid terms of reference, including the principle of land for peace and the Arab Peace Initiative. They called for the exertion by the international community of the necessary efforts in support of these objectives, stressing the urgency of intensified efforts to achieve a just, lasting and comprehensive solution and peace.

317. The Ministers reiterated their call for the immediate and full withdrawal of Israel, the occupying Power, from the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, and the occupied Syrian Golan to the line of 4 June 1967 and from the remaining Lebanese occupied land. They reaffirmed their support for a Middle East peace process aimed at achieving a comprehensive, just and lasting peace in the region, in accordance with the relevant United Nations resolutions, including Security Council resolutions [242 \(1967\)](#), [338 \(1973\)](#), [425 \(1978\)](#), [497 \(1981\)](#) [1850 \(2008\)](#) and [2334 \(2016\)](#) and the principle of land for peace. In this context, they also reaffirmed their support for the Arab Peace Initiative, endorsed by the Arab Summit Conference held in Beirut, Lebanon on 28 March 2002.

318. The Ministers condemned any decisions and actions which purport to have altered the character, status or demographic composition, and any measures of de facto or de jure annexation, of the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, and the occupied Syrian Golan and declared that such unilateral decisions have no legal effect, are null and void and must be rescinded, in compliance with international law and the relevant Security Council resolutions.

319. The Ministers deplored the systematic, grave breaches of international law, including international humanitarian and human rights law, committed by Israel, the occupying power. They called for accountability for these violations and called upon the Security Council, in line with its Charter duty for the maintenance of international peace and security, to undertake serious follow-up efforts to bring an end to Israel's impunity and realize justice for the victims and to contribute to a peaceful and just solution to the Palestinian-Israeli conflict.

320. The Ministers deplored the continuing de-development of the Gaza Strip and the dire humanitarian crisis, severe socio-economic conditions and challenges, including widespread poverty and unemployment and health, water, sanitation and energy crises facing the civilian population, in particular as a result of the ongoing Israeli blockade and the lasting and massive negative impact of the successive military aggressions committed by Israel, the occupying Power, against the Palestinian civilian population in the occupied Gaza Strip. The Ministers reiterated their demand for the immediate and full lifting of the Israeli blockade imposed on the Gaza Strip, which constitutes massive collective punishment. They expressed grave concern about the continuing obstruction of recovery due to the Israeli blockade and the resulting deterioration of infrastructure and services and called for urgent measures to advance reconstruction.

321. The Ministers requested all members of the international community, the UN and other international organizations and non-governmental organizations to continue providing much-needed developmental and humanitarian assistance to the Palestinian people, among them Palestine refugees, during this critical period, particularly for reconstruction and economic recovery in the Gaza Strip, including through the UN agencies present on the ground.

322. The Ministers reiterated their concern in this regard about the recurrent financial crisis and under-funding of UNRWA. They urged States to contribute to UNRWA and urged their strong support for the continuing efforts to follow-up the Secretary-General's report (A/71/849) and relevant recommendations aimed at mobilizing more sufficient, sustained and predictable funding to the Agency, including by the UN, to ensure the Agency's effective operation and uninterrupted provision of vital humanitarian and development assistance to the Palestine refugees, in accordance with its General Assembly mandate, including its education, health, and relief and social services, which have been recognized as promoting 10 of the 17 SDGs.

323. The Ministers appealed to States and organizations for the maintenance of their voluntary contributions to the Agency, as well as an increase in contributions where possible, and also appealed for the support of new donors, to meet the needs of the Palestine refugees and essential associated costs of operations, including to prevent the spread of the COVID-19 pandemic and mitigate its impact. They reaffirmed strong support for the mandate of UNRWA, in accordance with the continuing responsibility of the international community as a whole to assist the Palestine refugees, pending a just solution in accordance with the relevant UN resolutions.

324. The Ministers expressed deep concern about the further decline of the social and economic conditions of the Palestinian people as a result of illegal Israeli practices, which include, but are not limited to, the continuing colonization of Palestinian land by Israel, the occupying Power, in grave breach of international humanitarian law and

the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court, as well as in flagrant violation of relevant UN resolutions, including, inter alia, Security Council resolution [2334 \(2016\)](#), and disrespect of the advisory opinion of the International Court of Justice. In this connection, the Ministers demanded a halt to Israel's confiscation of Palestinian property, construction and expansion of Israeli settlements and the wall, demolition of Palestinian homes and forced displacement of Palestinian civilians, and all measures of annexation, and called for full respect of international law and all relevant resolutions. They also expressed grave concern over the frequent acts of violence, terror and incitement against Palestinian civilians and the destruction of Palestinian properties by Israeli settlers in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, and called for action to hold the perpetrators accountable for these crimes.

325. The Ministers reaffirmed the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people and of the population of the occupied Syrian Golan over their natural resources, including land, water and energy resources, and demanded that Israel, the occupying Power, cease the exploitation, damage, cause of loss or depletion and endangerment of the natural resources in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, and in the occupied Syrian Golan, which constitute violations of international law and severely undermine their ability to pursue sustainable development.

326. The Ministers reaffirmed the need for the Governments of the Argentine Republic and the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland to resume negotiations in accordance with the principles and the objectives of the UN Charter and the relevant resolutions adopted by the General Assembly, in order to find, as soon as possible, a peaceful solution to the sovereignty dispute over the Malvinas, South Georgias and South Sandwich Islands and the surrounding maritime areas, and appreciated the good predisposition and willingness of Argentina in holding negotiations related to this aim and recalled UN General Assembly Resolution [37/9](#), which, inter alia, entrusted the Secretary-General with a mission of good offices in order to assist the parties to resume the said negotiations.

327. In this regard, the Ministers reaffirmed the principle of territorial integrity as enshrined in General Assembly Resolution [1514 \(XV\)](#), highlighted the right of the Member States of the Group to permanent sovereignty over their natural resources, including the right of the Argentine Republic to take legal action with full respect for international law and relevant resolutions against non-authorized hydrocarbon exploration and exploitation activities in the referred area and recalled the need for both parties to refrain from taking decisions that would imply introducing unilateral modifications in the situation while the islands are going through the process recommended by the Assembly, in accordance with General Assembly resolution [31/49](#).

328. The Ministers welcomed the efforts made by the Government of Colombia in order to implement its policy of total peace. In this regard, the Ministers called upon the international community to lend its full support to Colombia at this critical stage of the process.

329. The Ministers reaffirmed the importance of supporting and strengthening multilateralism, and, in this regard, recognized that the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA) between the Islamic Republic of Iran and the other parties is a concrete case of a successful multilateral action for resolving outstanding global issues, stressed that such model sets a real example for further accelerating the achievement of sustainable development including by strengthening international co-operation, through enhanced means of implementation.

330. The Ministers recalled that the Chagos Archipelago, including Diego Garcia, was unlawfully excised by the United Kingdom from the territory of Mauritius, prior

to independence, in violation of international law and UN General Assembly resolutions 1514 (XV) of 14 December 1960 and 2066 (XX) of 16 December 1965 and that all inhabitants of the Chagos Archipelago were forcibly evicted. In this regard, the Ministers took note of the adoption by the UN General Assembly on 22 May 2019 of resolution 73/295 welcoming the Advisory Opinion of the International Court of Justice (ICJ) of 25 February 2019 on the legal consequences of the separation of the Chagos Archipelago from Mauritius in 1965. The Ministers took note of the Court's findings that the right to self-determination was a rule of customary international law in 1965 and that the excision of the Chagos Archipelago from the territory of Mauritius was an internationally wrongful act. In that regard, the Ministers fully supported the Court's ruling that the United Kingdom is under an obligation to bring to an end its administration of the Chagos Archipelago as rapidly as possible. The Ministers also took note of the Judgment of the Special Chamber of the International Tribunal for the Law of the Sea (ITLOS) of 28 January 2021. The Ministers reaffirmed, in the light of the Advisory Opinion of the ICJ, that the Chagos Archipelago is and has always been part of the territory of Mauritius and that Mauritius is the sole State lawfully entitled to exercise sovereignty over the Chagos Archipelago and sovereign rights over the appurtenant maritime spaces. They resolved to cooperate fully with the UN General Assembly in ensuring the prompt decolonization of Mauritius, as required by the ICJ, and take all necessary measures for the process of decolonization of Mauritius to be completed without hindrance and as rapidly as possible.

331. The Ministers also took note of the concern expressed by the Republic of Maldives regarding the legal and technical issues arising from the United Kingdom's illegal decision in 2010 to declare a "marine protected area" in the Chagos Archipelago which overlaps the exclusive economic zone of the Republic of Maldives as declared in its Constitution without prejudice to future resolution of maritime delimitations.

332. The Ministers reaffirmed that the imposition of coercive economic measures, including unilateral sanctions, against developing countries does not contribute to economic and social development, including dialogue and understanding among countries.

333. The Ministers reaffirmed their firm rejection of the imposition of laws and regulations with extraterritorial impact and all other forms of coercive economic measures, including unilateral sanctions, against developing countries and reiterated the urgent need to eliminate them immediately. They emphasized that such actions not only undermine the principles enshrined in the Charter of the UN and international law but also severely threaten the freedom of trade and investment. The Ministers therefore called upon the international community to adopt urgent and effective measures to eliminate the use of unilateral coercive economic measures against developing countries.

334. The Ministers expressed their strongest rejection of the implementation of unilateral coercive measures and reiterated their solidarity with Cuba. They reaffirmed their call upon the Government of the United States to put an end to the economic, commercial and financial blockade imposed on that sisterly nation for six decades that constitutes the major impediment for its full development. At the same time, the Ministers regretted the measures implemented by the government of the United States since November 9th, 2017, which strengthen the blockade. They expressed deep concern over the widening of the extraterritorial nature of the embargo against Cuba, including the full implementation of Chapter III of the Helms-Burton Act, and rejected the reinforcement of the financial measures adopted by the Government of United States, aimed at tightening the embargo.

335. The Ministers reaffirmed their rejection to the unilateral economic sanctions imposed on the Sudan, which have a negative impact on the development and prosperity of the people of the Sudan, and in this regard called for an immediate lifting of those sanctions.

336. The Ministers reaffirmed their rejection of the unilateral economic sanctions imposed on the Islamic Republic of Iran, which have a negative impact on the development and prosperity of the people of the Islamic Republic of Iran, and in this regard called for an immediate lifting of those sanctions.

337. The Ministers reaffirmed their rejection to the unilateral economic sanctions imposed on the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela, which have a negative impact on the development and prosperity of this country, and in this regard emphasized the importance of dialogue and called for an immediate lifting of those sanctions.

338. The Ministers reaffirmed their rejection to the unilateral economic sanctions imposed on the Syrian Arab Republic, which have a negative impact on the development and prosperity of the people of the Syrian Arab Republic, and in this regard called for an immediate lifting of those sanctions.

339. The Ministers reaffirmed their rejection to the unilateral economic sanctions imposed on the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, which have a negative impact on the development and prosperity of the people of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, and in this regard called for an immediate lifting of those sanctions.

340. The Ministers reaffirmed their rejection to the unilateral economic sanctions imposed on Zimbabwe, which have a negative impact on the development and prosperity of this country, and in this regard emphasized the importance for dialogue and called for an immediate lifting of those sanctions.

341. The Ministers approved the Report of the Thirty-eighth Meeting of the Committee of Experts of the Perez-Guerrero Trust Fund for South-South Cooperation (PGTF) contained in document G-77/AM(XXXV)/2023/2 and endorsed its recommendations. The Ministers commended the Chair of the PGTF for his continued commitment and expressed their satisfaction with the results achieved by the PGTF. The Ministers appealed to every Member State to make a significant contribution to PGTF to preserve its responsiveness to the growing demands of financial support to South-South cooperation activities.

342. The Ministers approved the Financial Statement of the ECDC Account of the Group of 77 contained in document G-77/AM(XXXV)/2023/3, as presented by the Chair of the Group of 77 and urged those Member States that have not yet done so to make special efforts to pay their outstanding contributions.

343. The Ministers warmly welcomed the election by acclamation of the Republic of Uganda to the Chairmanship of the Group of 77 for 2024.

344. The Ministers highlighted the progress and challenges experienced since the adoption of the Charter of Algiers, encouraged Members States and the G77 Secretariat to undertake activities to follow up the adoption of the Algiers Charter and stressed that the Group of 77 and China remain committed to our aspirations, our principles of unity, complementarity, cooperation and solidarity. The Ministers declared their firm pledge to continue their common actions for achieving the sustainable development goals, especially the eradication of poverty in all its forms and dimensions, inclusively.