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Agenda items 9, 14, 16, 17, 18, 19, 20, 21, 22, 23, 24, 25, 27, 28, 31, 37, 38, 42, 46, 53, 57, 60, 63, 64, 66, 69, 70, 71, 72, 73, 77, 80, 88, 108, 109, 117, 121, 123, 124, 133, 134, 135, 136, 137, 138, 139, 140, 141, 142, 143, 145 and 149

## Report of the Economic and Social Council

**Integrated and coordinated implementation of and follow-up to the outcomes of the major United Nations conferences and summits in the economic, social and related fields**

**Information and communications technologies for development**

**Macroeconomic policy questions**

**Follow-up to and implementation of the outcomes of the International Conferences on Financing for Development**

**Sustainable development**

**Implementation of the outcomes of the United Nations Conferences on Human Settlements and on Housing and Sustainable Urban Development and strengthening of the United Nations Human Settlements Programme (UN-Habitat)**

**Globalization and interdependence**

**Groups of countries in special situations**

**Eradication of poverty and other development issues**

**Operational activities for development**

**Agriculture development, food security and nutrition**

**Social development**

**Advancement of women**

**Elimination of unilateral extraterritorial coercive economic measures as a means of political and economic compulsion**

**The situation in the Middle East**

**Question of Palestine**



**Necessity of ending the economic, commercial and financial embargo imposed by the United States of America against Cuba**

**Question of the Falkland Islands (Malvinas)**

**United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East**

**Questions relating to information**

**Implementation of the Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples by the specialized agencies and the international institutions associated with the United Nations**

**Permanent sovereignty of the Palestinian people in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, and of the Arab population in the occupied Syrian Golan over their natural resources**

**Report of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, questions relating to refugees, returnees and displaced persons and humanitarian questions**

**New Partnership for Africa's Development: progress in implementation and international support**

**Rights of indigenous peoples**

**Elimination of racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance**

**Right of peoples to self-determination**

**Promotion and protection of human rights**

**Strengthening of the coordination of humanitarian and disaster relief assistance of the United Nations, including special economic assistance**

**Oceans and the law of the sea**

**United Nations Programme of Assistance in the Teaching, Study, Dissemination and Wider Appreciation of International Law**

**Request for an advisory opinion of the International Court of Justice on the legal consequences of the separation of the Chagos Archipelago from Mauritius in 1965**

**International drug control**

**Measures to eliminate international terrorism**

**Follow-up to the outcome of the Millennium Summit**

**Revitalization of the work of the General Assembly**

**Strengthening of the United Nations system**

**United Nations reform: measures and proposals**

**Financial reports and audited financial statements, and reports of the Board of Auditors**

**Review of the efficiency of the administrative and financial functioning of the United Nations**

**Programme budget for the biennium 2016–2017**

**Proposed programme budget for the biennium 2018–2019**

**Programme planning**

**Improving the financial situation of the United Nations**

**Pattern of conferences**

**Scale of assessments for the apportionment of the expenses of the United Nations**

**Human resources management**

**Joint Inspection Unit**

**United Nations common system**

**Report on the activities of the Office of Internal Oversight Services**

**Administrative and budgetary aspects of the financing of the United Nations peacekeeping operations**

**Letter dated 27 September 2017 from the Permanent Representative of Ecuador to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General**

I have the honour to transmit herewith the Ministerial Declaration adopted at the forty-first annual meeting of the Ministers for Foreign Affairs of the States members of the Group of 77, held at United Nations Headquarters in New York on 22 September 2017 (see annex).

On behalf of the Group of 77 and China, I would appreciate your having the present letter and its annex circulated as a document of the General Assembly, under agenda items 9, 14, 16, 17, 18, 19, 20, 21, 22, 23, 24, 25, 27, 28, 31, 37, 38, 42, 46, 53, 57, 60, 63, 64, 66, 69, 70, 71, 72, 73, 77, 80, 88, 108, 109, 117, 121, 123, 124, 133, 134, 135, 136, 137, 138, 139, 140, 141, 142, 143, 145 and 149.

*(Signed)* **Diego Morejón Pazmiño**  
Ambassador  
Permanent Representative of Ecuador  
to the United Nations  
Chair of the Group of 77

**Annex to the letter dated 27 September 2017 from the Permanent Representative of Ecuador to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General**

**Forty-first Annual Meeting of Ministers for Foreign Affairs of the Member States of the Group of 77**

**New York, 22 September 2017**

**Ministerial declaration**

The Ministers for Foreign Affairs of the States members of the Group of 77 and China met at United Nations Headquarters in New York on 22 September 2017, on the occasion of their forty-first annual meeting. The Ministers reviewed the world economic situation, the recent developments in the world and the particular challenges faced by developing countries in the economic, social and environmental areas and adopted the following Declaration which recognizes that eradicating poverty in all its forms and dimensions, including extreme poverty, remains the greatest global challenge and an indispensable requirement for sustainable development:

1. The Ministers noted that 2017 marks the 50th anniversary of the first Ministerial Meeting of the Group of 77 which adopted on 24th October 1967 the “Charter of Algiers”, the first platform of the G-77 calling for joint efforts by developing countries towards economic and social development, peace and prosperity. In this context, they welcomed the commemorative events to be convened for the occasion by the Group of 77 in New York, and its chapters in Geneva, Paris, Rome, Vienna, Nairobi and Washington (G-24).
2. The Ministers recalled the spirit of the Charter of Algiers which established the principles of unity, complementarity, cooperation and solidarity of the developing countries and their determination to strive for economic and social development, individually or collectively. They reaffirmed that these principles remain valid and relevant to this day.
3. 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 MDGs and seeking to address their unfinished business. In this regard, 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.
4. The Ministers stressed the continued relevance of the Charter of Algiers in the context of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. Despite the progress registered in the past fifty years, developing countries are still confronted by numerous development challenges with a rise of new challenges. They were deeply concerned about the uneven progress achieved in fulfilling the interrelated

internationally agreed commitments made at numerous UN conferences in the economic, social and environmental fields and by the lack of satisfactory progress in this regard. Conflicts, slowing global economic growth, volatile financial markets, high rates of youth unemployment, global health threats, humanitarian emergencies, corruption, the challenges posed by climate change and other related challenges, increase the difficulty to advance and impedes progress in the fulfilment of the economic, social and environmental objectives.

5. The Ministers firmly believe that all states and stakeholders should devote ourselves 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.

6. The Ministers reaffirmed the importance of building a culture of peace by strengthening multilateralism and developing friendly relations among nations, based on international law, dialogue, respect for the principle of equal rights and self-determination of peoples, and of taking other appropriate measures to strengthen universal peace and the fulfilment, promotion and protection of all human rights including the right to development. They recognized that peace not only is 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. They reaffirmed that there can be no sustainable development without peace and no peace without sustainable development.

7. The Ministers noted that two years have passed since the adoption of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and that significant effort is being exerted on implementing the Agenda; however, they acknowledged that the pace of implementation is still quite distant from achieving sustainable development for all, in particular for the poorest and most vulnerable. They reiterated the continued unwavering commitment of the Group of 77 to further translating ambitions set out in the Agenda into real action. Further support is needed from developed countries especially regarding the transfer of technology, capacity building and financing to developing countries.

8. The Ministers also noted 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 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development should be guided by the principles in accordance with paragraph 74 of the 2030 Agenda.

9. The Ministers reaffirmed the importance of integrating the three dimensions of sustainable development, namely sustainable, inclusive and sustained economic growth, social inclusion and protection of the environment, in a balanced manner, without emphasizing one over the other.

10. The Ministers welcomed the progress made by Member States in their national implementation, but stressed that implementing the 2030 Agenda at all levels requires a revitalized global partnership and the full implementation of SDG 17. In this context, enhancing support to developing countries is fundamental, including through provision of development financial resources, transfer of technology on favourable terms including on concessional and preferential terms, enhanced international support and targeted capacity-building and promoting a rules-based and non-discriminatory multilateral trading system. They urged the international community and relevant stakeholders to make real progress in these issues, including developing action plans to support the implementation of the 2030 Agenda.

11. 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 Member States and State Members 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 their full realization of the right of 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 to ensure that they will not be left behind.

12. The Ministers reaffirmed that the high-level political forum on sustainable development (HLPF) was mandated to provide political leadership, guidance and recommendations for the implementation of sustainable development commitments and that it has a central role in overseeing a network of follow-up and review processes of the 2030 Agenda at the global level, working coherently with the General Assembly, the Economic and Social Council and other relevant organs and forums, in line with existing mandates. They took note that this year's theme of the HLPF was "Eradicating poverty and promoting prosperity in a changing world", which coincides with the overall thrust of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable development. The Ministers commended all the countries that presented voluntary national reviews to highlight the steps taken to implement the 2030 Agenda at the 2017 HLPF. 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 other groups, is a prerequisite for achieving the 2030 Agenda.

13. The Ministers stressed the importance of national policies and development strategies, while respecting each country's policy space, priorities and leadership to implement policies for poverty eradication and sustainable development; and the need for an enabling international economic environment, including coherent and mutually supporting world trade, monetary and financial systems, and strengthened and enhanced global economic governance.

14. The Ministers stressed the need to consider different national realities, capacities and levels of development and respect national policies and priorities as well as the dynamic nature of needs of developing countries, whilst integrating the principle of the universality and indivisibility of the sustainable development agenda.

15. The Ministers underlined that the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals and the 2030 Agenda will depend on enabling international environment for development, facilitating the necessary means of implementation, particularly in the areas of finance, international trade, technology transfer and capacity-building to developing countries. In this regard, they called for an effective follow up on global commitments of all actors, particularly developed countries.

16. The Ministers are of the firm view that, for economic growth to positively contribute to eradicating poverty in all its forms and dimensions, it is essential that economic and social policies focus, among others, on job creation and social inclusion, as this will reduce inequalities and aid in providing social protection.

Furthermore, the Ministers highlighted the need to invest much more, as a catalyst to sustained, inclusive and sustainable economic growth, in infrastructure, interconnectivity, productivity and basic services as quality health-care services and education while also ensuring that all people, including women, youth, the elderly, persons with disabilities, migrants, indigenous peoples and people in vulnerable situations, have access to resources and opportunities.

17. 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.

18. The Ministers stressed that Financing for development is key to the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. In this context, the ministers reaffirmed that assured and predictable financial flow is indispensable to the realization of sustainable development, particularly for developing countries. As such, the mobilization and meaningful use of financial and non-financial resources are essential to accomplish the commitment to end poverty in all its forms and dimensions and to achieve Sustainable Development in its three dimensions in a balanced and integrated manner. In allocating development resources, priority should be given to areas that bear most directly on people's livelihood and development of developing countries, such as poverty eradication, infrastructure development, health, education, among others.

19. The Ministers 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. The Ministers therefore welcomed the second ECOSOC Forum on Financing for Development, a crucial platform for financing for development, which was held from 22 to 25 May 2017 and called for the implementation of its intergovernmentally agreed conclusions and recommendations.

20. The Ministers also welcomed the holding of the 2017 Global Infrastructure Forum in Washington on 22 April 2017. They recalled that developing countries are the most affected by lack of sustainable and resilient infrastructure, while facing serious financing challenges due to insufficient access to resources, both from the public and private sector, resulting in a wider global infrastructure gap. The leading role of multilateral development banks is critical to provide financing resources to bridge this gap, including the US\$1 trillion to US\$1.5 trillion annual gap in developing countries, by means of enhancing access to and improving quality of infrastructure services which are environmentally, socially and economically sustainable. In this context, the Ministers stressed that international development cooperation, especially North-South cooperation remains a fundamental catalyst to sustainable economic growth. They urged developed countries to urgently fulfil their unmet Official Development Assistance commitments.

21. The Ministers recognized the important contribution that direct investment, including foreign direct investment, can make to sustainable development, particularly when projects are aligned with national and regional sustainable development strategies. The Ministers recalled the important contribution of private investment to sustainable development, through tools and mechanism such as

public-private partnerships. They called for enhanced roles of multilateral development banks (MDB) in providing the soft infrastructure contribution through technical support and capacity building programs. This requires the strengthening and increased state-private sector risk alignment of mechanism such as the Multilateral Investment Guarantee Agency (MIGA) and development of more context-responsive investment risk assessment and guarantee mechanisms.

22. The Ministers welcomed the entry into force of the Proposed Amendment of the Articles of Agreement on Reform of the Executive Board of the IMF and 2010 Quota Increase and stress the need to continue to broaden and strengthen the voice and participation of developing countries in international economic decision-making and norm-setting and global economic governance.

23. The Ministers recalled that international financing for developing countries should respect what has been stipulated in the multilateral agreements, including the 2002 Monterrey Consensus and the 2008 Doha Declaration on financing for development, in the sense that access to preferential international financing should be given to developing countries, without differentiating them by their per capita income.

24. The Ministers recalled that sovereign debt matters should concern both developed and developing countries. This should be considered as a matter that has the potential to adversely impact the global economy and the achievement of the SDGs if left unchecked. In this regard, the Ministers welcomed progress on debt and debt sustainability. The Ministers urged all United Nations Member States to further discuss sovereign debt restructuring and management processes, with active, inclusive participation and engagement by all relevant stakeholders, in order to nurture and strengthen these processes. The Ministers also reaffirmed the roles of the United Nations and the international financial institutions in accordance with their respective mandates.

25. The Ministers recognized the need to assist developing countries in attaining long-term debt sustainability through coordinated policies aimed at fostering debt financing, debt relief, debt restructuring and sound debt management, as appropriate. Many countries remain vulnerable to debt crises and some are in the midst of crises, including a number of least developed countries, small-island developing States and some developed countries. They 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 acknowledged that lenders also have a responsibility to lend in a way that does not undermine a country's debt sustainability. We will support the maintenance of debt sustainability of those countries that have received debt relief and achieved sustainable debt levels.

26. The Ministers reiterated their concern about the activities of so-called "vulture funds" and their actions of a highly speculative nature, which pose a risk to all future debt-restructuring processes, for both developing and developed countries. They therefore stressed the importance of preventing vulture funds from paralysing debt restructuring efforts.

27. The Ministers welcomed the adoption of United Nations General Assembly resolution [69/319](#) titled "Basic Principles on Sovereign Debt Restructuring Processes" on 10 September 2015 as an important step and noted its invitation to all Member and observer states, competent international organizations, entities and other relevant stakeholders to promote the Basic Principles.

28. The Ministers encouraged UNCTAD to continue its analytical and policy work and technical assistance on debt issues and to promote policies for responsible



sovereign borrowing and lending, complementing the work done by the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund and other stakeholders as appropriate.

29. The Ministers are looking forward to the convening of the International Conference on Debt Management, organized by UNCTAD, to be held in November 2017 in Geneva, encouraging all United Nations Member States and Observer States to participate actively and at the highest possible level, given the importance of this topic.

30. The Ministers recalled that rising external debt in developing countries poses an important challenge for development. This is particularly the case of several LDCs and SIDS, in which the debt-to-GDP ratios have largely increased in the last years. A high debt-to-GDP ratio limits fiscal space and capacity to support social protection programs and investments in infrastructure. In this respect, the Ministers emphasized the need to ensure that financing mechanisms and policies speak to the integrated nature of sustainable development so that the implementation of specific deliverables can have a knock-on effect across multiple SDG goals and targets — thus ensuring debt sustainability, for example, even as the international community strives to unlock resources for achieving the goals.

31. The Ministers stressed that trade is still recognized as an engine for growth and sustainable development, despite a regression by 10% in 2016. In this regard, they expressed their deep concern at the increase in protectionist rhetoric and tendencies. They emphasized the importance of strengthening the multilateral trading system and the necessity for the WTO to work in an effective manner.

32. The Ministers reaffirmed the central role of WTO in today's global economy. 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 rules-based, transparent, non-discriminatory, open and inclusive multilateral trading system as embodied in the WTO. The Ministers further reaffirmed their commitments to ensure full implementation and enforcement of existing WTO rules and are determined to work together to further strengthen the WTO. They 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. The Ministers further called for the 11th WTO Ministerial Conference to be held in Buenos Aires, Argentina, in December 2017, to produce positive outcomes including on relevant issues pertaining to the implementation of the SDGs, and count on all Members involvement and constructive participation. 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 continue to fight all forms of protectionism.

33. The Ministers welcomed the entry into force of the WTO trade facilitation agreement and also called for the smooth implementation of the Trade Facilitation Agreement (TFA) given its potential to increase exports by 20%, as well as for the implementation of decisions from past WTO Ministerial Conferences. They reiterated the importance of stimulating economic diversification, the relevance of regional trade, and supporting micro-, small and medium-sized enterprises and cooperatives throughout the value chain, in particular businesses and enterprises in the social and solidarity economy, operating in both the formal and informal economies.

34. The Ministers emphasized the importance of facilitating the accession of developing countries to WTO, recognizing the contribution that this would make to

the rapid and full integration of those countries into the multilateral trading system. In that regard, they urged the accession process to be accelerated without political impediments and in an expeditious and transparent manner for developing countries that had applied for membership in WTO and reaffirmed the importance of the Organization's decision of 25 July 2012 on accession by the least developed countries.

35. The Ministers recommitted to continuing to make positive efforts designed to ensure that developing country Members, and especially the least developed country Members among them, secure a share in the growth of world trade commensurate with the needs of their economic development, and that provisions truly effective for special and differential treatment shall remain as an integral part of the multilateral negotiations. In this regard, they call for strengthened complementarity between the work of UNCTAD, the World Trade Organization (WTO) and other relevant agencies with a view to realizing the full developmental potential of trade.

36. The Ministers recognized the significant potential of regional economic integration and interconnectivity to promote inclusive growth and sustainable development and committed themselves to strengthening regional cooperation and regional trade agreements.

37. The Ministers called upon UNCTAD to enhance its work towards addressing the trade and development challenges of all developing countries and, in so doing, to strengthen its work on the special problems of the least developed countries; African countries; landlocked developing countries; small island developing States; structurally weak, vulnerable and small economies and the related problems and challenges faced by least developed countries and middle-income countries, countries and people under foreign occupation, as well as to assist transit developing countries with their specific needs and challenges, particularly in relation to infrastructure development and transport. The Ministers underscored and commended the pivotal role of UNCTAD particularly through its technical assistance and capacity building to developing countries before, during and after the process of accession to WTO.

38. 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 of assets owing to, inter alia, differences in legal systems, the complexity of multijurisdictional investigation and prosecution, divergent interpretations of the provisions of the Convention, 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. 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.

39. In this regard, the Ministers welcomed the report of the High-level Panel on Illicit Financial Flows from Africa, and invited other regions to carry out similar exercises and also welcomed the United Nations General Assembly resolution on the promotion of international cooperation to combat illicit financial flows in order to foster sustainable development. The Ministers also recalled resolution 5/3 of 29 November 2013 of the Conference of the States Parties to the United Nations Convention against Corruption, entitled "Facilitating international cooperation in asset recovery", and restated the intent of the Convention in ensuring the spontaneous sharing of information and the speedy return of illicit assets to

countries of origin and establishing practical guidelines to facilitate the recovery of assets.

40. The Ministers noted with appreciation the ongoing efforts by regional organizations and other relevant international forums to strengthen cooperation in combating corruption, which aim, inter alia, to ensure openness and transparency, combat domestic and foreign bribery, tackle corruption in high-risk sectors, strengthen international cooperation and promote public integrity and transparency in the fight against corruption, which fuels illicit trade and insecurity and is a tremendous barrier to economic growth and the safety of citizens. The Ministers also acknowledged the efforts of relevant international institutions, such as the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development, in addressing illicit financial flows, including trade misinvoicing and transfer mispricing, which hamper the mobilization of domestic resources for development.

41. The Ministers urged all Member 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 Member 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.

42. The Ministers called for closer and more active collaboration between interested States and the United Nations system, including international financial institutions, the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime and the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development, in accordance with their respective mandates, in identifying commendable practices in effective and coordinated approaches to asset recovery, including those related to illicit financial flows.

43. The Ministers commended the convening of the International Conference on Combating Illicit Financial Flows and Enhancing Asset Recovery to Foster Sustainable Development in Abuja, Nigeria in June 2017. The Ministers urged that similar initiatives should be encouraged in view of the adverse impact of illicit financial flows on the achievement of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

44. The Ministers committed to scaling up international tax cooperation. They encouraged countries, in accordance with their national capacities and circumstances, to work together to strengthen transparency and adopt appropriate policies, including multinational enterprises reporting country-by-country to tax authorities where they operate, providing access to beneficial ownership information for competent authorities and progressively advancing towards the automatic exchange of tax information among tax authorities, as appropriate, with assistance to developing countries, especially the least developed countries, as needed. Tax incentives can be an appropriate policy tool. To end harmful tax practices, however, countries can engage in voluntary discussions on tax incentives in regional and international forums.

45. The Ministers underscored the increasing recognition of the central role of tax systems in development and reiterated their concern over the negative impacts that illicit financial flows and related trade mispricing, tax avoidance, and evasion,

corruption, and money-laundering have on the world economy, in particular for developing countries. In this regard, the Ministers stressed that all States should attach importance to inclusive cooperation and dialogue among national tax authorities on international tax matters to scaling up international tax cooperation, strengthened national regulation, and combating illicit financial flows in order to mobilize domestic resources for the Sustainable Development Goals.

46. In this regard, the Ministers reiterated their commitment to work to strengthen regulatory frameworks at all levels to further increase transparency and accountability of financial institutions and the corporate sector, as well as public administrations. They also emphasized that efforts in international tax cooperation should be universal in approach and scope, and should fully take into account the different needs and capacities of all countries.

47. The Ministers welcomed the appointment of the members of the Committee of Experts on International Cooperation in Tax Matters on 10 August 2017 with an increased representation of experts from developing countries, as called for in the outcome document of the second ECOSOC Forum on Financing for Development. The Ministers urged the Committee and its subcommittees to fulfil their mandate to consider how new and emerging issues affect international cooperation in tax matters such as, tax evasion, with a view to eventually eliminating tax evasion through strengthened national regulation and increased international cooperation, taking into account the best practices and lessons learned on tax policy and administration.

48. The Ministers noted with appreciation that, in response to the call of the Addis Ababa Action Agenda, the Republic of India has made a voluntary contribution to the Trust Fund for International Cooperation in Tax Matters, the first 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.

49. The Ministers highlighted that there is still no single global inclusive forum for international tax cooperation at the intergovernmental level. While it may be indicated that a certain level of dialogue and initiative actions are taking place at the international level regarding cooperation on tax matters, they underscored that the United Nations is the only universal forum where these issues can be discussed in an open, transparent, and inclusive manner, considering that other processes might be outlined from a perspective that safeguards the interests of constituents from developed countries. In that regard, the Ministers reiterated the need to fully upgrade the Committee of Experts on International Cooperation in Tax Matters to an intergovernmental body, provide adequate resources to the Committee to fulfil its mandate and increase the participation of experts from developing countries at its meetings. Doing so would be critical to transforming the current Committee from experts acting in their own capacity to an intergovernmental subsidiary body of the Economic and Social Council, with experts representing their respective Governments.

50. The Ministers will work towards full and equal access to formal financial services for all. The Ministers will also work for the international system to ensure that the policy and regulatory environment supports financial market stability and promotes financial inclusion in a balanced manner and with appropriate consumer protection. The Ministers encouraged, as appropriate and in accordance with national laws and regulations, the use of innovative tools, including mobile banking, payment platforms and digitized payments. The Ministers looked forward to

strengthening financial literacy and capacity development for developing countries, including through the United Nations development system. The Ministers will work to ensure that adequate and affordable financial services are available to migrants and their families in both home and host countries, including by reducing the average transaction cost of migrant remittances, by 2030, to less than 3 per cent of the amount transferred, and to ensure that no remittance corridor requires charges higher than 5 per cent by 2030. In that regard, the Ministers looked forward to the implementation of the 2030 Agenda.

51. The Ministers reaffirmed that international development cooperation and official development assistance (ODA) are essential for sustainable development. They are the main channels for international cooperation and will continue to remain so. They expressed regret that ODA has been flat for the past 6 years, as well as noted the increasing shift of ODA resources towards crisis situations which is not consistent with a sustainable approach to development. They expressed concern that this situation promotes reactionary tendencies and lacks the very long-term mindset needed in the approach to financing development and achieving the SDGs.

52. The Ministers expressed their concern that, notwithstanding the increase in ODA in the past decade, it was, on average, 0.29 per cent of the aggregate donor gross national income in 2014, well below the commitment of 0.7 per cent. They also emphasized the importance of the commitments by ODA providers to achieve the national target of 0.7 per cent of gross national income and 0.15 to 0.20 per cent of ODA/GNI to the least developed countries. The Ministers reiterated their call that developed countries deliver on their commitments in relation to ODA to developing countries.

53. The Ministers reaffirmed the paramount importance of ODA in supporting the sustainable development needs of developing countries, in particular African countries, the least developed countries, landlocked developing countries and small island developing States, middle-income countries and countries in conflict, post-conflict situations and countries and people under foreign occupation. In that regard, developed countries must uphold their ODA commitments, 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.

54. 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. They urged developed countries to fulfil their unmet ODA commitments.

55. The Ministers stressed the importance of increasing efforts to address financing gaps and low levels of direct investment faced by least developed countries, landlocked developing countries, small island developing States, many middle-income countries, as well as countries and peoples living under colonial and foreign occupation, and countries in a situation of conflict and post-conflict. They encouraged the use of innovative mechanisms and partnerships to promote greater international private financial participation in these economies.

56. The Ministers reiterated that ODA can help catalyse additional resource mobilization from other sources, public and private. They stressed that ODA can support improved tax collection and help to strengthen domestic enabling environments and build essential public services and can also be used to unlock additional finance, including through blended or pooled financing and risk

mitigation, notably for infrastructure and other investments that support private sector development. In the same vein, they stressed the importance of mobilizing domestic resources to support science, technology and innovation, which needs to be reinforced by an enabling global environment.

57. The Ministers stressed that climate finance must not be double counted as official development assistance and must therefore be considered as separate from and additional to such assistance.

58. The Ministers reiterated that the successful implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development requires strengthened means of implementation and revitalized global partnership for sustainable development. This will require, among other things a State-led global partnership based on a spirit of global solidarity. They therefore reaffirmed their strong commitment to the full implementation of this Agenda, taking into account different national realities, capacities and levels of development and respecting national policies and priorities, through the delivery of the means of implementation as contained in Goal 17, as well as in each specific Sustainable Development Goal.

59. The Ministers reiterated their position that developing countries should be supported by an enabling international environment, which includes a supportive and just international system where the rules are fair and pro-development, as well as a genuine and revitalized global partnership to enable developing countries to meet their sustainable development aspirations.

60. The Ministers stressed that an enabling international environment may be achieved through the provision of additional financing resources, technology transfer and diffusion with concessional and preferential terms, capacity-building, strengthened data collection and analysing capacity, pro-development trade policies, equitable and effective participation of developing countries in global economic governance and adequate means of implementation for developing countries. They asserted that a strengthened and scaled-up global partnership for development is critical for developing countries in delivering the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

61. The Ministers recalled that the 2030 Agenda and the Addis Ababa Action Agenda established the Technology Facilitation Mechanism (TFM) which is one of the most important tools in order to support the sustainable development goals. In this regard, even though they noted there has been some progress made in the UN inter-agency task team on science, technology and innovation for the sustainable development goals, and the launch of first annual multi-stakeholder forum on Science, Technology and Innovation for the sustainable development goals (STI Forum) they made an urgent call for the online platform to become operational as soon as possible as a gateway for information on existing STI initiatives, mechanisms and programmes.

62. The Ministers stressed the urgent need to channel effective and sustainable technical assistance and capacity-building tailored to the specific needs and constraints of developing countries, to address technology infrastructure gaps as well as capacity constraints particularly in African countries, least developed countries, landlocked developing countries, small island developing States, countries and people under foreign occupation, as in some countries in situations of conflict and post-conflict countries, while recognizing the serious challenges faced by many middle-income countries. In this regard, the Ministers recognized the need to bring into full play the role of the UN Commission on Science and Technology for Development as the United Nations torch-bearer and functional Commission for science, technology and innovation for development in order to enhance the international scientific and technical cooperation and capacity-building.

63. The Ministers also reaffirmed that the United Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO) has a leading role to play in the implementation of the 2030 Agenda, and acknowledged its position as the central agency in the United Nations for all matters relating to industrial development. The Ministers called for Member States of the United Nations to increase their financial support for UNIDO in order to enable it to provide requisite technical assistance and advisory service to its Member States.

64. The Ministers also reiterated their previous call to the countries that left UNIDO to rejoin the organization, namely, Australia, Belgium, Canada, Denmark, France, Greece, Lithuania, New Zealand, Portugal, the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, and the United States of America. The Ministers expressed appreciation to all Member States for their engagement with UNIDO and called on them to further strengthen their relationship with the Organization.

65. The Ministers reiterated their position that South-South cooperation is a complement to, rather than a substitute for, North-South cooperation and reaffirmed that South-South cooperation is a collective endeavour of developing countries and that, consequently, South-South cooperation deserves its own separate and independent promotion, as reaffirmed in the Nairobi outcome document. In this context, the Ministers stressed that South-South cooperation and its agenda must be driven by the countries of the South. South-South cooperation, which is critical for developing countries, therefore requires long-term vision and a global institutional arrangement, as envisioned at the Second South Summit.

66. 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, Thailand's initiative on "Sufficiency Economy Philosophy (SEP) for SDGs Partnership", as well as the importance of the concrete collaboration between Member States and the United Nations Office of South-South Cooperation, such as the South-South-In-Action publication series on Thailand's application of the SEP and Bangladesh's citizen-friendly public service innovation.

67. The Ministers reiterated their strong support to the mandate of the United Nations Office for South-South Cooperation and stressed that the Office is the articulator of South-South cooperation in the United Nations system, and that the United Nations Development Programme as well as other entities of the United Nations development system should not duplicate, overlap with or undertake the system-wide functions and responsibilities of the Office. They reaffirmed the importance of further enhancing the role and impact of the Office and up-scaling it in terms of financial, human and budgetary resources in order to galvanise more coherent and coordinated United Nations system support to South-South and Triangular Cooperation towards the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

68. The Ministers recommended that the United Nations Office for South-South Cooperation be enabled to participate in the relevant high-level coordination structures of the United Nations, in accordance with General Assembly resolutions.

69. The Ministers recognized the need to mobilize adequate resources for enhancing South-South cooperation and, in this context, invited Member States to make generous contributions in support of such cooperation through, inter alia, the Pérez-Guerrero Trust Fund for South-South Cooperation and the United Nations Fund for South-South Cooperation.

70. The Ministers noted the preparations of the High Level United Nations Conference on South-South Cooperation to commemorate the 40th anniversary of the Buenos Aires Plan of Action (BAPA) to be held in Buenos Aires in 2019. It will present an opportunity to enhance the current institutional arrangements to effectively support South-South cooperation and promote South-South agenda. In this context, the Ministers strongly recommended the consolidation of existing mechanisms of South-South cooperation and reiterated their call for the establishment of a United Nations specialized agency for South-South cooperation to be located in a developing country.

71. The Ministers invited the Member States of the Group of 77 to come forward with an offer of venue for hosting the thirteenth session of the Intergovernmental Follow-up and Coordination Committee on South-South Cooperation (IFCC-XIII) in 2018. They also invited Member States to host 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 looked forward to the continued support of the UN Office for South-South Cooperation in this regard.

72. The Ministers noted that, in view of the mounting and intractable challenges that developing countries face, more frequent high-level meetings of the Group on thematic/sectoral issues, and with action-oriented outcomes, might be required. To this end, the Ministers invited Member States of the Group of 77 to make offers to host regularly high-level meetings of the Group on key issues of interest to the South and looked forward to the continued support of the UN Office for South-South Cooperation in this regard.

73. The Ministers noted the preparations for the Third South Summit and invited the Chair of the Group of 77 to continue consultations with Member States of the Group of 77 for the hosting of the Summit to be held at a convenient date.

74. The Ministers approved the Report of the Thirty-second Meeting of the Committee of Experts of the Perez-Guerrero Trust Fund for South-South Cooperation (PGTF) contained in document G-77/AM(XXIX)/2017/2 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. In light of the low level of interest earnings of the Fund caused by the current world financial situation as reported by the Chair of the PGTF, the Ministers appealed to every Member State to make a significant contribution to the PGTF on the occasion of the UN Pledging Conference for Development Activities to be held in New York on 6 November 2017.

75. The Ministers approved the Financial Statement of the ECDC Account of the Group of 77 contained in document G-77/AM(XXIX)/2017/3, 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.

76. The Ministers stressed the importance of human settlements and its direct impact on achieving sustainable development, especially in developing countries. They reiterated that urbanization and human settlements should enhance the Right to Development according to the Declaration on the Right to Development, in particular for developing countries. In this context, the role of international cooperation is crucial in providing additional, adequate, sustainable and predictable means of implementation including finance, technology transfer or capacity enhancement as means to support national efforts and capacities to implement the New Urban Agenda. They emphasized the important role of the United Nations and developed countries in assisting developing countries in this regard.



77. The Ministers welcomed the adoption of the outcome document, entitled “New Urban Agenda”, by the United Nations Conference on Housing and Sustainable Urban Development (Habitat III) held in Quito, Ecuador, from 17 to 20 October 2016, a meaningful outcome which will guide the international community towards sustainable urban development and human settlements in the next twenty years and provide an opportunity to promote a positive, mutually reinforcing relationship between cities and their surroundings, across the human settlements continuum. They expressed their firm belief that sustainable urban development and human settlements are key drivers of sustainable development in national and sub-national development plans including the participation of local governments and relevant stakeholders. The Ministers reiterated their political support unwavering commitment to the implementation as well as the follow up and review of the New Urban Agenda. The Ministers welcomed the convening of the High-level meeting of the General Assembly from 5 to 6 September 2017 to discuss the effective implementation of the New Urban Agenda and the positioning of the UN-Habitat in this regard, and noted the report from the evidence based and independent assessment UN-Habitat.

78. The Ministers believed that they must make every possible effort to improve the way the UN system and in particular UN-Habitat, addresses sustainable urbanization and human settlement issues, and its leadership, accountability, collaboration, efficiency and results on these matters.

79. The Ministers recognized that 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, it is necessary to promote harmony with nature.

80. In this regard, the Ministers welcomed the high-level interactive dialogue on harmony with nature in commemoration of International Mother Earth Day convened by the President of the General Assembly on 21 April 2017 under the theme “Earth Jurisprudence” which provided the opportunity to discuss the recommendations made by the experts in order to inspire citizens and societies to reconsider how they interact with the natural world and on how to further a more ethical basis for the relationship between humanity and the Earth in the context of sustainable development as well as to move away from a human-centred worldview. The Ministers supported the continuation of the dialogue on harmony with nature in the future recognizing the need to mobilize financial resources, including to the Voluntary Trust Fund established for that purpose and to achieve sustainable development in harmony with nature.

81. The Ministers recognized the need for a broader and a more people-centred preventive approach to disaster risk and that disaster risk reduction practices need to be multi-hazard and multi-sectoral, inclusive and accessible in order to be efficient and effective. In the regard, the Ministers recalled the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015–2030, reaffirming that disaster-prone developing countries, in particular the least developed countries, small island developing States, landlocked developing countries and African countries, as well as middle-income countries 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.

82. The Ministers reaffirmed that humanitarian emergencies arising out of natural and man-made disasters and other causes and outbreak of epidemics or other global health threats, deserve to be given the same level of attention as those arising out of armed conflicts. The devastating effects of climate change are real and sudden. Extreme natural disasters can affect the environment, the economy and society and reverse hard-earned developmental gains overnight. The massive humanitarian consequences that follow are even more catastrophic. Millions of lives are lost while many are forcibly displaced and separated from their families. In a similar vein, the devastating humanitarian emergencies resulting from other forced displacement equally deserves the attention of the international community which should spare no effort investing in durable solutions.

83. The Ministers reaffirmed that the Paris Agreement, adopted under the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), was the collective achievement of all Parties, which seeks to enhance the implementation of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, 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, and the right to development, in the context of sustainable development and efforts to eradicate poverty. It is also essential to maintain focus on the implementation of existing commitments by developed countries in the pre-2020 period, including the ratification of the Doha amendment to the Kyoto protocol. They stressed that global effort to fight climate change is an irreversible process that cannot be overlooked nor postponed. 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.

84. The Ministers called for mobilizing further action and support for climate change mitigation, adaptation and loss and damage, taking into account the specific needs and special circumstances of developing countries, especially, those particularly vulnerable to the adverse effects of climate change. They also called for increased efforts to mobilize, and enhance access to, climate finance, including public and private, domestic and international, bilateral and multilateral, as well as alternative sources of finance.

85. 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. Multilaterally agreed modalities are needed to track the delivery of \$100 billion per year in climate finance by 2020. Furthermore additional and scaled up finance that is secure, predictable and sustainable is crucial for developing countries in the post-2020 context. In concrete baseline target for post-2020 financing with progression from \$100 billion per year is needed to prevent backsliding and build trust.

86. The Ministers reiterated the importance of preserving the delicate balance of all the issues of the Paris Agreement that was achieved in Paris at COP21 and in Marrakesh at COP22, as delegations continue the work to develop and agree on the set of decisions for the implementation of the Paris Agreement's various provisions. They stressed the fact that these outcomes are not to be renegotiated nor reinterpreted, as the process under the Paris Agreement is irreversible. They emphasized the importance of moving from conceptual discussions to textual negotiations by COP23 while maintaining the balance struck in the Paris Agreement between mitigation, adaptation and means of implementation.

87. 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 pursuing 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 country Parties, and to undertake rapid reductions thereafter in accordance with 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 sustainable development and efforts to eradicate poverty.

88. The Ministers reaffirmed that desertification, land degradation and drought represent a serious concern for developing countries and noted the prominence given to it in the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, recognizing that the achievement of the SDG's and targets, including Goal 15 and target 15.3, would serve as an accelerator to ending poverty in all its forms and dimensions and hunger, tackling inequality, empowering women and those in vulnerable situations and stimulating sustained, inclusive and sustainable economic growth in harmony with nature. They recalled that striving to achieve land degradation neutrality would significantly contribute to the three dimensions of sustainable development through the rehabilitation, restoration, conservation and sustainable management of land resources. International action is therefore urgently required to address these challenges that are directly linked to the problem of climate change. They emphasized the great importance of the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification for supporting poverty reduction and environment sustainability globally and in particular in those countries experiencing serious drought and/or desertification, particularly in Africa. The Ministers reiterated that addressing desertification, land degradation and drought contributes to tackle several global policy challenges, such as food security, adaptation to climate change and forced migration. In this context, the Ministers welcomed the holding of the thirteenth session of the Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification from 6 to 16 September 2017 in Ordos, China.

89. The Ministers recognized that drought bears a heavy cost on countries' economies, especially the developing countries, and entrenches poverty and hunger. So far, the approach of the international community to drought has been largely reactive, with post-impact interventions and relief measures in the form of emergency assistance programs which so far have been limited to providing funding or other specific types of assistance such as food, livestock feed or water to those experiencing the most severe impacts. They emphasized the urgent need to design mechanisms to increase the resilience against drought at local and international levels, and the importance of having drought policies in drought-prone regions,

including through an integrated management that considers ecologic, biophysical, socioeconomic, ecosystemic and gender factors. Consequently, they stressed the need to design policy related to governance for drought risk management; monitoring and early warning, vulnerability and impact assessment; mitigation, preparedness, and response, as well as knowledge management and drought awareness, taking into account the different realities at the national and regional level.

90. 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 subregional 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 and of ways to address combating sand and dust storms in the context of the Sustainable Development Goals. In this regard, they welcomed the convening of the international conference on Combating Sand and Dust Storms held in Tehran, 3–5 July 2017, and took note of the ministerial declarations and technical recommendations of the conference.

91. The Ministers took note of the analysis of progress towards the implementation of the Strategic Plan for Biodiversity 2011–2020 and the achievement of the Aichi Biodiversity Targets based on the information provided in the revised and updated national biodiversity strategies and action plans and the fifth national reports; they also took note of the updated report on progress towards the implementation of the Global Strategy for Plant Conservation; the Ministers noted with concern the limited progress made towards Aichi Biodiversity Targets 18 and 14 at the national level and in mainstreaming Article 8(j) and related provisions into various areas of work under the Convention, including capacity development and the participation of indigenous peoples and local communities in the work of the Convention; they also noted with concern that a limited number of national biodiversity strategies and action plans refer to indigenous peoples and local communities, customary sustainable use, or the involvement of indigenous peoples and local communities in the revision of national biodiversity strategies and action plans.

92. The Ministers urged those Parties that have not yet done so to update and implement their national or regional biodiversity strategies and action plans as soon as possible, in keeping with decision XI/2; they encouraged Parties in the process of updating their national biodiversity strategies and action plans, to consider, as appropriate, the indicators for the Strategic Plan for Biodiversity 2011–2020 and the indicators for the Sustainable Development Goals; they finally encouraged Parties to review their national biodiversity strategies and action plans periodically, as appropriate and in accordance with national circumstances, priorities and capacities, to consider increasing the level of ambition and/or scope of the national or regional targets to a level that is commensurate with the Aichi Biodiversity Targets and to integrate the targets across different sectors, including in the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the Sustainable Development Goals, so as to make a greater contribution to collective global efforts to achieve the global targets.

93. The Ministers recognized that the United Nations 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.

94. In this context, the Ministers welcomed the adoption by the General Assembly of resolutions [A/RES/71/285](#) and [A/RES/71/286](#) on 27 April 2017, on the United Nations Strategic Plan for Forests 2017–2030 and the Quadrennial programme of work of the United Nations Forum on Forests for the period 2017–2020, commending its linkages in fostering the implementation of related SDG's and targets in the Agenda 2030 for Sustainable Development. They believed that the ambitious agreement in the UNSPF, with its six Global Forests Goals and 26 associated targets, while voluntary and universal in nature, represents both a challenge and a commitment by all Member States and relevant stakeholders on Sustainable Forest Management.

95. 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 catalyse and facilitate the mobilization of increased, predictable and sustaining financing from all sources, including and increasing 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.

96. The Ministers stressed the importance of strengthening the UNFF Global Forest Financing Facilitation Network (GFFFN), to foster and capitalize existing, new and emerging financing opportunities, including capacity building; taking into account the difficulties that several developing countries face in accessing international cooperation for forest-related programs.

97. The Ministers recognized the designation of the year 2017 as the year of sustainable tourism and that sustainable tourism, including ecotourism and accessible tourism, is a cross-cutting activity that can contribute to the three dimensions of sustainable development and the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals, including by fostering sustainable, inclusive and sustained economic growth, alleviating poverty, creating full and productive employment and decent work for all, accelerating the change to more sustainable consumption and production patterns and promoting the sustainable use of terrestrial ecosystems, oceans, seas and marine resources, promoting local culture, improving the quality of life and the economic empowerment of women and young people and promoting urban and rural development and better living conditions for its populations.

98. The Ministers encouraged Member States to use sustainable tourism, including ecotourism, and accessible tourism, as a tool for the eradication of poverty and hunger, to foster sustainable, inclusive and sustained economic growth, social development, environmental protection, including the conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity and natural resources and the promotion of investment and entrepreneurship in sustainable tourism, in accordance with their national development policies and legislation. This may include creating small and medium-sized enterprises, promoting cooperatives or initiatives from the social and solidarity economy and facilitating access to financing through inclusive financial services, including microcredit initiatives for the poor, women and young people,

indigenous peoples, older persons, persons with disabilities, migrants regardless of their migratory status and local communities in all areas.

99. The Ministers reaffirmed the crucial role of culture as an enabler and a driver of sustainable development. They stressed that cultural diversity and cultural and creative industries make important contributions to the three dimensions of sustainable development, including to the achievement of Sustainable Development Goals and targets related to poverty eradication, quality education, gender equality, decent work, innovation and inclusive economic growth, reduction of inequalities, inclusive and sustainable cities and urban settlements, and sustainable patterns of consumption and production, inter alia. In this regard, the Ministers reaffirmed the importance that all countries, intergovernmental bodies, organizations of the United Nations system, relevant non-governmental organizations and all other relevant stakeholders give due consideration to the contribution of culture to the achievement of sustainable development in the formulation of national, regional and international development policies and international cooperation instruments.

100. The Ministers recalled that the international community has a commitment to support the implementation of relevant strategies and programmes of action, including the Istanbul Programme of Action for the Least Developed Countries for the Decade 2011–2020 (IPoA) and the outcome document of its Comprehensive High-level Midterm Review, the Vienna Programme of Action for Landlocked Developing Countries and the SAMOA Pathway and the importance of supporting the African Union's Agenda 2063 and the programme of the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD), all of which are integral to the new Agenda. In that connection, international cooperation to provide assistance in term of capacity building in areas of need, such as improvement of access to education and health, productive and trade capacity, development of environmentally sound technology, climate change mitigation and adaptation, among others, would be a crucial step forward. These specific programmes of action for LDCs, LLDCs, SIDS and African countries however, must remain the most important entry points for the international community to focus its attention and resources to assist these groups of countries. They also recognized the importance of addressing the diverse needs and challenges faced by middle-income countries.

101. 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 the Sustainable Development Goals.

102. The Ministers expressed profound concern about the fact 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 fulfil 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.

103. The Ministers underlined the importance of the principles of universality and inclusiveness which must not be forgotten in order to enhance the capacities of LDCs towards their efforts to achieve the priority areas set forth in the IPoA and to implement the 2030 Agenda. With strong support, coordinated actions and acceleration of support from the international community, the LDCs will be able to strengthen their collective capacities in all sectors, including through structural transformation and this support will lead to having at least half of them to fulfil the graduation criteria by 2020.

104. The Ministers reiterated that official development assistance continues to be the largest and a critical source of external financing for the development of the least developed countries and that it provides a buffer to weather the impacts of the unstable and volatile global economic environment. They expressed their deep concern that total ODA from OECD-DAC countries to LDCs declined in nominal terms from US\$41 billion in 2014 to US\$37.3 billion in 2015 and the preliminary data for 2016 shows that bilateral net ODA to LDCs further decreased by 3.9 per cent in real terms compared to 2015. They also recalled the provisions of the Addis Ababa Action Agenda that encouraged official development assistance providers to consider setting a target to provide at least 0.20 per cent of official development assistance/gross national income to least developed countries, and expressed encouragement to those providers that are allocating at least 50 per cent of their official development assistance to least developed countries. They called upon all development partners to fulfil these targets.

105. The Ministers expressed their deep concern over the recent significant decline in merchandise exports of the least developed countries. The Ministers also reaffirmed that fulfilling the commitments of the ministerial decisions of WTO for duty-free and quota-free market access for all products from all least developed countries and the least developed country-friendly rules of origin regime 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 IPoA of doubling the share of least developed countries in global export. In that regard, it is important that at least 50 per cent of the Aid for Trade by development partners be allotted to the least developed countries. The Ministers called for significant progress on LDCs issues, preferential rules of origin and the application of the LDCs' services waiver at the 11th WTO Ministerial Conference.

106. The Ministers expressed their concern that the global financial and economic ongoing crisis is clearly undermining development in all developing countries and recalled that the modest development gains, in particular those in the least developed countries, 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 least developed countries could remain in extreme poverty by 2030. Many least developed countries continue to be lagging behind in meeting most of the internationally agreed development goals, including the Millennium Development Goals.

107. The Ministers expressed their deep concern that LDCs are disproportionately affected by a variety of systemic shocks, including the economic crisis, 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 for Sustainable Development. 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.

108. The Ministers stressed the need for the international community to remain vigilant in monitoring the debt situation of the least developed countries as many of them are in debt distress or at high risk of debt distress situation and 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 least developed countries 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.

109. The Ministers welcomed the establishment of the Technology Bank for the LDCs and the adoption of its Charter by the General Assembly and underlined the urgent need to fully operationalize the technology bank for the least developed countries, by 2017, in view of its potential to foster productive capacity, structural transformation, poverty eradication and sustainable development. They took note of the generous offer by Turkey to host the Technology Bank and its commitment to support the operationalization of the Technology Bank. They also called upon all relevant stakeholders to ensure continued financial and in kind support for the effective functioning of the Technology Bank.

110. 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 least developed countries in conflict and post-conflict situations and those experiencing political instability, or unable to deliver basic State services, 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.

111. The Ministers recognized the special development needs and challenges of landlocked developing countries 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 landlocked developing countries 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. 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 declaration adopted at the Fifth Meeting of Trade Ministers of LLDCs held in June 2016 in Geneva that calls for the establishment of a specific Work Programme for LLDCs at the WTO by the 11th WTO Ministerial Conference, the Communiqué adopted at the Ministerial Meeting of the Group of LLDCs at the margins of the 10th Ministerial Conference of the WTO held in Nairobi in December 2015 and the Ministerial Communiqué of the Landlocked Developing Countries adopted prior to



the fourteenth session of the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD XIV) in July 2016.

112. The Ministers reaffirmed their strong commitment to the implementation of the Vienna Declaration and the Vienna Programme of Action for Landlocked Developing Countries for the Decade 2014–2024, and encouraged the landlocked developing countries, transit countries, their development partners, the United Nations 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 cooperation; 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. They emphasized the importance of fostering strong synergy and coherence in the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, 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.

113. The Ministers reaffirmed that small island developing States remain a “special case” for sustainable development owing to their unique and particular vulnerabilities, including their small size, remoteness, narrow resource and export base, 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 sea level rise continue to pose a significant risk to small island developing States and their efforts to achieve sustainable development and, for some, represent the gravest threat to their survival and viability, including through the loss of territory.

114. The Ministers welcomed the progress made in the implementation of the SIDS Accelerated Modalities of Action (SAMOA Pathway), adopted at the third International Conference on Small Island Developing States, held in Apia from 1 to 4 September 2014, and further encouraged greater momentum towards its full implementation, as it represents the international community’s renewed political commitment to the sustainable development of small island developing States, and further welcomed the upcoming one-day high-level review of the SAMOA Pathway, to be held in 2019. 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 Partnership Framework for Small Island Developing States, which monitors and ensures the full implementation of pledges and commitments for SIDS.

115. The Ministers recalled that despite notable reductions in poverty, 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 middle-income countries 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 UN development system must improve its support to different country contexts, including how to provide efficient, effective, more coordinated and better and focused support to middle-income countries.

116. The Ministers recognized the importance of addressing the specific challenges facing middle-income countries. 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 from the United Nations development system, the international financial institutions, regional organizations and other stakeholders. The Ministers also acknowledged that official development assistance 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 middle-income countries within the United Nations 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.

117. The Ministers reaffirmed that the operational activities for development of the UN system should provide a key contribution of the implementation of the ambitious and transformational 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development through the strengthening of national capacity. They also reaffirmed that strengthening the role and capacity of the United Nations development system 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 United Nations operational activities for development must remain, 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.

118. The Ministers underlined that the Quadrennial Comprehensive Policy Review of Operational Activities for Development of the United Nations System (QCPR) is the main instrument to better position the United Nations development system (UNDS) and took into consideration the proposal from the Secretary General to move beyond coordination towards the new narrative for sustainable development to support countries in their efforts to achieve the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. In this regard, the review of the functions and existing capacities of the UN development system to be carried out in accordance with General Assembly's QCPR resolution [A/RES/71/243](#) of 21 December 2016 should be guided by the following considerations:

(a) The QCPR's mandate should be the basis of any proposed reform of the UNDS. In this regard, the Group of 77 and China is of a firm view that the QCPR is a development resolution and thus this should be the focus of the process;

(b) The process should take into account that the eradication of poverty in all its forms and dimensions is our highest priority and the underlying objective of the

UNDS. It is very important that the operational activities for development of the UNDS 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, especially least developed countries that still face difficulty in addressing poverty and hunger;

(c) The process should fully respect States' sovereignty, independence, and ownership over its own development pathways and recognize the importance of national ownership and leadership, bearing in mind the different development levels and realities on the ground in these countries. In this regard, they should take into account the different realities, capacities, and levels of national development, respecting national policies and priorities;

(d) The Secretary-General's report due in December 2017 should elaborate further the analysis and proposals contained in his first report on the repositioning of the UN development system, as well as to address the pending mandates from the QCPR resolution, providing elements for the intergovernmental deliberations of ECOSOC and the UN General Assembly in 2018.

119. The Ministers stressed the necessity of the implementation of 2030 Agenda at all levels and strengthening the capacity of Member States, and in this regard, they reaffirmed the role of the United Nations development system 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.

120. The Ministers remain fully committed to gender equality and the empowerment of all women and girls and welcomed 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 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.

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

122. The Ministers expressed their concern that overall progress for women and girls remains unbalanced. Inequalities remain in labour-force participation and leadership, wages and income, pensions, social norms and conditions of work. Women of all ages continue to be vulnerable in terms of access to justice, basic healthcare and education; lack social protection and other services essential for maintaining economic livelihood and self-sufficiency and supporting their ability to generate income and to thrive, particularly women in rural areas.

123. The Ministers expressed also their concern that women and girls are disproportionately affected by natural disasters. Climate change poses a challenge to the achievement of sustainable development and women and girls are particularly affected by its effects. It is important to remember, however, that women are also active actors or agents of change in relation to both climate change mitigation and adaptation. Women possess a strong body of knowledge and expertise that can be used in disaster risk reduction and adaptation strategies.

124. The Ministers recognized that violence against women and girls continues to be a major obstacle to the achievement of gender equality. The Ministers emphasize the need for measures to prevent and eliminate all forms of gender violence, in particular femicide, and to ensure that women with disabilities, girls, youth, indigenous, Afro-descendant and older women, are not subject to multiple or aggravated forms of discrimination, thus the need to improve the collection and analysis of data on the economy, disaggregated by sex, income, age, race, ethnicity, migratory status, disability, and other relevant factors.

125. The Ministers recognized in 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. The Ministers encouraged the international community, including the UN and development agencies, to continue and enhance their support, both technically and financially, in education, training and skills development for young people.

126. The Ministers recognize 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.

127. 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 and xenophobia as well as foreign occupation 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.

128. 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.

129. The Ministers welcomed the adoption of General Assembly Resolution [71/178](#) of 19 December 2016 which decided to proclaim 2019 as the International Year of Indigenous Languages, to draw world attention to the critical loss of indigenous languages and the urgent need to preserve, revitalize and promote indigenous languages.

130. The Ministers reaffirmed that antimicrobial resistance (AMR) is a universal challenge for all humankind and requires international cooperation to achieve action at the local, national and regional levels. It has the potential to challenge the international community's ability to deal with common infections at the global level and therefore seriously impact global public health, as well as overall development gains achieved thus far. Furthermore, failure to address AMR can also hamper

efforts to achieve the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, in particular, in developing countries.

131. The Ministers welcome the adoption of the political declaration of the high-level meeting of the General Assembly on antimicrobial resistance, in this context, the Ministers reiterated the importance of enhancing international cooperation in the realm of AMR, including through the fulfilment of international obligations and commitments in development cooperation. They stressed that, in implementation, addressing AMR must not in any way further hinder affordable and equitable access to existing and new antimicrobial medicines, vaccines and diagnostic tools, taking into account the needs of all countries, in line with the WHO Global Action Plan on AMR.

132. The Ministers emphasized the need to support, as a matter of urgency, research and development of antimicrobials, especially new antibiotics, vaccines, diagnostic tools and innovation, including in traditional and herbal medicine. They highlight that this must be done while ensuring that R&D efforts are needs-driven, evidence-based, and a shared responsibility, and that these efforts must be guided by the core principles of affordability, effectiveness, efficiency, and equity through delinking research and development costs from prices and sales volume.

133. The Ministers stressed that General Assembly resolution [46/182](#) and the guiding principles in its annex remain the global framework for humanitarian assistance and coordination. At the same time, they are mindful of the need to further strengthen the coordination of relief efforts in order to support affected States in their humanitarian response to deliver effectively to communities in need.

134. The Ministers reaffirmed the principles of humanity, impartiality, neutrality and independence for the provision of humanitarian assistance, as well as the promotion and respect for international humanitarian law. They expressed concern at the negative impact of unilateral coercive measures; or unilateral economic financial trade measures not in accordance with international law and the Charter of the United Nations. They condemned the threats to and deliberate targeting of humanitarian personnel, including through acts of terrorism; and they called upon all States and parties to comply with the provisions of international humanitarian law in order to protect and assist civilians, including in occupied territories.

135. In this context, the Ministers also recognized the importance of actions of humanitarian assistance as part of a comprehensive process of disaster risk management and the promotion of sustainable development.

136. The Ministers stressed the need to pay equivalent attention to, on the one hand, armed conflict, and, on the other, natural disasters and other humanitarian emergencies. Relevant information and recommendations are necessary on these equally important issues in order to address the need to strengthen capacity building and resilience. They expressed their concern on the issue of famine which is becoming very serious in several developing countries; in this context, substantive, concrete and operational recommendations are required to support efforts made to address the challenges linked to this phenomenon. The same observation can be applied to the important issue of responding to humanitarian emergencies in urban settings.

137. The Ministers expected further substance on the operationalization of the New Urban Agenda in the context of humanitarian assistance, along with concrete prospective recommendations in this regard. They also underlined the need to enhance national leadership while building local partnerships. They believed that capacity building is different from enhancing leadership.

138. The Ministers reaffirmed the primary role of the affected State in the initiation, organization, coordination and implementation of humanitarian assistance within its territory. In addition, they welcomed the coordination of humanitarian assistance among the different humanitarian actors and relevant development agencies. However, they stressed the importance for Members States to be effectively and regularly informed on how this coordination is implemented and what the identified gaps are.

139. The Ministers underlined the need to address the insufficient diversity in geographical representation and gender balance in the composition of humanitarian staff of the United Nations, in particular regarding professional and high-level staff.

140. The Ministers welcomed the agreements reached by the international community at the 2017 Session of the Humanitarian Affairs Segment of ECOSOC; it demonstrates the importance Member States give to the issues associated with humanitarian emergencies, and the commitment for further collaboration within the international community for the provision of humanitarian assistance.

141. 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, whose mandate is to elaborate an international legally binding instrument to regulate in international human rights law the activities of transnational corporations and other business enterprises, which held its second session in Geneva in October 2016.

142. The Ministers urged all Member States to participate actively and constructively in the Third Session of the Open-ended Intergovernmental Working Group, that will be held from 23 to 27 October 2017 in Geneva, where the Chairperson Rapporteur of the Open-ended Intergovernmental Working Group should prepare elements for the draft legally binding for substantive negotiations at the commencement of the third session of the Working Group on the subject, taking into consideration the discussions held at its first two sessions.

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

144. 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.

145. 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 endeavoured 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 reaffirm 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.

146. The Ministers welcomed the decision to hold the third High-level Dialogue on International Migration and Development in the first half of 2019, and also the decision to hold the High-level Dialogues during every fourth session of the General Assembly, beginning with the seventy-third session, at United Nations Headquarters, to review the follow-up to the outcomes of the previous High-level Dialogues, advance the discussion on the multidimensional aspects of international migration and development, assess progress towards the achievement of the migration-related Goals and targets, including migration-related commitments of the Addis Ababa Action Agenda of the Third International Conference on Financing for Development, taking into account other migration- and development-related processes.

147. The Ministers expressed their commitment to protecting the human rights of migrant children, given their vulnerability, particularly of unaccompanied 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.

148. The Ministers recalled the decision arrived at in the outcome document of the High-level plenary meeting of the General Assembly on addressing large movements of refugees and migrants to launch a process of intergovernmental negotiations leading to the adoption of a global compact for safe, orderly and regular migration in 2018 at an intergovernmental conference, and they reiterate the importance to actively participate in the ongoing preparatory process leading to the adoption of the global compact, in conformity with resolution [A/RES/71/280](#).

149. The Ministers welcomed the adoption of the Comprehensive Refugee Response Framework at the High-level plenary meeting of the General Assembly on addressing large movements of refugees and migrants, and reiterate the importance of its implementation while there is work towards the adoption in 2018 of a global compact on refugees.

150. The Ministers reaffirmed that remittance flows constitute sources of private capital, complement domestic savings and are instrumental in improving the well-being of recipients. The Ministers stressed that remittances cannot be considered a substitute for foreign direct investment, official development assistance, debt relief or other public sources of financing for development.

151. The Ministers also stressed the need to further address and promote conditions for cheaper, faster and safer transfers of remittances in both source and recipient countries, including through the reduction of the transaction costs of migrant remittances to less than 3 per cent and the elimination of remittance corridors with costs higher than 5 per cent by 2030, consistent with target 10.c of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, as well as the need to facilitate interaction between diasporas and their countries of origin; and, as appropriate, encouraged opportunities for development-oriented investment in recipient countries by beneficiaries that are willing and able to take such action.

152. 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. Oceans, seas, islands and coastal areas form an integrated and essential component of the Earth's ecosystem and are critical for global food security and for sustaining economic prosperity and

the well-being of many national economies, particularly in developing countries. 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 small island developing States and least developed countries are crucial for the achievement of sustainable development.

153. In this context, the Ministers welcomed the holding in June 2017 of the UN Conference to support the Implementation of Sustainable Development Goal 14: Conserve and sustainably use the oceans, sea and marine resources for sustainable development. They strongly supported the Outcome of the Conference: “Our Ocean, Our Future: Call for Action”, which raises awareness of the commitments needed to achieve the targets of Goal 14 within the timelines, and stresses the need to sustain action over the long term to address the causes that impair the irreplaceable role and the health of the Ocean. The “Call for Action” and the voluntary commitments announced at the Conference are just one step and one way forward to conserve and sustainably use the Ocean.

154. The Ministers reiterated the importance to embark collectively in building commitments and in taking actions beyond those mentioned in the Call for Action, either by establishing further voluntary commitments or by fostering measures in our daily life activities, that would allow the international community to contribute to the conservation and sustainable use of the Ocean and to ensure that it supports the needs of present and future generations. They expressed the sincere hope that all the commitments adopted at the Conference and the ones formulated beyond are immediately put into practice with the participation and involvement of all the citizens of the world, starting with the representatives of States as advocate for the well-being and common good of humanity and the planet.

155. The Ministers expressed their satisfaction on the successful conclusion of the Preparatory Committee established by General Assembly resolution [69/292](#): Development of an international legally binding instrument 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), and the adoption of its report and substantive recommendations. They stressed the importance of this achievement which represents an important step towards the development of an international legally binding instrument 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, without prejudice to the coastal State’s sovereign rights over their respective Exclusive Economic Zone and their extended continental shelf.

156. The Ministers reiterated the need for the General Assembly to take a decision, as soon as possible on the convening of an intergovernmental conference, under the auspices of the United Nations, and on the starting date of the conference, to consider the recommendations of the preparatory committee on the elements and to elaborate an international legally binding instrument under the Convention;

157. The Ministers recalled that such an instrument must encompass the conservation and sustainable use of marine biodiversity of areas beyond national jurisdiction, including marine genetic resources, and the question of the sharing of benefits, measures such as area-based management tools, including marine protected areas, environmental impact assessments and capacity-building and the transfer of marine technology.



158. The Ministers recognized that neither participation in the intergovernmental conference nor its outcome may affect the legal status of non-parties to the Convention or any other related agreements with regard to those instruments, or the legal status of parties to the Convention or any other related agreements with regard to those instruments.

159. The Ministers firmly reiterated that the principle of common heritage of mankind should guide and underpin the new legal regime for the conservation and sustainable use of marine biological diversity of areas beyond national jurisdiction, 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.

160. The Ministers emphasized that capacity building and transfer of technology should be promoted and carried out on fair, favourable and reasonable terms and conditions, especially with regards to developing countries. Furthermore, they highlighted the importance of encouraging international cooperation at all levels, including North-South/South-South cooperation and partnerships with relevant stakeholders.

161. The Ministers underscored that Area-based management tools (ABMTs), including marine protected areas (MPAs), which should be established on the basis of existing internationally recognized criteria, play an important role for, and should have as a main objective, the conservation and sustainable use of marine biological diversity of areas beyond national jurisdiction. They expressed the view that the protection and preservation of the marine environment, inclusiveness, transparency, and their precautionary approach taking into account best available science, are principles that should guide the establishment of Area-based management tools, including marine protected areas.

162. The Ministers recalled that the legal bases for the conduct of environmental impact assessments are reflected in the provisions of UNCLOS in particular articles 204 and 206, and in this regard the Ministers expressed the view that liability for damage to the marine environment from activities from areas beyond national jurisdiction should be addressed in the future BBNJ instrument.

163. 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.

164. The Ministers recognized the efforts led by the Secretary-General on management reform and welcome an inclusive and consultative process. They called for continued consultations with all Member States as meaningful reform requires ownership of the entire membership of the Organization. They emphasized that the reforms should increase transparency, accountability, efficiency and oversight. They emphasized the centrality of the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, as well as the need to monitor and evaluate mandate implementation. They underscored the importance of addressing gender parity and balanced geographical representation at all levels of the Secretariat and ensuring fair and equitable access to United Nations procurement opportunities for developing country Member States.

165. 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 to perform their oversight and monitoring role and that prior consideration by and approval of Member States 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.

166. 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 also urged the rest of the membership of the United Nations to actively participate in the sessions of the Committee.

167. 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, including the United Nations financial rules and regulations.

168. 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.

169. The Ministers underlined that the current methodology for the preparation of the scale of assessments reflects changes in the relative economic situations of the United Nations Member States. 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 Least Developed Countries and debt stock adjustment must be kept intact and are not negotiable.

170. 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](#).

171. 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 United Nations as observer states. In this context, they urged the General Assembly to consider a decision on an assessment for such organizations.

172. 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 of 77 and China that is not a permanent member of the Security Council, should therefore be categorized above level C.

173. The Ministers express their concern for the growing restrictive nature of “earmarked” contributions within different United Nations 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 fulfil 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.

174. The Ministers reiterated their support to the United Nations 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 United Nations 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. In this regard, the Ministers welcomed the inclusion of additional resources under the programme budget for the current biennium for the organization of the 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 United Nations Audiovisual Library of International Law. They also expressed their commitment to include the International Law Fellowship Programme, 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 regular budget of the United Nations for the biennium 2018–2019.

175. The Ministers resolved to take further effective measures and actions, in conformity with international law, to remove obstacles and constraints, strengthen support and meet the special needs of people living in areas affected by complex humanitarian emergencies and in areas affected by terrorism. In this context, they called for strengthening international cooperation and national institutions to combat money-laundering and financing of terrorism.

176. 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, 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.

177. The Ministers reiterated that each country has the sovereign right to decide its own development priorities and strategies and that there is no “one size fits all” approach. In this regard, they stressed the need for policy space and policy flexibility for developing countries.

178. In this context, 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.

179. The Ministers stressed the need to enable the Governments of developing countries to effectively formulate their own development strategies and policy tools, in line with their national priorities and circumstances. In this regard, the support of the UN system and other international partners, backed by resource commitments are crucial to help catalyse the much needed structural changes through people-centred and well-designed economic and social policies that promote inclusive growth, job creation, investment in education, health-care and infrastructure, social safety net and empowerment of women, among other aspects.

180. 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.

181. 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.

182. 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.

183. The Ministers reaffirmed the importance of respect for the universal realization of the right of peoples to self-determination, in particular of peoples living under colonial or foreign occupation and other forms of alien domination, which adversely affects their social and economic development, respect for the independence of States, national sovereignty, unity and territorial integrity and

non-interference in the internal affairs of States, including through the use of information and communications technologies, in particular social networks, contrary to the principles of international law, for the effective guarantee and observance of human rights, enshrined in the Charter of the United Nations and embodied in the international covenants on human rights, and stressed that full respect for the principles and purposes enshrined in the Charter and international law inspire full commitment to multilateralism.

184. 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 their full realization of the right of self-determination, which adversely affect their economic and social development and their ability to achieve and implement the sustainable development goals and to ensure that they will not be left behind.

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

186. The Ministers expressed grave concern about the ongoing decline of the situation in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem. They expressed deep regret about the continued denial of the independence and rights of the Palestinian people and the absence of a political horizon for bringing an end to the fifty-year 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. They stressed the urgency of intensified efforts to achieve a just, lasting and comprehensive solution and peace.

187. The Ministers deplored the continuing de-development of the Gaza Strip, in particular as a result of the ongoing Israeli blockade and the lasting and massive negative impact of the brutal military aggression committed by Israel, the occupying Power, in July and August 2014 against the Palestinian civilian population in the occupied Gaza Strip, which resulted in the killing of more than 2,150 Palestinians, including hundreds of children and women, and injury to more than 11,000 Palestinians as a result of the lethal, indiscriminate and excessive use of force by Israeli occupying forces, as well as the wanton destruction of thousands of Palestinian homes, vital civilian infrastructure, business properties, mosques, schools, hospitals, public institutions, farms and several United Nations facilities in Gaza. They expressed grave concern about the continuing obstruction of recovery due to the Israeli blockade and the resulting deterioration of infrastructure and services and stressed the urgency of reconstruction. The Ministers deplored the systematic, grave breaches of international law, including international humanitarian and human rights law, committed by Israel in this regard. They called for accountability for these crimes and 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.

188. The Ministers reiterated their demand for the immediate and full lifting of the Israeli blockade imposed on the Gaza Strip, which constitutes the massive collective punishment of its inhabitants in grave contravention of international humanitarian and human rights law. The Ministers requested all members of the international

community, the United Nations and other international organizations and non-governmental organizations to help to provide the victims of the Israeli aggression in the Gaza Strip with the required humanitarian assistance on an urgent basis. They also reiterated their call upon the international community 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 United Nations agencies present on the ground and providing vital assistance, including the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East.

189. The Ministers expressed concern in this regard about the critical financial situation and recurrent under-funding of UNRWA and the effect on Agency programmes to address the humanitarian and developmental needs of the Palestine refugees. They urged States to contribute to UNRWA and ~~to~~ 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 United Nations, 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.

190. The Ministers expressed their appreciation for the commitment by the Secretary-General to, inter alia, work with Member States, including relevant committees, to ensure that, to the greatest extent possible with the resources vested in the United Nations, the Agency's financial requirements are supported; they appealed to States and organizations for the maintenance of their voluntary contributions to the Agency, as well as an increase in contributions where possible, in particular to the Agency's programme budget, including in consideration of their allocation of resources for international human rights, peace and stability, development and humanitarian efforts, to support the Agency's mandate and its ability to meet the rising needs of the Palestine refugees and essential associated costs of operations.

191. They also appealed to States and organizations not currently contributing to the Agency to urgently consider making voluntary contributions in response to the calls of the Secretary-General for expansion of the Agency's donor base in order to stabilize funding and ensure greater sharing of the financial burden of supporting the Agency's operations, in accordance with the continuing responsibility of the international community as a whole to assist the Palestine refugees.

192. 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 United Nations 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 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.

193. 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, and called for the exertion by the international community of the necessary efforts in support of these objectives.

194. 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 in March 2002. (G77 2016 MD para. 143)

195. 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.

196. Recalling that 16th December 2015 marked the 50th anniversary of the adoption of UN General Assembly resolution 2065 (XX), the first resolution which specifically refers to the Question of the Malvinas Islands, the Ministers reaffirmed the need for the Governments of the Argentine Republic and the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland to hold negotiations in accordance with the principles and the objectives of the United Nations 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 relating to “The Question of the Malvinas Islands”, and appreciated the good predisposition and willingness of Argentina in holding negotiations related to this aim.

197. In this regard, the Ministers highlighted the right of the Member States of the Group of 77 to permanent sovereignty over their natural resources, based on the principle of territorial integrity (UN General Assembly Resolution 1514 (XV)) and international law, and they recalled the importance of not taking measures that could affect the economic growth and sustainable development, nor adopting unilateral actions in the areas under sovereignty dispute between the Argentine Republic and the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland.

198. The Ministers welcomed the Final Agreement between the Government of Colombia and the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia — People’s Army as an important step towards a stable and enduring peace in Colombia. The Ministers stressed that an equally determined and exemplary effort will be required to implement the agreements, and in this regard they called upon the international community to lend its full support to Colombia at this critical stage of the process.

199. 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 5+1 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.

200. 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 June 2017 of resolution [71/292](#) requesting an advisory opinion of the International Court of Justice on the legal consequences of the separation of the Chagos Archipelago from Mauritius in 1965. The Ministers encouraged members to make written submissions in support of the completion of the decolonization of Mauritius to the Court within the prescribed time frame of 30 January 2018.

201. 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.

202. 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 reiterate the urgent need to eliminate them immediately. They emphasized that such actions not only undermine the principles enshrined in the Charter of the United Nations 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.

203. 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 almost six decades that constitutes the major impediment for its full development. At the same time, the Ministers regretted the measures announced by the government of the United States on June, 16th 2017, which strengthen the blockade.

204. 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.

205. The Ministers reaffirmed their rejection to 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.

206. 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.

207. 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.



208. 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.

209. The Ministers highlighted the progress and challenges experienced since the adoption of the Charter of Algiers, 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.

210. The Ministers warmly welcomed the election by acclamation of the Arab Republic of Egypt to the Chairmanship of the Group of 77 for 2018.

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