



# General Assembly

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## Seventy-fifth session

Agenda item 22 (a)

### Globalization and interdependence: globalization and interdependence

#### **Letter dated 21 October 2020 from the Permanent Representative of the Philippines to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General**

On behalf of the Permanent Representatives of the Like-minded Group of Supporters of Middle-Income Countries, I have the honour to request that the present letter and the attached ministerial declaration (see annex) be circulated to all Member States as a document of the General Assembly.

The Secretary-General may recall that the declaration was adopted by the Ministers of the Like-minded Group at their fifth ministerial meeting on 2 October 2020.

We reiterate our appreciation for the continued active support of the Secretary-General for the interests of middle-income countries in the United Nations.

*(Signed)* Enrique A. **Manalo**  
Permanent Representative



**Annex to the letter dated 21 October 2020 from the Permanent Representative of the Philippines to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General**

**Fifth Ministerial Meeting of the Like-minded Group of Supporters of Middle-Income Countries**

**2 October 2020**

**Declaration**

1. We, the Ministers and high-level representatives of the countries constituting the Like-Minded Group of Supporters of Middle-Income Countries, Armenia, Belarus, Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, Jamaica, Mexico, Panama and the Philippines, having met on Friday, 02 October 2020 at the fifth Ministerial meeting of the Group on the margins of the 75th session of the United Nations General Assembly;
2. Recall and reaffirm our previous Declarations signed on 23 September 2016, 21 September 2017, 26 September 2018, and 24 September 2019 respectively;
3. Express our solidarity with all countries during this crisis; and salute healthcare professionals, humanitarian workers, medical researchers and other front liners around the world who, on a daily basis, are dedicating their time and risking their own lives to help and save others from COVID-19;
4. Reaffirm our commitment with the implementation of the General Assembly resolution [72/279](#) of 31 May 2018 on the repositioning of the United Nations development system in the context of the quadrennial comprehensive policy review of operational activities for development of the United Nations system; welcome the ongoing efforts of the Secretary-General on the repositioning of the United Nations development system and acknowledge the progress achieved thus far;
5. Also reaffirm our commitment with the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, the Addis Ababa Action Agenda, the Paris Agreement, the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction, the New Urban Agenda and other relevant multilateral outcomes;
6. Recall that the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development recognizes, inter alia, that middle-income countries still face significant challenges to achieve sustainable development and that, 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 of the United Nations development system, the international financial institutions, regional organizations and other stakeholders;
7. Reaffirm that despite sharing the same categorization, the homogenous designation “Middle-Income Country” does not adequately reflect the myriad of realities and oversimplifies the complexities of the countries it encompasses and, therefore, stress reconceptualizing the systemic approach to the categorization of developing countries is urgent for the accomplishment of real and long-lasting results in sustainable development worldwide;
8. Also recall the General Assembly resolution on Promoting investments for sustainable development ([A/RES/74/199](#)) which called upon developing partners to continue to support efforts to strengthen policy frameworks to incentivize finance for productive investment, including building capacity to access available financing, taking into account the specific challenges faced by middle-income countries;

9. Underline that the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development will remain out of reach if middle-income countries are unable to achieve the full spectrum of the Sustainable Development Goals;

10. Further underline that economic growth is not equivalent to advancements towards sustainable development and that, at all levels of per capita income, particularly of Gross National Income, middle-income countries continue to face serious challenges including obstacles in relation to poverty eradication, inequality, external debt and environmental vulnerabilities, among others, and that an improvement in macroeconomic indicators does not necessarily reflect advancements in the eradication of poverty or other areas, including, but not limited to, access to quality education and health services given that high inequality, or even a rise in inequality, remains pervasive in middle-income countries, even in those countries with high economic growth;

11. Note, with concern, that the COVID-19 pandemic is a global shock that has exacerbated existing challenges and created new vulnerabilities for middle-income countries, setting back progress and development gains made during the past years, in the three dimensions of sustainable development – economic, social and environmental;

12. Stress that among developing countries most affected by the pandemic, middle-income countries face diverse challenges such as weak or severely impacted health systems, high levels of indebtedness and limited fiscal space, and require international support and solidarity, equal access to medical supplies, medicines and future COVID-19 vaccines, and to be considered eligible for humanitarian assistance, funds and recovery programs from the COVID-19 pandemic;

13. Further stress that the severe impacts of the pandemic in areas such as health, livelihood and well-being, poverty eradication, reducing hunger, combating climate change, halting the loss of biodiversity, preventing desertification and drought, and reducing inequalities, highlight the interconnectedness of global development challenges;

14. Note that recent data describes the impacts and increasing vulnerability of middle-income countries to the pandemic. The crisis is causing an unprecedented reduction in economic activity and working time. Huge losses are expected across all income groups. In upper middle-income countries, 85 million full-time workers are expected to lose their jobs, a figure that far exceeds that of the 2008–2009 financial crisis. The informal economy, which plays a major economic role in middle-income countries, is badly hit. Immediate relief measures are needed for enterprises and workers, including those operating in the informal economy;

15. Recognize the need to focus on the importance of micro-, small and medium-sized enterprises in achieving the Sustainable Development Goals, in particular in promoting innovation, creativity and decent work for all and recognizing also the importance of encouraging the formalization, participation and growth of micro-, small and medium-sized enterprises in international, regional and national markets, including through access for all to capacity-building and financial services, such as affordable microfinance and credit;

16. Further note that the SG Report on Debt and COVID-19 states that many middle-income countries are highly vulnerable to a debt crisis, lost market access and capital outflows. We support the call on the international financial institutions, the multilateral development banks and the UN for debt relief that is not based on levels of income but on vulnerability. At the same time, the current COVID-19 pandemic has demonstrated that aspects related to the social and environmental dimensions of development are as relevant as the income per capita criterion for graduation, especially for middle-income countries. In this context, new and complex challenges

are faced by those countries that have graduated. The pandemic crisis underlines that no country can be left behind;

17. Also note that COVID-19 is projected to result in a decline in remittances of USD\$109 billion causing hardship for the 800 million people in those low-and-middle-income countries that heavily depend on them. Migrant workers often face specific challenges during the COVID-19 pandemic due to a variety of factors, including, among others, inadequate living and working conditions, limited local knowledge and networks, xenophobia, discrimination, and lack of access to health and related services;

18. Recognize that the pandemic has disproportionately affected people of all ages with pre-existing medical conditions, and older persons, who are at a significantly higher risk of mortality, and showed a higher mortality rate in men affected by COVID-19 compared with women;

19. Also recognize the multi-faceted impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on women, nearly 60 per cent of whom work in the informal economy around the world, are more likely to earn and save less, provide most unpaid care work, and have greater risk of unemployment, lack of social protection and falling into poverty;

20. Stress that as we enter the Decade of Action, and amidst the COVID-19 pandemic, we need to work together to protect, as much as possible, the development gains thus far achieved and to build back better, while ensuring that no one is left behind in our collective efforts and shared commitment to achieve the SDGs and pursue a sustainable and resilient recovery;

21. Support the call for solidarity made by the Secretary-General during this crisis; and welcome the launch of the COVID-19 Response and Recovery Fund that supports middle-income countries (MICs) to respond to the crisis and recover from its socio-economic shocks;

22. Welcome the adoption of the GA resolutions on “Global Solidarity to fight the coronavirus disease COVID-19” ([A/RES/74/270](#)) and “International Cooperation to ensure global access to medicines, vaccines, and medical equipment to face COVID-19” ([A/RES/74/274](#)); Reiterate our request for the Secretary General to formulate an analysis report on the impact of COVID19 on middle-income countries, with policy recommendations for the UN system;

23. Appreciate the call of the Secretary-General for the United Nations Development System to evolve its support to middle-income countries in all their diversity, including in efforts to advance the multidimensional measurements of sustainable development;

24. Welcome and request the United Nations Sustainable Development Group for update on the development of a joint framework of collaboration with multilateral development banks to improve regional and country-level synergies, with specific attention to middle-income countries;

25. Take note of the UN Task Force Report on Digital Task Force on Digital Financing of the Sustainable Development Goals which recommends ways to harness digitalization in accelerating financing of the SDGs;

26. Further note that in 2019, UNDP launched 60 accelerator labs covering 78 mostly middle-income countries, and a new digital strategy which aims to help Governments and communities leverage technology and innovation to deliver results in the era of digital transformation and the fourth industrial revolution;

27. Recall and look forward to the meeting to be convened by the President of the General Assembly during the seventy-fifth session of the Assembly to discuss the

gaps and challenges of middle-income countries in the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, with a focus on the economic dimension of sustainable development. Note that identifying and addressing structural gaps can improve the understanding of the development needs of middle-income countries, helping to determine mechanisms capable of attending those gaps with greater efficiency and precision.

28. Recall the request for the Secretary-General to submit to the General Assembly at its seventy-sixth session an action-oriented report on the implementation of [A/RES/74/231](#), including a comprehensive and in-depth analysis of the particular challenges faced by middle-income countries, along with a concrete set of recommendations to promote and enhance their efforts in the achievement of the economic dimension of sustainable development, while recognizing that particular challenges in the environmental and social dimensions will require further analysis in subsequent reports;

29. Reiterate our readiness to actively engage with the UN system, particularly with the UN Chief Economist and designated focal person for middle-income countries as well as with the UN Sustainable Development Group, to advance the interests of middle-income countries which are major engines of global growth and development, contributing to 1/3rd of global GDP and representing 75% of the world's population and 62% of the world's poor;

30. Renew our commitments to the Group as expressed in the terms of reference and reiterate our determination to support the advancement of our agenda during the 75th of the General Assembly and invite other Members States to join this Like-Minded Group; and

31. Decide to submit the present Declaration as an official document of the 75th session of the General Assembly.

New York, Friday, 02 October 2020

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