



# General Assembly

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## Seventy-eighth session

Agenda item 20 (a)

### Follow-up to the Fifth United Nations Conference on the Least Developed Countries

#### Report of the Second Committee\*

*Rapporteur:* Mr. Ivaylo Gatev (Bulgaria)

#### I. Introduction

1. The Committee held a general discussion on agenda item 20 (see [A/78/463](#), para. 2). An account of the Committee's consideration of the sub-item is contained in the relevant summary records.<sup>1</sup>

#### II. Consideration of draft resolutions [A/C.2/78/L.2](#) and [A/C.2/78/L.57](#)

2. At the 21st meeting, on 9 November 2023, the representative of Cuba on behalf of the States Members of the United Nations that are members of the Group of 77 and China, introduced a draft resolution entitled "Follow-up to the Fifth United Nations Conference on the Least Developed Countries" ([A/C.2/78/L.2](#)).

3. At its 23rd meeting, on 21 November, the Committee had before it a draft resolution entitled "Follow-up to the Fifth United Nations Conference on the Least Developed Countries" ([A/C.2/78/L.57](#)), submitted by the Rapporteur of the Committee, Ivaylo Gatev (Bulgaria), on the basis of informal consultations held on draft resolution [A/C.2/78/L.2](#).

4. At the same meeting, the Committee was informed of the programme budget implications of draft resolution [A/C.2/78/L.57](#), as contained in document [A/C.2/78/L.70](#).

5. Also at the same meeting, the Committee adopted draft resolution [A/C.2/78/L.57](#) (see para. 8).

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\* The report of the Committee on this item is being issued in three parts, under the symbols [A/78/463](#), [A/78/463/Add.1](#) and [A/78/463/Add.2](#).

<sup>1</sup> [A/C.2/78/SR.7](#), [A/C.2/78/SR.21](#) and [A/C.2/78/SR.23](#).



6. After the adoption of the draft resolution, a statement was made by the representative of the United States of America.
7. In the light of the adoption of draft resolution [A/C.2/78/L.57](#), draft resolution [A/C.2/78/L.2](#) was withdrawn by its sponsors.

### III. Recommendation of the Second Committee

8. The Second Committee recommends to the General Assembly the adoption of the following draft resolution:

#### **Follow-up to the Fifth United Nations Conference on the Least Developed Countries**

*The General Assembly,*

*Recalling* the Doha Programme of Action for the Least Developed Countries,<sup>1</sup> and the Doha Political Declaration, adopted during the second part of the Fifth United Nations Conference on the Least Developed Countries, held in Doha from 5 to 9 March 2023,<sup>2</sup> in which the Heads of State and Government and representatives of States strongly committed to the implementation of the Doha Programme of Action throughout the coming decade, including its six priority areas,

*Reaffirming* that the Doha Programme of Action is a new generation of renewed and strengthened commitments by the least developed countries and their development partners grounded in the overarching goals of achieving rapid, sustainable and inclusive recovery from the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic, building resilience against future shocks, eradicating extreme poverty, strengthening labour markets by promoting the transition from informal to formal employment, enabling graduation from the least developed country category, facilitating access to sustainable and innovative financing, addressing inequalities, within and among countries, leveraging the power of science, technology and innovation, mainstreaming tech-driven entrepreneurship, bringing about structural transformation and achieving the Sustainable Development Goals, through a reinvigorated global partnership for sustainable development based on scaled-up and ambitious means of implementation and diverse support for the least developed countries in forging the widest possible coalition of multi-stakeholder partnerships,

*Reaffirming also* that the Doha Programme of Action is grounded in six key focus areas for action and in the commitments and targets contained therein:

- (a) Investing in people in least developed countries: eradicating poverty and building capacity to leave no one behind,
- (b) Leveraging the power of science, technology, and innovation to fight against multidimensional vulnerabilities and to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals,
- (c) Supporting structural transformation as a driver of prosperity,
- (d) Enhancing international trade of least developed countries and regional integration,
- (e) Addressing climate change, environmental degradation, recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic and building resilience against future shocks for risk-informed sustainable development,
- (f) Mobilizing international solidarity, reinvigorated global partnerships and innovative tools and instruments: a march towards sustainable graduation,

*Affirming* the purposes and principles of the Charter of the United Nations, including full respect for international law, the Universal Declaration of Human

<sup>1</sup> Resolution 76/258, annex.

<sup>2</sup> Report of the Fifth United Nations Conference on the Least Developed Countries, New York, 17 March 2022, and Doha, 5–9 March 2023 (A/CONF.219/2023/3), chap. I, resolution 2.

Rights<sup>3</sup> and international human rights treaties, and emphasizing the importance of fundamental freedoms for all,

*Reaffirming* the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development,<sup>4</sup> the Addis Ababa Action Agenda of the Third International Conference on Financing for Development,<sup>5</sup> the Paris Agreement,<sup>6</sup> the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015–2030<sup>7</sup> and the New Urban Agenda adopted in Quito by the United Nations Conference on Housing and Sustainable Urban Development (Habitat III),<sup>8</sup>

*Highlighting* the synergies between the implementation of the 2030 Agenda, the Addis Ababa Action Agenda and the Paris Agreement, and noting with concern the findings contained in the special report of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change on the impacts of global warming of 1.5 degrees Celsius above pre-industrial levels and related global greenhouse gas emission pathways, in the context of strengthening the global response to the threat of climate change, sustainable development and efforts to eradicate poverty, and looking forward to the convening of the twenty-eighth session of the Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, to be held in Dubai, United Arab Emirates, from 30 November to 12 December 2023,

*Noting with great concern* the severe negative impact on human health, safety and well-being caused by the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic, as well as the severe disruption to societies and economies and the devastating impact on lives and livelihoods, and that the poorest and most vulnerable are the hardest hit by the pandemic, reaffirming the ambition to get back on track to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals by designing and implementing sustainable and inclusive recovery strategies to accelerate progress towards the full implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and to help to reduce the risk of and build resilience to future shocks, crises and pandemics, including by strengthening health systems and achieving universal health coverage, and recognizing that equitable and timely access for all to safe, quality, effective and affordable COVID-19 vaccines, therapeutics and diagnostics are an essential part of a global response based on unity, solidarity, renewed multilateral cooperation and the principle of leaving no one behind,

*Recognizing* that the COVID-19 pandemic and its consequences, the adverse impact of climate change, biodiversity loss, desertification, pollution and other environmental degradation aspects, rising geopolitical tensions and conflicts with widespread effects on people, planet, prosperity and peace affect the situation of food security, energy security, extreme poverty and inequality, global trade and market stability, which put the very viability of achieving the Sustainable Development Goals by 2030 at great risk,

*Recalling* its resolution [77/177](#) of 14 December 2022,

*Looking forward* to the Summit of the Future in 2024,

*Looking forward also* to the fourth International Conference on Small Island Developing States, to be held in Antigua and Barbuda from 27 to 30 May 2024 under the overarching theme “Charting the course towards resilient prosperity”,

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<sup>3</sup> Resolution [217 A \(III\)](#).

<sup>4</sup> Resolution [70/1](#).

<sup>5</sup> Resolution [69/313](#), annex.

<sup>6</sup> Adopted under the UNFCCC in [FCCC/CP/2015/10/Add.1](#), decision 1/CP.21.

<sup>7</sup> Resolution [69/283](#), annex II.

<sup>8</sup> Resolution [71/256](#), annex.

*Looking forward further* to the successful convening of the third United Nations Conference on Landlocked Developing Countries, to be held in Kigali from 18 to 21 June 2024, under the theme “Driving partnerships for progress”,

*Recalling* Economic and Social Council resolution [2023/29](#) of 25 July 2023 on the Doha Programme of Action for the Least Developed Countries for the decade 2022–2031,

*Recalling also* General Assembly resolutions [59/209](#) of 20 December 2004 and [67/221](#) of 21 December 2012 on a smooth transition for countries graduating from the list of least developed countries,

*Recalling further* General Assembly resolutions [74/270](#) of 2 April 2020 on global solidarity to fight the coronavirus disease (COVID-19), [74/274](#) of 20 April 2020 on international cooperation to ensure global access to medicines, vaccines and medical equipment to face COVID-19 and [76/175](#) of 16 December 2021 on ensuring equitable, affordable, timely and universal access for all countries to vaccines in response to the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic,

*Recognizing* that the least developed countries have been severely hit by the adverse impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic owing to the fragility of their health systems, limited access to vaccines, test-to-treat and diagnosis, and the slow pace of vaccinations, limited fiscal space, limited coverage of their social protection systems, limited financial and other resources, and vulnerability to external shocks,

*Recognizing also* the special challenges facing all developing countries in pursuing sustainable development, in particular least developed countries,

*Noting* the Transforming Education Summit convened and organized under the auspices of the Secretary-General in New York on 19 September 2022,

*Recognizing* the contributions of migrants in mitigating the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic in both their countries of origin and destination, noting with concern the significant socioeconomic consequences that the COVID-19 pandemic has had on migrant workers and refugees from the least developed countries, including those in the low-wage informal economy, and noting with concern that the prospects of upward growth rate of remittances are likely to moderate in 2022 in many countries, highlighting that promoting faster, safer and cheaper remittances and reducing to less than 3 per cent the transaction costs of migrant remittances will have positive impacts on the millions of people who depend heavily on them,

*Noting* the importance of the work of the Technology Bank for the Least Developed Countries in promoting networking among researchers and research institutions, helping such countries to access and utilize critical technologies on mutually agreed terms, drawing together bilateral initiatives and support by multilateral institutions and the private sector, and implementing projects contributing to the use of science, technology and innovation for economic development in the least developed countries; and recalling with appreciation the contributions that Bangladesh, Guinea, India, Italy, Norway and Türkiye have made, as well as the pledges made by the Sudan,

*Welcoming* the convening of the United Nations Conference on the Midterm Comprehensive Review of the Implementation of the Objectives of the International Decade for Action, “Water for Sustainable Development,” 2018–2028, from 22 to 24 March 2023,

*Taking note* of the 2023 Ministerial Declaration of the Least Developed Countries,<sup>9</sup>

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<sup>9</sup> [A/78/528](#), annex.

*Welcoming* the convening of the High-level Dialogue on Financing for Development held in New York on 20 September 2023,

*Welcoming also* the political declarations adopted by the high-level meeting on the fight against tuberculosis,<sup>10</sup> the high-level meeting on universal health coverage<sup>11</sup> and the General Assembly high-level meeting on pandemic prevention, preparedness and response,<sup>12</sup> in September 2023,

*Reaffirming* its resolution [75/233](#) of 21 December 2020 on the quadrennial comprehensive policy review of operational activities for development of the United Nations system, as well as its 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, and emphasizing the importance of their full and timely implementation,

1. *Takes note* of the reports of the Secretary-General on the follow-up to the Fifth United Nations Conference on the Least Developed Countries<sup>13</sup> and on ensuring the effective implementation of the functions of the Office of the High Representative for the Least Developed Countries, Landlocked Developing Countries and Small Island Developing States;<sup>14</sup>

2. *Calls upon* the least developed countries, with the support of their development partners, to take action to implement the Doha Programme of Action for the Least Developed Countries, including by developing an ambitious national implementation strategy regarding the Programme of Action and integrating its provisions into their national policies and development frameworks and conducting regular reviews with the full involvement of all key stakeholders;

3. *Also calls upon* the least developed countries, in cooperation with their development partners, to broaden their existing country-level review mechanisms and report dissemination, including those for the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals and the implementation of poverty reduction strategy papers, nationally determined contributions, United Nations Sustainable Development Cooperation Frameworks and the existing consultative mechanisms, to cover the review of the Doha Programme of Action and extend them to all least developed countries;

4. *Calls upon* development partners and all other relevant actors to implement the Doha Programme of Action by integrating it into their respective national cooperation policy frameworks, programmes and activities, as appropriate, to ensure enhanced, predictable and targeted support to the least developed countries, as set out in the Programme of Action, and the delivery of their commitments, and to consider appropriate measures to overcome shortfalls or shortcomings, if any;

5. *Invites* the United Nations system, including the governing bodies of the United Nations funds and programmes and other multilateral organizations, including the World Bank Group, the International Monetary Fund and other international financial institutions, as well as the World Trade Organization, to contribute to the implementation of the Doha Programme of Action and to integrate it into their programmes of work, as appropriate and in accordance with their relevant mandates, and invites those organizations to participate fully in reviews of the Programme of Action at the national, subregional, regional and global levels;

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<sup>10</sup> Resolution [78/5](#), annex.

<sup>11</sup> Resolution [78/4](#), annex.

<sup>12</sup> Resolution [78/3](#), annex.

<sup>13</sup> [A/78/112-E/2023/94](#).

<sup>14</sup> [A/77/984](#).

6. *Welcomes* the work of the Inter-Agency Consultative Group for Least Developed Countries, led by the Office of the High Representative for the Least Developed Countries, Landlocked Developing Countries and Small Island Developing States, notes the steps taken by the United Nations System Chief Executives Board for Coordination and the High-level Committee on Programmes in supporting the coordination and follow-up of the implementation of the Doha Programme of Action on a system-wide basis, and reiterates its invitation to the Secretary-General, in his capacity as Chair of the Chief Executives Board, to include the implementation of the Programme of Action in the agenda of the Board;

7. *Recalls* the strong commitment of the Heads of State and Government and representatives of States to advancing the concrete deliverables of the Doha Programme of Action with respect to exploring the feasibility, effectiveness and administrative modalities of a system of stockholding or alternative means, such as cash transfers, taking into account possible economic implications and risks, an online university or other equivalent platforms, an international investment support centre, a sustainable graduation support facility, and comprehensive multi-hazard crisis mitigation and resilience-building measures for least developed countries, and requests the Secretary-General to further elaborate on these deliverables and calls upon the development partners and other stakeholders to fully support the processes;

8. *Decides* to include the Doha Programme of Action as part of its review of the implementation of and follow-up to major United Nations conferences and summits, including the review of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development;

9. *Notes with concern* the estimates that by 2030 much of the world's poor will live in the least developed countries, which indicate that the implementation of the 2030 Agenda is not on track, stresses the need for global support for the least developed countries to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals, as well as ensuring that no one is left behind, and further recognizes the importance of enhancing good governance at all levels by strengthening democratic processes, institutions and the rule of law, increasing efficiency, coherence, transparency and participation, achieving gender equality and the empowerment of all women and girls, reducing inequalities, protecting and promoting human rights, reducing corruption and strengthening the capacity of Governments of the least developed countries to play an effective role in their economic and social development;

10. *Expresses deep concern* at the devastating impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic on the least developed countries, takes note of the statement dated 28 April 2020 of the Group of Least Developed Countries on COVID-19<sup>15</sup> and commits to supporting its implementation, as appropriate, and invites development partners, international organizations and other stakeholders to support the least developed countries in their recovery efforts and continued implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, further highlighting the need for greater collaboration and partnerships at all levels to accelerate the implementation of the 2030 Agenda, including the fulfilment of the least developed country-specific targets, and the Addis Ababa Action Agenda of the Third International Conference on Financing for Development, which is an integral part of the 2030 Agenda;

11. *Expresses its concern* that the world is in the midst of a highly challenging environment in which global sustainable development prospects continue to diverge; stresses that, at the midpoint of the implementation timeline, the Sustainable Development Goals are facing big challenges, with only about 12 per cent on track and the rest either off track or regressed below the 2015 baseline and that, under current trends, 575 million people will still be living in extreme poverty in 2030; and

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<sup>15</sup> See [A/74/843](#), annex.

expresses further concern that the increased pressure on food, energy and finance, elevated inflation, rising global interest rates, tightened financial conditions, high indebtedness, disruptions in supply chains, and geopolitical tensions and conflicts, together with the adverse impacts of climate change, biodiversity loss and digital divides, have exacerbated challenges for many countries in addition to those associated with COVID-19 recovery, increasing hunger, and all forms of malnutrition and poverty and inequality; and analysis of the most recent data reveals that the least developed countries are not on track to meet the targets of the Doha Programme of Action and the Sustainable Development Goals;

12. *Welcomes* the political declaration adopted by the high-level political forum on sustainable development convened under the auspices of the General Assembly (Sustainable Development Goals Summit), held in New York on 18 and 19 September 2023,<sup>16</sup> and urges timely action to ensure its full implementation;

13. *Welcomes* the Secretary-General's efforts to address the SDG financing gap through an SDG stimulus; and reiterates the commitment to advance the Secretary-General's proposal, in a timely manner through discussions at the United Nations as well as other relevant forums and institutions, to tackle the high cost of debt and rising risks of debt distress, to enhance support to developing countries and to massively scale up affordable long-term financing for development and expand contingency financing to countries in need;

14. *Reaffirms* that the least developed countries, as the most vulnerable group of countries, need enhanced global support to overcome the structural challenges, as well as recent devastating impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic, conflicts and climate change and the deteriorating situation of food security, lack of access to finance and energy, and increased poverty, that they face in implementing the 2030 Agenda, and in this regard calls upon the international community to prioritize and strengthen support from all sources to facilitate sustained recovery and rebuilding and the coordinated implementation and coherent follow-up to and monitoring of the Doha Programme of Action, the 2030 Agenda and the Addis Ababa Action Agenda in the least developed countries;

15. *Recognizes* that many developing countries, especially the least developed countries, are faced with significantly higher borrowing costs to finance the response to COVID-19, leading to a greater finance divide that can undermine the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals;

16. *Also recognizes* that domestic public and private resources, including at the subnational level, supplemented by international assistance and foreign direct investment, as appropriate, will be critical for the realization of sustainable development and the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals; and that the 2030 Agenda and the Addis Ababa Action Agenda acknowledge the centrality of domestic resources mobilization, underscored by the principle of national ownership;

17. *Welcomes* the commitment of development partners to ensuring the fulfilment of their respective official development assistance commitments to the least developed countries, ensuring the alignment of aid with the least developed countries' national priorities and increasing the alignment of aid with the least developed countries' national systems and procedures, also welcomes the decision by the European Union by which it reaffirms its collective commitment to achieving the target of 0.7 per cent of gross national income for official development assistance within the time frame of the 2030 Agenda and to reach 0.20 per cent of gross national income for official development assistance to the least developed countries within the time frame of the 2030 Agenda, encourages official development assistance providers

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<sup>16</sup> Resolution 78/1, annex.



to consider setting a target to provide at least 0.20 per cent of gross national income for official development assistance to the least developed countries, is encouraged by those that are allocating at least 50 per cent of their official development assistance to the least developed countries, and calls upon the development partners to continue their development assistance to the least developed countries in their efforts to overcome ongoing crises;

18. *Also welcomes* the global ambition to voluntarily channel 100 billion United States dollars of special drawing rights to developing and least developing countries, calls upon Member States with strong external positions to consider the voluntary channelling of special drawing rights to countries in need, particularly to the least developed countries, in a timely manner, including through the International Monetary Fund Poverty Reduction and Growth Trust, welcomes the operationalization of the International Monetary Fund Resilience and Sustainability Trust as a new mechanism to voluntarily channel special drawing rights to provide affordable long-term financing to the least developed countries and other vulnerable countries, with due consideration to national legal frameworks, and also welcomes the ongoing exploration of viable options to voluntarily channel special drawing rights through multilateral development banks; and calls for an urgent voluntary re-channelling of Special Drawing Rights to countries most in need, including through multilateral development banks, while respecting relevant legal frameworks and preserving the reserve asset character of Special Drawing Rights; and explore ways for future allocations of Special Drawing Rights to benefit those countries most in need;

19. *Notes* that the global macroeconomic outlook remains highly uncertain, and is particularly bleak for many developing countries, including a large number of least developed countries, faced with growing debt service burdens and tight fiscal constraints and that such a finance divide will, if left unaddressed, translate into a lasting sustainable development divide; and calls for improved international debt mechanisms to support debt review, debt payment suspensions, and debt restructuring, as appropriate, with an expansion of support and eligibility to vulnerable countries in need;

20. *Calls upon* official creditors to make long-term sustainable financing available to least developed countries through grants and concessional funding and to offer more fixed-interest lending at low interest rates, emphasizing that this is part of a mix of financing approaches that also include grants;

21. *Stresses* the urgency of enhancing ambition for climate action in the implementation of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change<sup>17</sup> and the Paris Agreement in relation to climate mitigation, adaptation and the provision of the means of implementation, especially finance to developing countries; urges the implementation of the decisions adopted at the twenty-seventh session of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention, held in Sharm el-Sheikh, Egypt; reaffirms its commitment to take concrete steps toward the operationalization of the new funding arrangements for responding to loss and damage, including the fund, by the twenty-eighth session; commits to continuing work to accelerate action to address climate change; and in this regard looks forward to the first global stock take of the Paris Agreement to take place at the twenty-eighth session;

22. *Notes with concern* that the current provision of climate finance for adaptation remains insufficient to respond to worsening climate change impacts in developing country parties and recognizes the importance of the adequacy and predictability of adaptation finance, welcomes that the parties<sup>18</sup> urged developed

<sup>17</sup> United Nations, *Treaty Series*, vol. 1771, No. 30822.

<sup>18</sup> United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change and/or Paris Agreement.

country parties to urgently and significantly scale up their provision of climate finance, technology transfer and capacity-building for adaptation so as to respond to the needs of developing country parties as part of a global effort, including for the formulation and implementation of national adaptation plans and adaptation communications, also recognizes that many least developed countries face challenges in gaining direct access to international public finance owing to a lack of technical capacity, supports the provision of assistance to least developed countries in preparing bankable projects and creating enabling environments, and encourages further efforts to enhance access to finance;

23. *Welcomes* that the parties<sup>19</sup> urged developed country parties to deliver in full on the 100 billion dollar goal urgently and through to 2025 and emphasizes the importance of transparency in the implementation of their pledges, also welcomes that they urged the operating entities of the Financial Mechanism of the Convention, multilateral development banks and other financial institutions to further scale up investment in climate action, and calls for a continued increase in the scale and effectiveness of climate finance from all sources globally, including grants and other highly concessional forms of finance;

24. *Notes* that in 2021, electrification rates in the least developed countries continued to rise but remained low, at 56 per cent, 481 million people in the least developed countries were without any access to electricity in 2021, which was almost two thirds of the total global population living without access to electricity, and urgent international attention is needed to address the inequalities in access to sustainable energy that are faced by the least developed countries, and encourages the doubling of international public finance and the mobilization of resources from all sources to meet the urgent need for investment in power generation and transmission;

25. *Underlines* the need for reinforcing the existing comprehensive multi-hazard early warning system and comprehensive multi-hazard crises mitigation and resilience-building measures, including comprehensive disaster risk financing strategies for the least developed countries aligned with the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015–2030 as a key instrument to build resilience against and mitigate the impacts of various shocks, and the commitment to making the best use of existing initiatives, providing support for capacity-building for adaptation planning and implementation, and technical assistance to develop operational national risk information systems to support policymaking, including in the insurance sector; welcomes the call by the Secretary-General to ensure every person on Earth is protected by early warning systems within five years, and requests the Secretary-General to undertake, with the least developed countries, a comprehensive study involving all relevant United Nations development system entities and other relevant stakeholders on the existing arrangements, lessons learned and gaps identified and to submit it to the General Assembly at its seventy-ninth session for further consideration;

26. *Calls upon* the developing countries, guided by the spirit of solidarity and consistent with their capabilities, to provide support for the effective implementation of the Doha Programme of Action in mutually agreed areas of cooperation within the framework of South-South and triangular cooperation, which is a complement to but not a substitute for North-South cooperation;

27. *Underlines* the importance of promoting an enabling business environment conducive to growth and development, the absence of corruption, a transparent and rules-based regulatory framework, simplifying business regulations and processes, reducing and streamlining administrative formalities, creating efficient national

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<sup>19</sup> United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change and/or Paris Agreement.

support mechanisms for micro-, small and medium-sized enterprises, improving supply chains, facilitating access to markets, reinforcing cooperation, building capacities to implement effective competition policies, and adopting open, transparent and clear regulatory frameworks for business and investment, with protection for property rights and land rights as appropriate and in accordance with national circumstances and consistent with international legal frameworks;

28. *Welcomes* the convening of the twelfth Ministerial Conference of the World Trade Organization, held in Geneva from 12 to 17 June 2022, and the adoption of its ministerial declarations, and looks forward to concrete and positive results at the thirteenth Ministerial Conference; and also welcomes the convening of the fifteenth session of the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development, held in Barbados from 3 to 7 October 2021, at which the Bridgetown Covenant<sup>20</sup> was adopted;

29. *Urges* the least developed countries and their development partners to make use of existing initiatives and programmes, such as the relevant ministerial decisions of the World Trade Organization on duty-free and quota-free market access for the least developed countries and on preferential rules of origin for those countries, as well as aid-for-trade, reiterates its commitment to increasing aid-for-trade support, in particular for the least developed countries, striving to allocate an increasing proportion of aid-for-trade to the least developed countries, in accordance with development cooperation effectiveness principles, welcomes additional cooperation among developing countries to that end, and encourages the least developed countries to mainstream trade in their national development plans;

30. *Recognizes* that the least developed countries face significant infrastructure gaps, including in the areas of transport, energy, water, sanitation and information and communications technology, and reaffirms the need to promote quality, reliable, sustainable and resilient infrastructure and to enhance infrastructure connectivity with concrete actions and predictable financing, thereby maximizing synergies in infrastructure planning and development;

31. *Reaffirms* that the least developed countries are especially vulnerable to and disproportionately affected by the adverse effects of climate change, environmental degradation and other disasters, and recognizes the high importance of building resilience in the least developed countries through stepped-up capacity-building and finance for adaptation to climate change;

32. *Recalls* the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015–2030 and reaffirms that disaster-prone developing countries need particular attention in view of their high vulnerability and exposure to adverse climate change impacts, recognizes that the development and implementation of risk-informed plans, policies, programmes and investments are essential for sustainable development and the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals, also recognizes that the COVID-19 pandemic has increased vulnerability to wider, growing risks, notes with serious concern the stark warnings contained in the recent report of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change and notes that the Sendai Framework provides guidance relevant to a sustainable recovery from COVID-19 and also to identify and address underlying drivers of disaster risk in a systemic manner, further recognizes the health aspects of the Sendai Framework, and stresses the need for resilient health systems;

33. *Welcomes* the convening of the high-level meeting of the General Assembly on the midterm review of the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015–2030, held on 18 and 19 May 2023, to assess progress on integrating disaster risk reduction into policies, programmes and investments at all levels, identify good practices, gaps and challenges and accelerate the path to achieving the

<sup>20</sup> TD/541/Add.2.

goal of the Sendai Framework and its seven global targets by 2030, and affirms its commitment to scale up efforts towards the full and timely implementation of the Sendai Framework, including its guiding principles and four priorities for action;

34. *Recognizes* the need for dealing with severe food insecurity and malnutrition in least developed countries, and calls upon Member States and other relevant stakeholders to keep food and agriculture supply chains functioning; and calls upon the international financial institutions to find urgent, affordable and timely solutions to support developing countries, in particular those highly indebted, in responding to the food security crisis and achieving Sustainable Development Goal 2, through, but not limited to, facilitating, as appropriate, access to debt relief and concessional finance;

35. *Takes note* of the recommendations of the Secretary-General, including with regard to a food import financing facility, a credit guarantee facility and a special food reserve system, and in this regard reiterates its requests to the Secretary-General, on the basis of voluntary contributions, to carry out a study, with secretariat support provided by the Office of the High Representative for the Least Developed Countries, Landlocked Developing Countries and Small Island Developing States, in consultation with all relevant United Nations entities and taking into consideration and building upon the existing initiatives and programmes on food security, taking into account World Trade Organization members' existing obligations, in order to further assess the proposed recommendations for the least developed countries, outlining their modalities, terms of reference, governance and support structures, and looks forward to the submission of the report with his recommendations to the General Assembly at its seventy-eighth session for consideration by the Member States;

36. *Recognizes* that particular efforts are needed to ensure that all young people, including girls, enjoy equal access to lifelong learning opportunities and equal access to quality education at all levels, inclusive of early childhood, primary, secondary and tertiary education, as well as technical and vocational training, notes with concern, in this regard, the lack of progress in closing gender gaps in access to, retention in and completion of secondary education, particularly for girls, recognizes the need to continue to provide and encourage, as appropriate, institutes of higher education to allocate places and scholarships for students and trainees from the least developed countries, in particular in the fields of science, technology, business management and economics, and to strengthen support for institutions in relation to gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls at the global, regional and national levels, and also recognizes that the least developed countries have the most to gain from sustainable development and utilizing the full skills and talents of their people, including women and girls;

37. *Emphasizes* the need for early conclusion of the feasibility studies, as mandated in the Doha Programme of Action, to explore the possibility of establishing an online university or other equivalent platforms to support online graduate and postgraduate university-level science, technology, engineering and mathematics education in the least developed countries and recently graduated countries with a view to, inter alia, providing policy support to promote distance education and open learning for graduate and postgraduate studies in science, technology, engineering and mathematics, ensuring gender balance at all levels while guaranteeing special access for the poorest and people in vulnerable situations, creating a virtual network of educational institutions within and beyond the least developed countries, assisting in course design and curriculum development, and leading to scale and sustainability of the education system, taking into account all pre-existing initiatives developed by the relevant partners in a comprehensive manner, and in this regard looks forward to the report of the Secretary-General outlining, inter alia, the mapping of existing

initiatives, possible new modalities, resource requirements, accreditation and sustainable funding sources to be submitted to the General Assembly at its seventy-eighth session for its consideration;

38. *Recognizes* that increasing participation, supporting the empowerment of women, youth and civil society, and strengthening collective action will contribute to the eradication of poverty and the achievement of sustainable development;

39. *Also recognizes* the need to support least developed countries in building capacity and a framework to scale up the development, deployment and sustainable utilization of emerging technologies for the Sustainable Development Goals, including strengthening of digital literacy and skills, as part of efforts to bridge digital and knowledge divides, as a prerequisite for inclusive participation in the digital economy, and to provide necessary financial and technical support to least developed countries to establish and strengthen national and regional science institutes to increase their capacity for research and development in science, technology and innovations and promote the adaptation and application of modern technologies for domestic uses;

40. *Supports* the Technology Bank for the Least Developed Countries as a focal point for the least developed countries to strengthen their science, technology and innovation capacity towards building sustainable productive capacities and promoting structural economic transformation, also supports the Technology Bank in strengthening the science, technology and innovation capacity of least developed countries for structural transformation and productive capacity development, invites Member States, as well as international organizations, foundations and the private sector, to provide voluntary financial and in-kind resources to the Technology Bank in order to enhance its capacity and effectiveness, and decides to strengthen collaboration among Governments, the private sector and academia to advance science, technology and innovation research and development, build inclusive digital economies and bridge the digital divide, including by facilitating technology transfer mutually agreed terms; and also decides to include the topic “Report on the work of the Technology Bank for the Least Developed Countries” under the sub-item entitled “Follow-up to the Fifth United Nations Conference on the Least Developed Countries” at its seventy-ninth session, and requests the Secretary-General to submit a report for its consideration;

41. *Reaffirms* the commitment to implementing the decision contained in the Addis Ababa Action Agenda to adopt and implement investment promotion regimes for the least developed countries, reiterates the decision<sup>21</sup> to provide financial and technical support for project preparation and contract negotiation, advisory support for investment-related dispute resolution, access to information on investment facilities, improving enabling environments, and risk insurance and guarantees such as through the Multilateral Investment Guarantee Agency, and in this regard reiterates its requests to the Secretary-General to conclude expeditiously the feasibility study on establishing an international investment support centre for the least developed countries in the form of a one-stop shop to mobilize support for the implementation of the investment promotion regime for the least developed countries and graduated countries, and to submit the study and recommendations to the General Assembly for its consideration at its seventy-ninth session;

42. *Also reaffirms* that achieving gender equality, the empowerment of all women and girls and the full realization of the human rights of all people is essential to achieving sustained, inclusive and equitable economic growth and sustainable development, and reiterates the need for gender mainstreaming, including targeted

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<sup>21</sup> Resolution [69/313](#), annex, para. 46.

actions and investments in the formulation and implementation of all financial, economic, environmental and social policies in the least developed countries;

43. *Congratulates* those countries that have met the criteria for graduation from least developed country status, notes with appreciation that 4 countries have graduated since 2011, 1 will graduate in December 2023, another 5 have been designated to graduate by 2026 and 10 others have met the graduation criteria at least once, invites those countries to start the preparations for their graduation by formulating a smooth transition strategy, and requests all relevant organizations of the United Nations system, led by the Office of the High Representative, to extend the necessary support in this regard in a coordinated manner, through the full operationalization of the Sustainable Graduation Support Facility (iGRAD), while calling upon Member States to support this initiative with voluntary contributions;

44. *Reiterates its conviction* that no country graduating from the least developed country category should have its development progress disrupted or reversed, welcomes the fact that the United Nations graduation process helps to ensure that no graduating country has its special and differential treatment measures and exemptions reduced abruptly, invites development and trading partners to consider extending to graduated countries trade preferences previously made available as a result of least developed country status, or reducing them in a phased manner in order to avoid their abrupt reduction, notes that the Group of Least Developed Countries put forward various proposals at the World Trade Organization, pertaining to, among other things, trade-related challenges and those related to the smooth transition of the countries graduating from the least developed country category and seeks to further examine these issues, and calls upon the development partners to continue to provide, as appropriate, special climate change-related finance and technological support to graduated countries so as to support action towards the achievement of the goals of the Paris Agreement and for a period consistent with their vulnerabilities, sustainable development needs and other national circumstances and emerging challenges;

45. *Underlines* the importance of integrating support for graduating and graduated countries into the relevant work programmes of the entities of the United Nations development system in the light of the increasing number of graduating countries and their need for continued support from the United Nations development system;

46. *Recommits* to take action to strengthen international, national and local data systems efforts to collect high-quality, timely, relevant, disaggregated and reliable data on Sustainable Development Goals progress and to intensify efforts to strengthen data and statistical capacities in developing countries, in particular the least developed countries;

47. *Recognizes* that the activities relating to the least developed countries carried out within the Secretariat need to be further coordinated and consolidated in order to ensure the effective monitoring and follow-up of the implementation of the Doha Programme of Action, led by the Office of the High Representative, and to provide well-coordinated support to realizing, inter alia, the target of enabling 15 additional least developed countries to meet the criteria for graduation by 2031;

48. *Also recognizes* that, over the years, the responsibilities of the Office of the High Representative have increased considerably in their scope and complexity and that, in addition to its original mandate, the requirement to undertake research and analytical work, monitor sectoral policy developments at the level of intergovernmental processes, follow up on actions taken at the national level, further strengthen the network of national focal points of least developed countries, develop operational guidelines for United Nations entities support to countries in conflict and

post-conflict situations and support the graduating and graduated countries have increased;

49. *Recommends* that the United Nations development system organizations develop internal guidelines on how to translate the stated priorities for least developed countries into their budget allocations or their capacity development projects, and invites the World Bank Group, the International Monetary Fund, other international financial and development institutions to provide tailored programmes to support the least developed countries; further invites international organizations to consider how the Doha Programme of Action may inform their efforts; and also requests the United Nations development system to further expand the use of the least developed country category in programming and budgeting;

50. *Approves* the proposal of the Secretary-General for strengthening the capacity and functions of the Office of the High Representative in view of the increased demand from the three groups of countries, improving its strategic position in dealing with key development issues and processes relevant to the most vulnerable countries and providing important service benefits to them while improving its performance implementation rate, and requests the Secretary-General to address the allocation of adequate resources for the Office in the context of the proposed programme budget for the year 2025;

51. *Invites* Governments, intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations, major groups and other donors to contribute in a timely manner to the trust fund in support of activities undertaken by the Office of the High Representative to support the implementation, follow-up and monitoring of the Doha Programme of Action and the participation of the representatives from the least developed countries in the high-level political forum on sustainable development of the Economic and Social Council as well as in other relevant forums, and in this regard expresses its appreciation to those countries that have made voluntary contributions to the trust fund;

52. *Expresses its profound gratitude* to the Government and the people of the State of Qatar for hosting the second part of the Fifth United Nations Conference on the Least Developed Countries and for providing all the necessary support to the Conference and its preparatory process;

53. *Requests* the Secretary-General, with the assistance of relevant organizations and bodies of the United Nations system, including the Department of Global Communications of the Secretariat, in collaboration with the Office of the High Representative, to take the measures necessary to intensify their public information efforts and other appropriate initiatives to enhance public awareness on the outcome of the Conference, including by highlighting its programme of action, objectives, key deliverables and significance;

54. *Requests* the Secretary-General to submit to the General Assembly at its seventy-ninth session a report on the implementation of the present resolution and the Doha Programme of Action, and decides to include in the provisional agenda of its seventy-ninth session, under the item entitled “Groups of countries in special situations”, the sub-item entitled “Follow-up to the Fifth United Nations Conference on the Least Developed Countries”.