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Second Committee**Summary record of the 11th meeting**

Held at Headquarters, New York, on Friday, 6 October 2023, at 3 p.m.

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The meeting was called to order at 3 p.m.

In the absence of Mr. Amorín (Uruguay), Mr. Cimino (Italy), Vice-Chair, took the Chair.

Agenda item 16: Macroeconomic policy questions (continued)

- (a) **International trade and development** (continued) (A/78/15 (Part I), A/78/15 (Part II), A/78/230 and A/78/506)
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- (h) **Promotion of inclusive and effective international cooperation on tax matters at the United Nations** (continued) (A/78/235)

Agenda item 17: Follow-up to and implementation of the outcomes of the International Conferences on Financing for Development (continued) (A/78/93-E/2023/90 and A/78/190)

1. **Mr. Seedat** (South Africa) said that monetary and fiscal policies in developed countries should be reassessed, given their negative impact on developing countries. Developing countries needed access to finance that was more readily available and more affordable to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals. His delegation applauded the work carried out by the Secretary-General towards a Sustainable Development Goal stimulus. It was a major concern that financial spending on defence had reached new heights in many developed countries when the achievement of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development was under serious threat.

2. Multilateral development banks were well placed to improve aid coordination, address financing gaps and channel climate finance to developing countries. Any reform process undertaken by the World Bank Group could not be considered successful without giving developing countries a greater voice. The lending

capacity of multilateral development banks should be increased by billions of dollars over their current exposure ceilings. The potential implications of balance sheet optimization options should be carefully considered, as the terms of borrowing could harden significantly. Multilateral coordination was crucial to addressing the deteriorating debt situation of many countries. The Common Framework for Debt Treatments beyond the Debt Service Suspension Initiative should be further strengthened to ensure timely debt treatment for countries that needed it.

3. A strong and adequately financed International Monetary Fund (IMF) at the centre of the global financial safety net was imperative. The Fund's current lending capacity should, at the very least, be maintained. The IMF poverty reduction and growth trust should be put on a sustainable footing through further subsidy and loan pledges to enable it to meet the elevated borrowing needs of vulnerable low-income countries. Additional pledges were needed to ensure that the IMF resilience and sustainability trust was adequately financed to help low-income and vulnerable middle-income countries.

4. Effectively addressing illicit financial flows would have a positive impact on the recovery of the developing South. While great strides had been made in changing global tax rules, more changes were needed to address the continued concerns of developing countries regarding the allocation of taxing rights between residents and source jurisdictions, and to address illicit financial flows through artificial profit shifting by multinationals. Such changes were of paramount importance in ensuring that Africa had the domestic resources required for development.

5. South Africa strongly opposed the emerging green protectionism. Global and regional trade mechanisms must enable products from Africa to compete on fair and equal terms. Trade-related environmental tariffs and non-tariff barriers must be the product of multilateral agreements; they must not be unilateral, arbitrary or discriminatory.

6. **Mr. Muktar** (Ethiopia) said that the ever-expanding global wealth gap, an unjust trading system and unilateral coercive measures had hindered the development of the least developed States. His Government's attempts at domestic resource mobilization had been undermined by the economic downturn brought about by the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic, climate-related catastrophes and geopolitical tensions. The flow of development finance to developing countries remained both unequal and inadequate. Climate finance fell far short of the urgent requirements, leaving many developing nations

in Africa preoccupied with managing their debt burden rather than advancing their development agenda.

7. His Government had undertaken comprehensive tax collection reforms, emphasizing the expansion of the tax base, rigorous control of public expenditure, prudent debt management and the formalization of the informal sector. It was engaged in privatization initiatives and was opening the economy to private sector participation. It had implemented significant policy shifts to attract foreign direct investment and boost remittance inflows, and made comprehensive efforts to combat illicit financial flows.

8. Reform of the global financial framework was needed to address the unique requirements and interests of developing nations. The growing scope, frequency and intensity of climate change challenges underscored the need for a shift in approach. International cooperation guided by the principle of common but differentiated responsibilities must be strengthened.

9. Unilateral trade restrictions that contravened international trade agreements had disrupted global value chains, resulting in escalating inflation and rising prices for food and fuel, and were thus counterproductive. Efforts must be intensified to expand concessional loans and grants in collaboration with multilateral development banks. His country applauded the redirection of unused special drawing rights towards financing the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals and climate goals, and the provision of debt relief to heavily indebted countries through expeditious multilateral processes, including debt payment suspensions. A new sovereign debt framework should be established.

10. **Mr. Mott** (Bahamas) said that his Government was seeking to address the debt impact of climate-related natural disasters, the economic fallout of the COVID-19 pandemic, the effects of the Russia-Ukraine war, inflation and an international financial architecture that did not adequately meet the sustainable development needs of small island developing States. Such challenges were stifling economic growth in the Bahamas, with capital used to service debt rather than finance development.

11. Policy innovations and initiatives such as the multidimensional vulnerability index for small island developing States and the Accra-Marrakech Agenda should be incorporated into international financial institutions with the aim of establishing a global system that effectively addressed emergency relief, debt financing and development requirements, and enhanced climate resilience, while promoting trust in multilateralism to strengthen the rules-based

international order. It was crucial not to withhold funding from small island developing States, as most of their debt was tied directly to climate change. The Bahamas was no exception, with 50 per cent of its national debt stemming from climate change consequences and the need for recovery finance.

12. For the past 62 years, the international tax policies formulated and dictated by the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) had failed to address the inherent challenges and the differences in development dynamics faced by the global South. In the interests of the universal right to development, a United Nations tax convention should be created. The United Nations should take the lead in crafting a fair and inclusive international tax governance framework that ensured equal participation among all Member States.

13. His delegation joined the calls for reform of the international financial architecture. Multilateral development banks should substantially increase their climate finance support for small island developing States. The Bahamas advocated the implementation of the recommendations made by the Group of 20 in its review of the capital adequacy frameworks of multilateral development banks, including enabling concessional investments in adaptation and loss and damage initiatives across a wider spectrum of vulnerable countries.

14. **Mr. Løvold** (Norway) said that considerable hurdles must be overcome to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals, and efforts must be mobilized to secure financing from all available sources. The fourth International Conference on Financing for Development should be a milestone for renewed and increased commitment and action. Detailed preparations and a bold political vision were needed. Domestic revenue mobilization was key for financing the achievement of the Goals. Official development cooperation must underpin national efforts and leverage resources from many sources. His country had consistently provided more than 0.7 per cent of its gross national income in development assistance and would continue to be a reliable partner and donor. The 2030 ambitions would not be reached without the economic empowerment of women, and that joint commitment must therefore be renewed.

15. Efforts must continue to combat secrecy and illicit financial flows. The report of the Secretary-General on the promotion of inclusive and effective international tax cooperation at the United Nations ([A/78/235](#)) had provided a sombre assessment of the persisting gaps in the current tax architecture. National implementation of

existing standards was key, but systemic weaknesses also needed to be addressed. Duplication must be avoided; rather, complementarity should be promoted, and the achievements made both at OECD and in the United Nations built upon. Member States should heed the call of the Secretary-General to strive to develop consensus-based rules and standards that effectively and inclusively promoted a responsible and accountable global financial system.

16. **Mr. Klose** (Observer for the United Nations Industrial Development Organization) said that, without the means to invest in sustainable development, developing countries were falling even further behind, and disparities were growing in several areas. During the COVID-19 pandemic, developed nations had protected their economies through massive financial stimulus, large-scale subsidy programmes and incentivized investment in energy transition and advanced technologies. Developing countries, meanwhile, had struggled to scale up public finance and investment owing to limited fiscal space and a lack of access to affordable long-term financing. High borrowing costs had put tighter constraints on debt finance and public investment and had raised the cost of private investment. The lack of long-term finance was a constraint for firms, particularly when investing in innovation. The financial sector tended to have short-term incentives, but long-term investment was needed for growth.

17. The number of countries reviving industrial policies had more than doubled between 2009 and 2019, but that resurgence was driven by industrialized countries. To really advance the 2030 Agenda, developing countries needed to step up efforts to make effective use of available policy space; only then would they be able to pursue sustainable transformation, build domestic productive capabilities, create decent jobs and achieve gender equality and economic growth. Modern industrial policies in developing countries needed to facilitate a clean energy transition and digital transformation. Through a clean energy transition, developing countries had a unique opportunity to leapfrog traditional energy sources by accessing, producing and deploying clean energy technologies. The digital transformation would help to increase competitiveness and establish new sectors tailored for advanced manufacturing. The development of policies and regulations for the digital transition, coupled with capacity-building initiatives, could close divides and enhance digital competencies across regions. To benefit from those opportunities, future-ready industry development propelled by modern industrial policies,

public-private cooperation and effective investment in the achievement of Goals was needed.

Agenda item 15: Information and communications technologies for sustainable development

(continued) (A/78/62-E/2023/49)

Agenda item 19: Globalization and interdependence
(continued)

(a) **Science, technology and innovation for sustainable development** (continued) (A/78/232)

(b) **Culture and sustainable development**
(continued) (A/78/217)

(c) **Development cooperation with middle-income countries** (continued) (A/78/224)

18. **Ms. Alghali** (Sierra Leone) said that countries in special situations, in particular the least developed countries, faced serious challenges in harnessing information and communications technology (ICT) to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals, including inadequate ICT infrastructure and a lack of private sector investment and of access to innovative technologies and finance. Technology and digital innovation had the potential to accelerate transformational change in the least developed countries. Her Government had thus increased the national fibre network and expanded Internet and mobile access and connectivity. It was fully committed to using infrastructure, technology and innovation to advance and sustain high economic growth.

19. The Havana Declaration of the Summit of Heads of State and Government of the Group of 77 and China and the outcomes of the multi-stakeholder forum on science, technology and innovation for the Sustainable Development Goals should be implemented to complement the acceleration of the achievement of the Goals. Rural connectivity should be expanded, while building robust ICT infrastructure to promote sustainable industrialization and innovation in countries of the global South.

20. Increased investment and partnerships in ICT were needed in countries in special situations, with a view to developing infrastructure and addressing global inequity, in particular by empowering women and girls, older persons and persons with disabilities with reliable Internet connectivity and access to e-health services and digital markets. The global digital compact could help to realize the commitment to shaping a shared vision on digital cooperation by providing an inclusive global framework, which was essential for the multi-stakeholder action required to overcome digital, data

and innovation divides and establish the governance architecture required for a sustainable digital future.

21. **Mr. Bregala** (Philippines) said that his Government had formulated a road map for the fourth industrial revolution, outlining strategies for the necessary facilities and services, human resources, research and development technologies, and science and technology policies. The implementation of the national research and development agenda for the period 2022–2028, including its industry, energy and emerging technology road maps, would be accelerated. Those initiatives required increased investment and stronger regional and multilateral partnerships. His Government continued to pursue high-impact free trade agreements with a view to providing a framework for investment in areas such as electric vehicles, pharmaceuticals, electronics and agroprocessing. South-South and triangular cooperation needed to be leveraged and strengthened for the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals.

22. Middle-income countries played a significant role in global efforts to achieve the Goals. His country supported ongoing efforts to re-examine and redesign the current approaches to development, including addressing the structural barriers in the international financial architecture. To lay the groundwork for moving beyond gross domestic product as a measure of development and a criterion for access to concessional financing, intergovernmental discussions should be held and an independent high-level expert group established to develop a value dashboard. A new growth model was needed to enable middle-income countries to move away from the middle-income trap and continue their development journey.

23. His Government recognized the value of preserving and enriching the country's cultural heritage. It strongly supported the promotion of the creative economy and the protection of the rights of the creative labour force.

24. **Ms. Ahmadova** (Azerbaijan) said that enhancing the technological capacities of the economy and applying innovations were current priorities for her Government. Modern innovations and competitive human capital had been identified as leading national priorities for socioeconomic development until 2030. The introduction of broadband Internet, the transition to digital television and the application of fourth generation mobile communications technologies had allowed Azerbaijan to provide transformative solutions to achieve the goals set by the World Summit on the Information Society.

25. Her country had been developing satellite services to build its regional commercial telecommunications capacity for more than a decade. With two telecommunications satellites and one Earth observation satellite, Azerbaijan provided services to 45 countries. The seventy-fourth International Astronautical Federation Congress had been held that week in Baku, providing an open forum for exchanging views on new ideas and cutting-edge solutions to shape the future of the space industry.

26. Her Government attached great importance to promoting multiculturalism and encouraging intercultural and interreligious dialogue nationally and internationally. In recent years, Azerbaijan had hosted international events and proposed initiatives to encourage dialogue and mutual understanding. In the light of globalization and the increased interdependence among economies and societies, strengthening multiculturalism and international cooperation had become an imperative for development strategies.

27. **Mr. Mpama** (South Africa) said that digital public infrastructure was a fundamental tool for accelerating the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals and for safely and efficiently delivering economic opportunities and social services to all residents, especially in developing countries. For such infrastructure to deliver on its immense potential, it needed to be underpinned by universal connectivity. Countries from the global South called for the digital divide among and within countries to be closed through the transfer of technologies and the provision of the requisite financial resources.

28. Advancing universal connectivity included ensuring that no one was left behind in relation to emerging and frontier technologies such as artificial intelligence and quantum computing, and in terms of access to and the use, protection and storage of data. Data should be classified as a global public good. Women and young people should be placed at the heart of efforts to ensure universal connectivity in the context of emerging and frontier technologies. Linking the empowerment of women to digital technologies would benefit the achievement of all the Goals.

29. **Mr. Mart** (Serbia) said that his Government had incorporated the principle of leaving no one behind into its legal framework and had provided clear guidelines on the drafting of public policies in accordance with that principle. Serbia was committed to digitalization and the development and application of new knowledge in order to establish resilient infrastructure, support entrepreneurship and encourage innovation.

30. As part of the Global Pilot Programme on Science, Technology and Innovation for the Sustainable Development Goals Road Maps, his Government had successfully introduced a road map based on the smart specialization approach that it had launched in 2017. The road map had been included as an example of best practice in the Guidebook for the Preparation of Science, Technology and Innovation for the Sustainable Development Goals Road Maps. As part of the Pilot Programme, Serbia had participated in the development of methodology for mapping the Goals in the context of smart specialization strategies. The priorities of his country's smart special strategy were ICT, food for the future, machines and manufacturing systems, creative industries and key enabling technologies.

31. During its seventy-seventh session, the General Assembly had adopted resolution [77/326](#) entitled "International Decade of Sciences for Sustainable Development, 2024–2023", which was the first thematic resolution to be submitted by his country. By proposing that resolution, Serbia had confirmed its political commitment to achieving common goals for the common good and to working actively towards the realization of the Decade.

32. **Mr. Prabowo** (Indonesia) said that the growing digital divide was exacerbating existing inequalities in access to information, education and finance. Increasing global interdependence was also leading to inequality. Countries were becoming more reliant on each other for goods, services and capital. While countries with strong economic and political institutions had reaped significant benefits, others, particularly countries in the global South, had not benefited as much.

33. Accelerating an inclusive digital transformation, improving digital infrastructure to increase connectivity, promoting the transfer of technology and capacity-building, and increasing digital skills and literacy should be encouraged with a view to enabling people to harness the full potential of digital technology for economic growth, job creation and poverty eradication.

34. Debt sustainability remained a challenge for many middle-income countries. As part of the reform of the international financial architecture, access to concessional finance and debt relief should be addressed to help countries to accelerate their development plans. The issue of increasing the representation of countries from the global South should also be addressed.

35. Digitalization had the potential to generate new forms of economic growth, which could contribute significantly to achieving sustainable development in many different countries, including developing

countries, by promoting socioeconomic development and job creation.

36. **Mr. Xaiyavong** (Lao People's Democratic Republic) said that many developing countries were experiencing economic recession, which had hampered their progress towards achieving the Sustainable Development Goals. Developing countries must seek innovative ways to ensure a sustainable recovery from the socioeconomic impacts caused by multiple crises, while enhancing their resilience and properly utilizing science, technology and innovation to transform and achieve the Goals as scheduled.

37. His Government attached great importance to the role of science, technology and innovation in overcoming ongoing challenges and advancing the national development agenda towards green growth and a digital economy. A national digital economy development vision and strategy had been adopted. His country had continued to enhance collaboration with international organizations and countries in the region with a view to sharing best practices and promoting technology transfer. South-South and triangular cooperation could be strengthened by sharing best practices and lessons learned, transferring technological know-how and increasing investment in the research and development of science, technology and innovation.

38. Advanced technologies such as blockchain, artificial intelligence, the Internet of things, big data and cloud computing could foster rapid progress in socioeconomic development. To harness their full potential, clear regulations and reliable measurement strategies must be established. All stakeholders should strengthen cooperation and initiatives aimed at enhancing capacity and mutual support in the research, development and application of science, technology and innovation.

39. **Mr. Milambo** (Zambia) said that the global community must seize the opportunities of an evolving global digital economy and help developing countries to harness digital technologies to improve the livelihoods of citizens through increased economic output, higher productivity, digitalization, job creation and economic transformation. While artificial intelligence was opening new opportunities, including for achieving the Sustainable Development Goals, the global community must cooperate to mitigate the ethical issues and human security risks arising from its use. The COVID-19 pandemic had uncovered the digital divide, and inequalities between developed and developing countries continued to widen. The proposal of the Secretary-General for a human-centred global digital compact was therefore timely.

40. His Government was implementing digitalization policies and rolling out digital communications infrastructure, including satellite technology, resulting in increased Internet usage and coverage, especially in rural areas, and enhanced digital skills, services, innovation and entrepreneurship platforms. A low-Earth orbit Internet service had just been launched in Zambia and would soon provide service to millions of people, including in rural areas. The digitalization of Government services had improved service delivery and advanced the country's digital economy. His Government was promoting ICT training programmes in fields such as nuclear medicine, agriculture and education. Internet connectivity was being increased for all secondary schools in collaboration with development partners.

41. **Mr. Muktar** (Ethiopia) said that inclusive and efficient international cooperation was needed to bridge the digital divide and address cybersecurity, particularly in developing countries. Ethiopia called for an inclusive Internet governance system that prioritized the needs and interests of developing countries. His delegation commended the Economic Commission for Africa and the Department of Economic and Social Affairs for organizing the seventeenth meeting of the Internet Governance Forum in Addis Ababa from 28 November to 2 December 2022. The international community should support the implementation of the outcome document.

42. Unilateral sanctions and coercive economic measures that were inconsistent with international law continued to hinder the development of ICT and science, technology and innovation in Ethiopia and should therefore be immediately removed. Knowledge and technology transfer should be enhanced through cooperation and the promotion of innovative policies, with a focus on making developing countries the next frontier of the technological revolution.

43. His Government had adopted a digital strategy with the aim of developing an inclusive digital economy and building digital infrastructure, platforms and systems. Commendable results had been achieved by liberalizing the telecommunications sector and developing digital payment services. Coverage of 2G and 3G mobile networks had increased. An innovative digital identification, payment and security system had been established in cooperation with financial technology companies. Despite such progress, millions of Ethiopians lacked access to ICT, the Internet and online services, and many had limited connectivity. Technical and financial support was therefore needed to ensure the maximum utilization of new technologies.

44. **Ms. Zamora Zumbado** (Costa Rica) said that her Government had emphasized the importance of science,

innovation and technology in finding solutions to global challenges and accelerating the achievement of the 2030 Agenda in its national development and public investment plan. A strategy was in place to adapt the national education system to the information era through the development of skills in science, technology, engineering, arts and mathematics, interdisciplinary and innovation-oriented learning, and mastery of a second language. The Ministry of Science, Innovation, Technology and Telecommunications was promoting public-private partnerships with multinational companies aimed at digital empowerment. Her Government was committed to strengthening and expanding Internet infrastructure across the country, especially in vulnerable areas. A reform of the Constitution that would guarantee universal access to telecommunications and information technology was under discussion. A national campaign had been launched to support the development of technology for peaceful purposes.

45. The digital economy, the creative economy and biotechnology must be nurtured to achieve sustained and inclusive economic growth. Costa Rica had pursued foreign direct investment policies to support the creative economy. For example, the Film Investment Act provided for value added tax refunds for foreign film productions under certain conditions and measures to promote the national film industry.

46. Middle-income countries continued to face external and structural pressures that kept them in the "middle-income trap". To meet the specific development needs of those countries, the results of the mapping carried out by the Secretary-General must be built upon to develop a comprehensive inter-institutional response plan that addressed the multidimensional nature of sustainable development.

47. **Mr. Gunaratna** (Sri Lanka) said that the success of the Sustainable Development Goals, especially in developing countries, depended on the application of science, technology and innovation. Sri Lanka was committed to supporting the Havana Declaration adopted at the Summit of Heads of State and Government of the Group of 77 and China held in September 2023, which was focused on science, technology and innovation. Investment in science, technology and innovation should be increased, and efforts should be made to reduce inequalities in access to data and artificial intelligence.

48. Sri Lanka was on the road to economic recovery and stabilization. The ongoing economic and financial restructuring process would enable the country to harness science, technology and innovation for

sustainable development and growth. Digitalization and the adoption of new technologies would be key in helping the nation to recover from the external shocks of the deteriorating international security environment and the COVID-19 pandemic, and from the debt burden. A skilled workforce that was well equipped with technological knowledge and know-how was also needed to facilitate the needed transformations. His Government intended to establish a technology and innovation council, a digital transformation agency and five new universities that promoted education in new technologies.

49. The role of science, technology and innovation in identifying and addressing climate change challenges was an area of interest for Sri Lanka, as a climate-vulnerable island. The adoption of renewable energy and climate adaptation and mitigation efforts must be supported through technology transfer and capacity-building. South-South and triangular cooperation played an important part in advancing technical cooperation and the exchange of best practices in science and technology among the countries of the global South. Sri Lanka supported the proposal made at the Havana Summit to convene a high-level meeting of the General Assembly on science, technology and innovation for development in 2025.

50. **Mr. Pary Rodríguez** (Plurinational State of Bolivia) said that more than half of the people in developing countries did not have full access to the benefits of ICT. There were significant and growing digital divides in terms of ICT availability, accessibility and use and access to broadband. Such divides were replicated in other areas, including finance and investment, where a small group of investors had taken over the market for those technologies, thus delaying their democratization.

51. His Government had been pursuing policies to promote digital literacy and skills development, with a focus on communities in remote and marginalized areas, including Indigenous Peoples. ICT tools and knowledge should be sought, not as a means to expand the market and the number of users, but rather with a view to ensuring the well-being and sustainable development of communities, with respect for their cultures and identity. His Government was seeking to bridge the digital divide by fostering an enabling environment for local digital innovation. Local solutions and initiatives could boost economies, create jobs and contribute to product diversification.

52. Robust cybersecurity measures were vital. Digital infrastructure, including cloud infrastructure, must be protected not only from attacks, but also from

monopolies and unilateral measures to restrict access for political or other reasons. Access to artificial intelligence and the equitable sharing of its benefits, especially among developing countries, must be ensured. Efforts should be made to prevent the continued use of discriminatory measures and to eliminate the new forms of digital labour exploitation that were emerging.

53. **Ms. Wynhoven** (Observer for the International Telecommunication Union (ITU)) said that the Sustainable Development Goals Digital Acceleration Agenda launched by ITU and the United Nations Development Programme during the Sustainable Development Goals Summit showed that digital technologies could accelerate progress towards 70 per cent of the Goal targets. ITU was committed to making digital technologies a central part of the global rescue plan for the Goals called for by the Secretary-General. The first step would be to bring online the 2.6 billion people who were still unconnected worldwide. ITU and the United Nations Development Programme were working together to coordinate the high-impact initiative on digital public infrastructure launched in September 2023, during the high-level week of the General Assembly, with the aim of empowering 100 countries with safe, accessible, affordable, green, fully funded and future-ready digital public infrastructure solutions.

54. The global digital compact, the Summit of the Future to be held in 2024 and the 20-year review of the World Summit on the Information Society would provide crucial opportunities to recalibrate the digital agenda in the face of a rapidly evolving digital landscape. At the World Radiocommunication Conference 2023, ITU member States would shape digital development for the coming decade. The Conference would take place at the same time as the twenty-eighth session of the Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, at which ITU would organize discussions on green digital action.

The meeting rose at 4.20 p.m.