

Zero draft

Ministerial declaration of the high-level segment of the 2021 session of the Economic and Social Council on the annual theme “Sustainable and resilient recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic that promotes the economic, social and environmental dimensions of sustainable development: building an inclusive and effective path for the achievement of the 2030 Agenda in the context of the decade of action and delivery for sustainable development”

Ministerial declaration of the 2021 high-level political forum on sustainable development, convened under the auspices of the Economic and Social Council, on the theme “Sustainable and resilient recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic that promotes the economic, social and environmental dimensions of sustainable development: building an inclusive and effective path for the achievement of the 2030 Agenda in the context of the decade of action and delivery for sustainable development”

I. Introduction

We, the Ministers and high representatives, during this challenging time of crisis, resilience, recovery and hope, have adopted the present declaration at the high-level segment of the 2021 session of the Economic and Social Council and the 2021 high-level political forum on sustainable development,

1. The COVID-19 crisis is unprecedented in human history and has exacerbated our world’s vulnerabilities and inequalities within and among countries. While acknowledging its multidimensional nature and its severe impact on all countries, especially developing countries and countries in special situations, we emphasize the urgent need for a global renewed commitment to solidarity, across the multilateral system, nations, people and generations.
2. As we have entered the decade of action and delivery for sustainable development, we reaffirm our commitment to implement the 2030 Agenda in its entirety as our first line of defense against the negative impacts of the global pandemic. Accelerated progress towards implementing the 2030 Agenda should be our collective road map to respond and build back better, help prevent future pandemics, achieve a sustainable, resilient and prosperous future for all and respect protect and fulfil human rights.
3. We reaffirm that eradicating poverty in all its forms and dimensions, including extreme poverty, is the greatest global challenge and an indispensable requirement for sustainable development, and note with concern that, for the first time in decades, the trend of poverty reduction is being reversed.
4. We also reaffirm the principles recognized in the 2030 Agenda, which is people-centered, transformative and universal in nature, and that its Goals and targets are integrated and indivisible, balancing the economic, social and environmental dimensions of sustainable development. We need an integrated approach that will leverage interlinkages and

minimize trade-offs across Goals and targets, lead to sustainable and inclusive recovery, and accelerate the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals in the framework of the decade of action and delivery. Rapid change is possible and the Goals remain within reach if we embrace transformation and accelerate implementation.

5. We recognize the central role of the United Nations system in supporting the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, as well as effectively catalysing and coordinating the global response to control and contain the spread of COVID-19 and confront its unprecedented effects including the severe disruption to societies and economies and address the critical interlinkages between health, trade, finance, and economic and social development.

II Impact of the pandemic on the implementation of the 2030 Agenda, enhancing coordinated global response on supporting recovery and building back better in the Decade of Action and Delivery

6. The pandemic has caused immense human suffering across the globe and triggered the worst economic and social crisis in generations. The COVID-19 pandemic has reinforced pre-existing structural inequalities, including within and between countries, widened existing gaps, and accentuated systemic challenges and risks and, threatens to halt or obliterate progress made in realizing the Sustainable Development Goals.
7. The pandemic and the measures taken to contain the spread has caused the worst global economy recession since the Great Depression and massive damage to working time and income. It has forced businesses to shut down, pushed down commodity prices, investment and remittances, exacerbated pre-existing debt and vulnerabilities in many countries, disrupted global value and supply chains, affected international human mobility, the tourism industry and related services, severely impacting the livelihoods of half of the global workforce and exacerbating unemployment particularly for youth and women. It has undermined the ability of local authorities to provide basic services, has overwhelmed health systems, caused a “generational catastrophe” through school closures affecting the majority of children worldwide, and challenged the provision of humanitarian assistance and protection. The pandemic has also intensified the vulnerabilities and inadequacies of global food systems, which could add hundreds of million more people to the chronic undernourished.
8. Although the virus has impacted everyone everywhere, developing countries, especially countries in special situations and most vulnerable countries as well as people in vulnerable situations, have been disproportionately affected. 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. It also poses risks of regression in gender equality. The COVID-19 pandemic is deepening pre-existing inequalities that perpetuate

discrimination, racism, stigmatization and xenophobia, and violence against women, and put women and girls at particular risk, compounding and further exposing vulnerabilities in the social, political and economic spheres.

9. The COVID-19 pandemic is a compelling reminder of the inextricable relationship between humans and the environment and that addressing the environmental crises should be fully compatible with efforts to eradicating poverty and creating adequate incentives for sustainable livelihoods in line with the 2030 Agenda and the SDGs. We need to critically consider our consumption and production patterns and address biodiversity loss and climate change as well as to embrace the One Health approach to avoid such pandemics in the future.
10. We recognize the need for coordination and collaboration at all levels of governance to respond to the pandemic. We recognize the urgent need to support in particular those who are in vulnerable situations who are the most affected by COVID-19, including women and girls, youth, persons with disabilities, older persons, indigenous peoples, local communities, refugees, displaced persons, migrants.
11. COVID-19 has shown the key role that all digital technologies play in the provision of financial and public services, including health and education, and the need for digital inclusion as an integral part of social and economic inclusion. We recognize the need to address digital inequality to ensure that the digital transformation does not widen inequality within and between countries.
12. In order to effectively respond to and achieve sustainable, inclusive and resilient recovery from health crises such as the COVID-19 pandemic and their consequences we need to enhance efforts to supply safe drinking water and water for sanitation, including hand-washing, as well as water for agriculture and food production.
13. At the centre of a global recovery is equitable, affordable access for all to safe, quality, efficacious, effective, accessible and affordable COVID-19 vaccines, therapeutics and diagnostics. We stress the need to develop international partnerships particularly to scale-up manufacturing and distribution capabilities, in recognition of differing national contexts, and recognize the role of extensive immunization against COVID-19 as a global public good for health in preventing, containing and stopping transmission in order to bring the pandemic to an end. We resolve to work tirelessly to ensure timely access for all countries to COVID-19 vaccines, therapeutics and diagnostics.
14. *PLACEHOLDER ON COVID-19 VACCINES FROM WHA74 WHICH will take place virtually from 24 May to 1 June 2021*

III. Assessment of Sustainable Development Goals under in-depth discussion

15. We recognize the contribution of the Secretary-General's Report on Progress towards the Sustainable Development Goals, inputs of the regional forums on sustainable development, functional commissions of the Council and other intergovernmental bodies and forums, as well as major groups and other stakeholders.
16. We commend the 42 countries¹ that presented voluntary national reviews at the 2021 high-level political forum on sustainable development. We urge the United Nations to further capitalize on the key findings and evidence extracted from the reviews and encourage peer learning. We encourage countries to share locally driven development approaches and pathways to accelerate the implementation of the 2030 Agenda.
17. We reiterate that while our 2021 review emphasizes Sustainable Development Goals 1, 2, 3, 8, 10, 12, 13, 16, and 17, the integrated, indivisible and universal nature of the Goals makes it essential that we pay particular attention to leveraging synergies and co-benefits across all dimensions of sustainable development, while avoiding or minimizing trade-offs.
18. SDG1: The triple threat of COVID-19, conflict and climate change makes the global goal of ending poverty by 2030 beyond reach. The COVID-19 pandemic is set to increase the number of poor by over 110 million people, causing the extreme poverty rate to rise for the first time in a generation. The COVID-19 crisis has demonstrated the importance of social protection systems to protect people's health, jobs and income; yet 4 billion people worldwide are left without any social protection, the majority of whom are the poor and the vulnerable. We therefore call for all countries to ensure universal access to social protection.
19. SDG2: The COVID-19 pandemic has intensified the vulnerabilities and inadequacies of global food systems, which could add hundreds of million more people to the chronically undernourished. This shows the urgent need to accelerate the transformation of food systems to end hunger and all forms of malnutrition and to reduce the impact of food systems on biodiversity, natural resources, ecosystems and the climate. The impact of economic slowdowns and downturns as well as transport restrictions on food security cannot be separated from the root causes of hunger and malnutrition, namely poverty, inequality and marginalization. National efforts in those areas need to be better coordinated. Interventions to build sustainable food systems must address not only food

¹ Afghanistan, Angola, Antigua and Barbuda, Azerbaijan, Bahamas, Bhutan, Bolivia, Cabo Verde, Chad, China, Colombia, Cuba, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Democratic People's Republic of Korea, Denmark, Dominican Republic, Egypt, Germany, Guatemala, Indonesia, Iraq, Japan, Lao People's Democratic Republic, Madagascar, Malaysia, Marshall Island, Mexico, Myanmar, Namibia, Nicaragua, Niger, Norway, Paraguay, Qatar, San Marino, Saudi Arabia, Sierra Leone, Spain, Sweden, Thailand, Tunisia, Uruguay, Zimbabwe.

production but also food access and utilization and the stability of food systems. We also call for countries to take action to promote healthy and sustainable diets, noting that overweight and obesity rates are rising everywhere.

20. SDG3: We note with concern the impact of the pandemic on health, with almost 137 million cases and close to 3 million deaths around the world, COVID-19 related disruptions have halted or even reversed progress made in many health areas. We note the increasing burden that payments for health services place on household budgets and the impact this has had in pushing people into extreme poverty. We call for increased action to achieve universal health coverage, including financial risk protection, access to quality essential health-care services and access to safe, effective, quality and affordable essential medicines and vaccines for all. We also note with concern that progress has been particularly slow on reducing maternal mortality and commit to accelerate action. We commit to stepping up efforts to ensure universal access to sexual and reproductive health-care services, including for family planning, information and education, and the integration of reproductive health into national strategies and programmes. Particular action is needed to increase the proportion of births attended by skilled birth attendants, meet unmet family planning needs including enhancing access to contraceptive methods and reduce adolescent birth rates.
21. SDG8: The COVID-19 pandemic has caused massive damage to livelihoods and declines in hours worked, and income. The COVID-19 crisis has affected incomes and livelihoods particularly of women and young people. We note the overrepresentation of young workers in informal jobs and the persistence of the gender pay gap with men earning more than women per hour worked in 89 percent of countries. Actions to reduce vulnerable employment are needed, including through steps to support structural economic transformation, including expanding digital and mobile banking services.
22. SDG10: Among other forms of inequalities, the great discrepancies in access to affordable information and communications technologies, particularly for women and girls, has hindered measures to respond to the impact of COVID-19. Artificial intelligence could transform production and business, but without addressing the digital gap this transformation might widen income inequality. We note as well the possible impacts of artificial intelligence on progress toward different Sustainable Development Goals and also the need to address the security challenges related to digitalization.
23. SDG12: For decades, scientists have been laying out how humanity is driving the three planetary crises: the climate crisis, the biodiversity crisis, and the pollution crisis, all linked to unsustainable production and consumption. COVID-19 provides a window of opportunity to explore more inclusive and equitable development models underpinned by sustainable consumption and production to build a more sustainable and resilient recovery. We call for accelerated enhancement of multi-stakeholder partnerships at all levels,

including with the United Nations system and international financial system, to advance innovative pathways to achieving sustainable consumption and production, thereby creating job opportunities, promoting sustainable business practices, and fostering more sustainable and stable global supply chains.

24. SDG13: While there was a temporary reduction in emissions in 2020 related to measures taken due to COVID-19, it is likely to lead to only a slight decrease in the annual growth rate of CO₂ concentration in the atmosphere. In order to limit warming to 1.5°C above pre-industrial levels as called for in the Paris agreement, global efforts would need to reach net zero CO₂ emissions globally around 2050. We encourage all parties to enhance the ambition and increase the clarity and understanding of their NDCs, as well as to communicate long-term low greenhouse gas emission development strategies and NDCs well ahead of the 26th Conference of the Parties (COP26) in Glasgow in November 2021, as appropriate, as a way of providing clear signals to citizens, political actors and businesses. We urge all countries to institute sustainable and climate sensitive economic recovery policies from the COVID-19 crisis as an important element of a sustainable growth strategy and an immediate investment into a climate-resilient, inclusive and just transition while ensuring countries' national circumstances needs and priorities, taking fully into account the common but differentiated responsibilities and respective capabilities, the specific needs and conditions of countries and minimizing the possible adverse impacts on their development in a manner that protects the poor and the affected communities. We stress the urgent need to enhance adaptive capacity, strengthen resilience and reduce vulnerability to climate change and extreme weather events, and to continue to engage in adaptation planning processes and to enhance cooperation, namely disaster risk reduction. We further stress that enhanced access to international climate finance is important to support mitigation and adaptation efforts in developing countries, especially those that are particularly vulnerable to the adverse effects of climate change, and also recognizes the ongoing efforts in this regard.
25. SDG16: The world is still a long way off from achieving the goal of peaceful, just and inclusive societies and effective, accountable and inclusive institutions. Some risks, such as corruption, have been exacerbated by the response to the pandemic and the implementation of stimulus packages. Progress toward peace, security and conflict management is being set back, as shocks from the pandemic have further intensified the vulnerabilities of countries in conflict and post-conflict situations. The pandemic has increased the need for concerted government action at the local, national and international levels, global cooperation, peace and solidarity, and the fostering of development through the principles of the rule of law and leaving no one behind. Achieving sustainable development and strengthening resilience require a long-term perspective in policymaking together with institution-building at all levels, based on effective governance for

sustainable development and an steadfast commitment to peaceful, just and inclusive societies.

26. SDG17: We reaffirm the outcome of the Financing for Development forum of the Council. While the investment gap for the achievement of the 2030 Agenda is growing, the extraordinary fiscal and monetary measures taken by many governments have cushioned the socio-economic impact of the pandemic. We welcome the prioritization of spending, among others, on essential health functions and social protection measures to reduce exclusion, eradicate poverty, tackle inequalities and end discrimination, including in access to trade and capital markets, affordable and reliable energy and technologies for sustainable development. We call for maintaining appropriate exceptional fiscal measures for as long as needed to secure the health response and social and economic recovery. We stress the importance of transparent fiscal systems, measures to prevent illicit financial flows internationally and domestically. We are concerned by the deep decline in global FDI flows, decline in remittances, in investments in low-emission, resource-efficient technologies and in sustainable and resilient infrastructure. Fulfilling ODA commitments is urgent as international public finance is critical for supporting the sustainable recovery from COVID-19 and advancing the provision of global public goods, including extensive immunization, and building resilient and sustainable health systems. Concessional financing needs to be expanded and delivered to where it is most needed. We are concerned by the disruption of supply chains and the sharp reduction and slow recovery in world trade triggered by COVID-19. There is urgent need for measures to support developing countries in building capacity in promoting e-commerce and closing the digital divide, addressing debt distress in particular in developing countries dependent on commodities, remittances and tourism. We need to strengthen global coordination and policy coherence to protect global financial and macroeconomic stability and provide more liquidity in the financial system, especially in all developing countries, including by increasing access to concessional finance for developing countries. We need to accelerate investment in the digital transition and build an open, free and secure digital world as well as strengthen traditional data sources, such as surveys and administrative records, while also embracing new sources and continuing to strengthen efforts to collect, analyse and disseminate relevant and reliable data, disaggregated by sex, age, disability and other characteristics relevant in national contexts, for better monitoring and policy making to achieve the 2030 Agenda.
27. 2020 targets: We welcome the review of the 2020 targets at this year's high-level political forum and commit to maintain the integrity of the 2030 Agenda and achieve these targets in an accelerated timeframe, reflecting the urgency conveyed in the Agenda, while keeping track of and taking fully into account the related ongoing intergovernmental processes to allow updated targets to reflect a suitable level of ambition for 2030.

IV. Other priority issues

28. Poverty including multidimensional aspects: We express our deep concern that, while there has been progress in reducing poverty, such progress remains uneven, with 1.3 billion people still living in multidimensional poverty, this number continues to be significant and unacceptably high, the levels of inequality in income, wealth and opportunities remain high or are increasing within and between many countries, and the non-income dimensions of poverty and deprivation, such as access to quality education or basic health services, and relative poverty remain major concerns.
29. LNOB: We reaffirm the reversal of the trend of poverty reduction. We recognize that the poorest and most vulnerable people are the most affected by the COVID-19 crisis. We will place a focus on those people in our policies and actions. We will undertake every effort to leave no one behind and to reach the furthest behind first. Those whose needs are reflected in the 2030 Agenda include all children, youth, persons with disabilities, people living with HIV/AIDS, older persons, indigenous peoples, refugees and internally displaced persons and migrants. We also intend to see the Goals and targets met for all nations and peoples and for all segments of society.
30. Gender: We reaffirm our commitment to achieving gender equality, the empowerment of all women and girls and the full realization of the human rights of all women and girls. To achieve inclusive, sustainable and resilient societies, we call for the leadership and full, effective and equal participation of women in decision-making in the design, budgeting, implementation and monitoring of policies and programmes that affect their livelihoods, well-being and resilience, and we recognize that unequal gender roles as reflected in women's disproportionate share of unpaid care and domestic work hold women back in the economy and other areas. We reiterate the urgency to ensure women's equal access to, and control over, land and natural resources. We reaffirm our commitment to preventing and responding to gender-based violence, sexual exploitation and abuse, sexual harassment and harmful practices. Our efforts will reinforce the linkages between Sustainable Development Goal 5 and the other Goals. The systematic mainstreaming of a gender perspective into the implementation of the 2030 Agenda is crucial. National responses to the COVID 19 pandemic must ensure respect for women's human rights and fundamental freedoms without discrimination of any kind. The participation of women's rights organisations, women-led movements and women human rights defenders must be ensured at all levels in order to build back better and more gender equal.
31. MICs: We recognize that middle-income countries still face significant challenges to achieve sustainable development. 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. We are concerned that eight out of ten ‘new poor’ are in middle-income countries.

32. Recognize that sustainable development cannot be realized without peace and security and that peace and security will be at risk without sustainable development. The 2030 Agenda recognizes the need to build peaceful, just and inclusive societies that provide equal access to justice and that are based on respect for human rights, including the right to development, on effective rule of law and good governance at all levels and on transparent, effective and accountable institutions. Factors that give rise to violence, insecurity and injustice, such as inequality, corruption, poor governance and illicit financial and arms flows, are addressed in the 2030 Agenda. We must redouble our efforts to resolve or prevent conflict and to support post-conflict countries, including by ensuring that women have a role in peacebuilding and State-building. We call for further effective measures and actions to be taken, in conformity with international law, to remove the obstacles to the full realization of the right to self-determination of peoples living under colonial and foreign occupation, which continue to adversely affect their economic and social development as well as their environment.
33. Human Rights: We emphasize that universal respect for human rights and human dignity, peace, justice, equality and non-discrimination is central to our commitment to leaving no one behind. Our commitment also includes respect for race, ethnicity and cultural diversity, and equal opportunity, permitting the full realization of human potential and contributing to shared prosperity. We are committed to a world that invests in its children and youth and in which every child grows up free from all forms of violence and exploitation. We envision a world in which every woman and girl enjoys full gender equality and all legal, social and economic barriers to their empowerment have been removed. We will strive for a world where young women and young men are key agents of change, supported by a culture of innovation, sustainability and inclusiveness, to enable a better future for themselves and their communities in a just, equitable, tolerant, open, creative and socially inclusive world in which the needs of the most vulnerable are met.
34. Children and Youth: We recognize that developing the human capital required to build sustainable, equitable and resilient societies must begin with investing in all children, adolescents and youth, safeguarding their rights and ensuring that from early childhood they grow up in a safe environment, free from all forms of violence, including neglect, abuse and exploitation, and through the elimination of all harmful practices. As critical agents of change and torchbearers of the 2030 Agenda for current and future generations, we emphasize the importance of engaging and supporting the meaningful participation of children, adolescents and young people, particularly the most deprived and marginalized among them, in the implementation, follow-up and review of the 2030 Agenda and of enabling their empowerment through information, knowledge and awareness of sustainable development. We commit to including youth in the development and

assessment of strategies and programmes designed to address their specific needs and to ensure that youth education, skills development and decent employment are prioritized. We also note with concern that school closures has caused a regression in educational gains, and commit to scale up efforts for remedial and catch-up strategies.

35. Countries in special situations: We recognize the special challenges and needs facing the most vulnerable countries, in particular African countries, least developed countries, landlocked developing countries and small island developing States, as well as the specific challenges facing many middle-income countries and countries in conflict and post-conflict situations in pursuing sustainable development. Taking into account the different levels of development and the disproportionate impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on countries in special situations, we will support them by taking urgent steps to help them address the impacts of COVID-19 for a sustainable, inclusive and resilient recovery, including through funding stimulus measures that take into account their special vulnerabilities.
36. Decent work: We will promote a sustainable and inclusive recovery of our economies, including through ensuring sustainable consumption and production patterns, to protect the environment and create conditions for decent work for all, including for those in the informal economy, support and facilitate access to finance for micro, small and medium-sized enterprises and build their capacity, to help restore jobs and incomes.
37. Trade: We are concerned by the disruption of supply chains and the sharp reduction and slow recovery in world trade triggered by COVID-19. This has significantly affected developing countries. We will ensure that any emergency trade measures designed to tackle COVID-19 are targeted, proportionate, transparent, and temporary, protecting the most vulnerable and do not create permanent barriers to trade or disruption to global supply chains, and are consistent with WTO rules. We recognize the need to scale up trade finance and trade-facilitation measures for the developing countries. We will continue to promote a universal, rules-based, open, transparent, predictable, inclusive, non-discriminatory and equitable multilateral trading system under the World Trade Organization (WTO), as well as meaningful trade liberalization.
38. Data: Over the last year, the data and statistical community has faced unprecedented disruptions in statistical operations and a spike in demand for data to monitor and mitigate the effects of the global pandemic which has exacerbated critical funding gaps in national, regional, and global statistical offices, making more urgent than ever the need to mobilize international and domestic resources to support data for decision making during the pandemic. We encourage international cooperation, supporting statistical capacity-building in developing countries, in particular the most vulnerable countries, which face the greatest challenges in producing, collecting, analyzing and using high-quality, timely and reliable data and statistics.

39. Science, Technology and Digital: We acknowledge that the pandemic has shown the potential for science and technology to solve pressing global problems and support the advancement of the well-being of current and future generations. But it can also contribute to exacerbating inequalities. We will continue to strengthen the science-policy interface and advance international cooperation around science, technology and innovation through evidence-based policy making, support for research and development, harnessing science, technology and innovation, leveraging technologies to promote inclusive digital economy and build resilience across sectors. In this regard, we thank the Secretary General for launching the Roadmap for Digital Cooperation. We commit to enhance and promote capacity-building, infrastructure, connectivity and technical assistance initiatives as well as innovation and technologies towards advancing the Goals and targets, with special focus on developing countries. We commit to strengthening cooperation to close the digital divide within and among countries. We must also build public trust in science. We welcome the creation of the independent group of scientists who will write the 2023 Global Sustainable Development Report and the appointment of the ten-member group to support the Technology Facilitation Mechanism.
40. Climate: We stress that climate change is one of the greatest challenges of our time. We will strengthen our global response to climate change by accelerating the reductions in greenhouse gas emissions, We emphasize in this regard that mitigation of and adaptation to climate change represent an immediate and urgent priority. We also stress the importance of engaging further efforts and mobilizing means of implementation, for climate change mitigation, and adaptation, including strengthening resilience, taking into account the specific needs and special circumstances of developing countries, especially those that are particularly vulnerable to the adverse effects of climate change. We recognize the synergies between the implementation of the 2030 Agenda and the Paris Agreement.
41. Biodiversity: Our relentless extraction of resources from the Earth is having a devastating impact on the natural world. Changes in consumption and production patterns can help promote decoupling of economic growth and human well-being from resource use and environmental impacts. It can also trigger the transformations envisaged by global commitments on biodiversity, climate and sustainable development at large. We note with concern that none of the biodiversity related targets with a 2020 timeline have been met. We recommit therefore with an increased sense of urgency and ambition to protecting wildlife and other living species and to reversing the trends in environmental degradation through the restoration of ecosystems, halting biodiversity loss and deforestation, integrating the conservation and sustainable use of natural resources, as well as the fair and equitable benefit-sharing of the use of genetic resources, into relevant national decision-making, ending the illegal and unsustainable trade and consumption of wildlife, forest restoration, combatting desertification and achieving land degradation neutrality as conserving and sustainably using oceans, seas and marine resources, promoting sustainable

consumption and production patterns. In that regard, we will promote a coherent approach for addressing biodiversity loss, climate change and land and ecosystem degradation, including between the secretariats of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, the Convention on Biological Diversity and the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification in Those Countries Experiencing Serious Drought and/or Desertification, Particularly in Africa. We also recall, in this context, the relevant initiative of the fourteenth meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity. We reiterate the need for action on biodiversity protection, conservation and sustainable use, climate change, sustainable consumption and production and sound management of chemicals and waste, including by improving waste management as part of the sustainable recovery efforts in response to the COVID-19 pandemic, this can only be achieved by strong resource mobilization and addressing, in a balanced manner, the three objectives of the Convention on Biological Diversity.

42. We reaffirm, in accordance with the Charter of the United Nations, the need to respect the territorial integrity and political independence of States.

V Accelerated Actions

43. We reaffirm our commitment to the actions in the political declaration adopted at the 2019 SDG Summit and the preceding HLPF declarations and recognize the urgent need to accelerate action on all levels and by all stakeholders, including through COVID-19 response and recovery efforts, to fulfil the vision and Goals of the 2030 Agenda. We also encourage all countries to use the key findings of the voluntary national reviews in supporting the implementation and accelerated actions for the decade of action and delivery. We emphasize the need for concerted action to implement the outcomes of all relevant major United Nations conferences and summits in the economic, social and environmental fields. We recognize the synergies between the implementation of the 2030 Agenda and the Paris Agreement and urge action to fully realize them.
44. Our policies and actions to respond to COVID-19 and get on track to realize the SDGs by 2030 will continue to be guided by the principle to leave no one behind. We will accelerate our efforts to proactively mainstream the 2030 Agenda into our national planning instruments, policies, strategies and financial frameworks.
45. We will enhance our work to develop effective, accountable and transparent institutions at all levels and ensure more responsive, inclusive, participatory and representative decision - making processes. We will strive to equip domestic institutions to better address interlinkages, synergies and trade-offs between the Goals and targets through a whole-of-government approach that can bring about transformative change in governance and public policy and ensure policy coherence for sustainable development.

46. We commit to involving and empowering local authorities to ensure local ownership of SDGs, in particular by citizens, and to best translate national development priorities into local realities and in this regard support voluntary local reviews as a useful tool to show progress in local implementation of the 2030 Agenda and Sustainable Development Goals.
47. We are determined to invest and cooperate in prevention and resilience as essential components of disaster risk reduction, to increase preparedness and to build back better, in accordance with the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015-2030. We will combine short term actions with long term disaster risk reduction strategies and policies, to prevent the creation of new risks, build resilience to future shocks and crises, reduce existing risks, resist shocks and mitigate their consequences, including by investing in reducing hazard exposure and vulnerability, information and communication networks, early warning systems, and evidence-based policymaking.
48. We will continue to strengthen the science-policy interface through evidence-based policy making, support for research and development, particularly harnessing science, technology and innovation, leveraging technologies to promote inclusive digital economy and connectivity and build resilience across sectors. We commend the individual scientists, technologists and innovators across the world whose work is creating pathways out of the pandemic but also note the manifest inequalities in countries' capacities and experiences. We call upon the Secretary General to present the findings of the Technology Facilitation Mechanism on learning from the experience of the pandemic to better deploy STI for the SDGs, including through improved international cooperation, for consideration at the next HLPF.
49. We commit to pursuing multilateral solutions guided by global solidarity in responding to the pandemic and realizing the SDGs, including by ensuring equitable access to the vaccine by all countries and people. We will remain guided by the Addis Ababa Action Agenda and the agreed conclusions of ECOSOC Financing for Development Forum in order to mobilize resources to support the response to COVID-19 and close the financing gap for the Sustainable Development Goals. We call on Governments, international financial institutions, the private sector and other stakeholders to increase the level of ambition in mobilizing resources to support the response to COVID-19 and invest in the sustainable development goals.
50. There is a need to invest the financing in the most socially, economically and environmentally impactful way to build resilience against future shocks and to build back better. Infrastructure impacts 92% of the SDGs. Investment in sustainable and resilient infrastructure is critical for the COVID-19 recovery achievement of the SDGs and environmental goals. Many developing countries need support in project identification and development and mobilization of private and public investment. Private sector investment can and must be scaled up significantly especially in areas such as energy,

communications, transport and technology. We recognize the important role of the UN system in addressing the funding gaps in sustainable infrastructure investment, complementing existing initiatives. We recognize the need for system wide support from the UN to developing countries to enable them to prepare and promote pipelines of investable projects. We acknowledge the availability of capital in the market seeking investment opportunities in sustainable infrastructure, but most developing countries are unable to access this capital. At the same time, investors have been unable to adequately access viable investment projects in most developing countries. We reaffirm our strong political commitment to create an enabling environment at all levels.

51. We encourage ambitious, and action-oriented and synergistic outcomes across planned high-level events in 2021 including the Second Global Sustainable Transport Conference, the Secretary-General's Food Systems Summit, the High-Level Dialogue on Energy, the High-Level Meeting on Water, Biodiversity COP15, UNFCCC COP26, and the UNCCD COP15. These events are opportunities to deliver on existing commitments, restore and conserve our natural resources, bridge the technology divide, tackle increasing inequalities, powered by multi-stakeholder partnerships and the necessary financial, technological and knowledge resources. We look forward to a concise and joint reporting back from these opportunities to the HLPF in 2022.
52. We call upon the entities of the United Nations development system to achieve and work towards building back better and ensuring a sustainable inclusive and resilient recovery as outlined in the present declaration. They should also support and work with programme countries in a coherent and collaborative manner in implementing, with urgency, sustainable solutions and catalysing partnerships, leveraging digital technologies where appropriate including with financial institutions and the private sector for achieving the Sustainable Development Goals in the post-COVID-19 era.
53. Finally, we commit to promote public engagement and innovative partnerships through a whole-of-government and whole-of-society approach, regional and local mobilization and actions, and involvement of communities, people, civil society, academia and the private sector. We will continue to ensure the meaningful participation of all relevant stakeholders in the high-level political forum. We also acknowledge the role of the civil society and volunteers in the implementation of the Goals, both individually and as part of multi-stakeholder partnerships. We will invest more in human capital to empower children and youth as critical agents of change and support their meaningful participation in realizing the vision of the 2030 Agenda.