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Sustainable development: sustainable mountain development

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Sustainable mountain development

The General Assembly,

Recalling its resolutions [55/189](#) of 20 December 2000, [57/245](#) of 20 December 2002, [58/216](#) of 23 December 2003, [59/238](#) of 22 December 2004, [60/198](#) of 22 December 2005, [62/196](#) of 19 December 2007, [64/205](#) of 21 December 2009, [66/205](#) of 22 December 2011, [68/217](#) of 20 December 2013 and [71/234](#) of 21 December 2016, entitled “Sustainable mountain development”,

Reaffirming its resolution [70/1](#) of 25 September 2015, entitled “Transforming our world: the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development”, in which it adopted a comprehensive, far-reaching and people-centred set of universal and transformative Sustainable Development Goals and targets, its commitment to working tirelessly for the full implementation of the Agenda by 2030, its recognition that eradicating poverty in all its forms and dimensions, including extreme poverty, is the greatest global challenge and an indispensable requirement for sustainable development, its commitment to achieving sustainable development in its three dimensions – economic, social and environmental – in a balanced and integrated manner, and to building upon the achievements of the Millennium Development Goals and seeking to address their unfinished business,

Recalling that the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, inter alia, recognizes that economic and social development depends on the sustainable management of our planet’s natural resources and confirms the determination of the international community to conserve and sustainably use oceans and seas and freshwater resources, as well as forests, mountains and drylands, and to protect biodiversity, ecosystems and wildlife,

Recalling also its resolution [70/299](#) of 29 July 2016, entitled “Follow-up and review of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development at the global level”,

Reaffirming its resolution [69/313](#) of 27 July 2015 on the Addis Ababa Action Agenda of the Third International Conference on Financing for Development, which



is an integral part of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, supports and complements it, helps to contextualize its means of implementation targets with concrete policies and actions, and reaffirms the strong political commitment to address the challenge of financing and creating an enabling environment at all levels for sustainable development in the spirit of global partnership and solidarity,

Reaffirming also the Paris Agreement¹ and its early entry into force, encouraging all its parties to fully implement the Agreement, and parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change² that have not yet done so to deposit their instruments of ratification, acceptance, approval or accession, where appropriate, as soon as possible,

Highlighting the synergies between the implementation of the 2030 Agenda and the Paris Agreement, and noting with concern the scientific findings contained in the special reports entitled *Global Warming of 1.5°C* and *The Ocean and Cryosphere in a Changing Climate* of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change,

Welcoming the initiatives presented during the 2019 Climate Action Summit, held in New York on 23 September,

Recalling that the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, inter alia, recognizes that developing countries with fragile mountainous ecosystems are among the countries that are particularly vulnerable to the adverse effects of climate change,

Recognizing the Sendai Declaration and the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015–2030,³ adopted at the Third United Nations World Conference on Disaster Risk Reduction, the latter of which, inter alia, identifies a need for focused action in investing in disaster risk reduction for resilience, and in this regard considers it important to promote, at the national and local levels, the mainstreaming of disaster risk assessment, mapping and management into rural development planning and management of, inter alia, mountains, including through the identification of areas that are safe for human settlement, and at the same time preserving ecosystem functions that help to reduce risks,

Recalling the outcome document of the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development, entitled “The future we want”,⁴ Agenda 21,⁵ the Plan of Implementation of the World Summit on Sustainable Development (Johannesburg Plan of Implementation)⁶ and the Aichi Biodiversity Targets of the Strategic Plan for Biodiversity 2011–2020,⁷

Recognizing that the benefits derived from mountain regions are essential for sustainable development and that mountain ecosystems play a crucial role in providing water and other essential resources and services to a large portion of the world’s population,

¹ See [FCCC/CP/2015/10/Add.1](#), decision 1/CP.21, annex.

² United Nations, *Treaty Series*, vol. 1771, No. 30822.

³ Resolution [69/283](#), annexes I and II.

⁴ Resolution [66/288](#), annex.

⁵ *Report of the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development, Rio de Janeiro, 3–14 June 1992*, vol. I, *Resolutions Adopted by the Conference* (United Nations publication, Sales No. E.93.I.8 and corrigendum), resolution 1, annex II.

⁶ *Report of the World Summit on Sustainable Development, Johannesburg, South Africa, 26 August–4 September 2002* (United Nations publication, Sales No. E.03.II.A.1 and corrigendum), chap. I, resolution 2, annex.

⁷ United Nations Environment Programme, document UNEP/CBD/COP/10/27, annex, decision X/2, annex.

Recognizing also that mountain ecosystems are highly vulnerable to the increasing adverse impacts of climate change, extreme weather events, deforestation and forest degradation, land-use change, land degradation and natural disasters, from which they recover slowly, and that mountain glaciers around the world are retreating and getting thinner, with increasing impacts on the environment, sustainable livelihoods and human well-being,

Acknowledging that, despite the progress that has been made in promoting sustainable development of mountain regions and conservation of mountain ecosystems, including their biodiversity, the prevalence of poverty, food insecurity, social exclusion, environmental degradation and exposure to the risk of disasters is still increasing, particularly in developing countries, and access to safe and affordable drinking water and basic sanitation as well as to sustainable modern energy services continues to be limited,

Noting with deep concern that, according to the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, about 340 million people in rural mountain areas in developing countries – 55 per cent of the total rural mountain population – were considered vulnerable to food insecurity in 2017, a steep increase compared with 2012, and in this regard acknowledging the need to prioritize the special and urgent attention needed by mountain areas, including by focusing on the specific challenges they face and the opportunities they provide,

Noting the collaborative efforts of the International Partnership for Sustainable Development in Mountain Regions (Mountain Partnership), launched during the World Summit on Sustainable Development as a multi-stakeholder approach benefiting from the committed support of 381 members, including 60 Governments, 16 intergovernmental organizations, 297 major groups and 8 subnational authorities, and engaged in the promotion of sustainable development in its three dimensions – economic, social and environmental – in mountain regions,

Noting also the establishment of groups of friends aimed at the promotion of sustainable mountain development, such as the Mountain Focus Group and the Group of Friends of Mountainous Countries, and noting further the recent high-level ministerial event on sustainable mountain development organized by Kyrgyzstan on behalf of the Group of Friends of Mountainous Countries that was held in New York on 26 September 2019,

1. *Takes note* of the report of the Secretary-General on sustainable mountain development;⁸

2. *Encourages* States to adopt a long-term vision and holistic approaches, including through incorporating mountain-specific policies into national sustainable development strategies, increase efforts to end poverty in all its forms and dimensions, address food insecurity and malnutrition, promote the conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity, traditional crops and diets and fight against social exclusion, environmental degradation and disaster risk in mountain areas, taking into account that an integrated landscape approach which addresses natural resources management, including watershed and sustainable forest management as well as climate change resilience through multi-stakeholder approaches, can lead to the sustainable development of highland areas, the improvement of the livelihood of the local mountain communities and the sustainable use of mountain resources;

3. *Also encourages* States to participate in the Mountain Partnership, the only United Nations voluntary alliance of Governments and organizations dedicated to achieving sustainable mountain development around the world, and takes note of the

⁸ A/74/209.

Mountain Partnership framework for action on implementing the 2030 Agenda for mountains, as well as the work of the Mountain Partnership Products initiative;

4. *Stresses* the special vulnerability of people living in mountain environments, often with limited access to health, education and economic systems and particularly at risk because of the negative impact of extreme natural phenomena, and invites States to strengthen cooperative action, with the effective involvement and sharing of knowledge and experience of all relevant stakeholders, including traditional knowledge of indigenous peoples living in mountain areas and knowledge of local mountain communities, by strengthening existing arrangements, agreements and centres of excellence for sustainable mountain development, as well as exploring new arrangements and agreements, as appropriate;

5. *Also stresses* the importance of innovative solutions for the diversification of livelihoods and income enhancement opportunities for local mountain communities, and in this regard encourages the promotion of innovative solutions and entrepreneurship within local mountain communities, as appropriate, to end poverty and hunger;

6. *Further stresses* the importance of mountain family farming communities as custodians of cultural heritage, and encourages Member States to support the activities related to the United Nations Decade of Family Farming (2019–2028) to promote national policies that support secure land tenure, provide access to resources, ensure gender equality, empower women and vulnerable groups and retain youth in mountain regions;

7. *Stresses* that the traditions and knowledge of indigenous peoples living in mountain areas and the knowledge of local mountain communities, particularly in the fields of agriculture and medicine, should be fully considered, respected and promoted in development policy, strategies and programmes in mountain regions, and underlines the need to promote the full participation and involvement of local mountain communities in decisions that affect them and to integrate indigenous and local knowledge, heritage and values in all development initiatives, in consultation with and with the consent of the concerned indigenous peoples and local mountain communities, as appropriate;

8. *Recognizes* the need to increase the resilience and sustainability of food and agricultural production with regard to climate change, notes that sustainable production practices and the conservation of agrobiodiversity in mountain areas ensure food security and nutrition and dietary diversity and quality, generate income for smallholder farmers and aid conservation and restoration, addressing the particular vulnerabilities of food production systems to the adverse impacts of climate change, and also notes that mountain farmers and pastoralists play a key role in agroecology;

9. *Notes* that women are often the primary managers of mountain resources and the main actors in agriculture, underlines the need for improved access to resources, including land and economic and financial services, for women in mountain regions, as well as the need to strengthen the role of women in mountain regions in decision-making processes that affect their communities, cultures and environments, and encourages Governments and intergovernmental organizations to integrate the gender dimension, including data disaggregated by sex, in mountain development activities, programmes and projects;

10. *Recognizes* that mountains provide sensitive indications of climate change through phenomena such as modifications to biological diversity, the retreat of mountain glaciers, flash floods and changes in seasonal runoff, which are having an impact on major sources of freshwater in the world, and stresses the need to undertake

actions to minimize the negative effects of these phenomena, promote adaptation measures and prevent the loss of biological diversity;

11. *Encourages* Member States to collect at the local, national and regional levels, as appropriate, disaggregated scientific data on mountain areas through systematic monitoring, including of trends of progress and change, based on relevant criteria, to support interdisciplinary research programmes and projects and to enhance an integrated and inclusive approach to decision-making and planning, and in this regard takes note of the consideration of the Mountain Green Cover Index, the indicator for target 15.4 of the Sustainable Development Goals, and the need to validate the related national data and improve its data accuracy and analysis at the country level for the implementation of appropriate policies aimed at restoring and protecting mountain environments;

12. *Encourages* Member States and all relevant stakeholders to continue to increase public awareness through worldwide occasions such as International Mountain Day, on 11 December, established in its resolution [57/245](#), with respect to the economic benefits that mountains provide, not only to highland communities but also to a large portion of the world's population living in lowland areas;

13. *Welcomes*, in this regard, the contribution of sustainable tourism initiatives in mountain regions as a way to enhance environmental protection and generate socioeconomic benefits for local communities, including opportunities for productive employment, economic growth and the promotion of local culture and products;

14. *Expresses its deep concern* at the number and scale of natural and man-made disasters and their increasing impact in recent years, which have resulted in massive loss of life and long-term negative social, economic and environmental consequences for societies throughout the world, and recognizes that disaster risk reduction requires a broader and more people-centred preventive approach and an all-of-society engagement and partnership, empowerment and inclusive, accessible and non-discriminatory participation, paying special attention to people disproportionately affected by disasters, especially the poorest, and also taking into account the vulnerability of people living in mountain environments, especially those in developing countries;

15. *Encourages* States to strengthen disaster risk governance, to invest in disaster risk reduction for resilience and to develop and improve disaster risk strategies in mountain regions through increased generation and use of climate and disaster risk information, development of hazard risk maps and platforms, improvement of early warning systems and application of the risk-based approach in all development planning, in order to cope with such extreme events as rockfalls, avalanches, glacial lake outburst floods and landslides, which can be exacerbated by climate change and deforestation, consistent with the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015–2030;⁹

16. *Encourages*, in this regard, the increased involvement of local authorities, as well as other relevant stakeholders, in particular the rural population, indigenous peoples, civil society and the private sector, in the development and implementation of programmes, land-use planning and land tenure arrangements, and in other relevant activities related to sustainable development in mountains;

17. *Notes* the importance of ensuring the conservation of mountain ecosystems, including their biodiversity, in order to enhance their capacity to provide benefits that are essential for human well-being, economic activity and sustainable development, and of developing innovative means of implementation for their

⁹ Resolution [69/283](#), annex II.

protection, recognizes in this regard the establishment of the Mountain Partnership Secretariat beneficiary fund, and encourages States and other relevant stakeholders to financially support it on a voluntary basis;

18. *Encourages* greater efforts by States, all stakeholders and the international community towards the conservation of mountain ecosystems and the enhancement of the well-being of their local populations, including by promoting investment in infrastructure in mountain areas, such as transport and information and communication technologies, and supporting education, extension and capacity-building programmes, especially among local mountain communities and other relevant stakeholders, taking into account the extent of the current challenges that they face and bearing in mind the increased economic, social and environmental costs that inaction might represent for countries and societies;

19. *Underlines* the fact that action at the national level is a key factor in achieving progress in sustainable mountain development, welcomes its steady increase in recent years with a multitude of events, activities and initiatives, and invites the international community to support the efforts of developing countries to develop and implement strategies and programmes, including, where required, enabling policies and laws for the sustainable development of mountains, within the framework of national sustainable development plans, including by building and strengthening institutional capacities, as appropriate;

20. *Encourages* the further undertaking of multi-stakeholder and transboundary initiatives at the national, regional and global levels, where appropriate, such as those supported by all relevant international and regional organizations, to enhance sustainable development in mountain regions, and notes in this regard the numerous initiatives undertaken, including the fifth global meeting of the Mountain Partnership, held in Rome from 11 to 13 December 2017, and the fourth World Mountain Forum, held in Bishkek from 23 to 26 October 2018;

21. *Encourages* all relevant entities of the United Nations system, within their respective mandates, to further enhance their constructive efforts to strengthen inter-agency collaboration to promote sustainable mountain development;

22. *Recognizes* that mountain ranges are usually shared among several countries, and in this context encourages transboundary cooperation approaches where the States concerned agree to the sustainable development of mountain ranges and information-sharing in this regard;

23. *Notes with appreciation*, in this context, the Convention on the Protection of the Alps¹⁰ and the Framework Convention on the Protection and Sustainable Development of the Carpathians, which promote constructive new approaches to integrated, sustainable mountain development and provide a forum for dialogue among stakeholders, as well as other transboundary approaches and initiatives such as the Mountain Partnership Andean Initiative, the Scientific Network for the Caucasus Mountain Region, the African Mountains Regional Forum, the European Union Strategy for the Alpine Region and the Zurich process, the Hindu Kush Himalayan Partnership for Sustainable Mountain Development, the International Snow Leopard and Ecosystem Forum of 2017 and the World Nomad Games of 2018;

24. *Requests* the Secretary-General to report to the General Assembly at its seventy-seventh session on the implementation of the present resolution under the sub-item entitled “Sustainable mountain development” of the item entitled “Sustainable development”, unless otherwise agreed.

¹⁰ United Nations, *Treaty Series*, vol. 1917, No. 32724.