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Sustainable development: protection of global climate for present and future generations of humankind

Resolution adopted by the General Assembly on 21 December 2020

[on the report of the Second Committee (A/75/457/Add.4, para. 20)]

75/217. Protection of global climate for present and future generations of humankind

The General Assembly,

Recalling its resolutions [43/53](#) of 6 December 1988, [54/222](#) of 22 December 1999, [62/86](#) of 10 December 2007, [63/32](#) of 26 November 2008, [64/73](#) of 7 December 2009, [65/159](#) of 20 December 2010, [66/200](#) of 22 December 2011, [67/210](#) of 21 December 2012, [68/212](#) of 20 December 2013, [69/220](#) of 19 December 2014, [70/205](#) of 22 December 2015, [71/228](#) of 21 December 2016, [72/219](#) of 20 December 2017, [73/232](#) of 20 December 2018 and [74/219](#) of 19 December 2019 and other resolutions and decisions relating to the protection of the global climate for present and future generations of humankind,

Recalling also the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change¹ and the Paris Agreement adopted under the Convention,² acknowledging that they are the primary international, intergovernmental forums for negotiating the global response to climate change, expressing determination to address decisively the threat posed by climate change and environmental degradation, recognizing that the global nature of climate change calls for the widest possible international cooperation aimed at accelerating the reduction of global greenhouse gas emissions and addressing adaptation to the adverse impacts of climate change, and noting with concern the significant gap between the aggregate effect of parties' mitigation pledges, in particular their nationally determined contributions, as appropriate, and aggregate emission pathways,

Recalling further the Paris Agreement, which, pursuant to article 2, paragraph 2, thereof, will be implemented to reflect equity and the principle of common but

¹ United Nations, *Treaty Series*, vol. 1771, No. 30822.

² See [FCCC/CP/2015/10/Add.1](#), decision 1/CP.21, annex.



differentiated responsibilities and respective capabilities, in the light of different national circumstances,

Concerned that a prolonged economic downturn following the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic will adversely impact the implementation of the Paris Agreement and the ability of countries, especially developing countries, to adequately respond to the adverse impacts of climate change, emphasizing that, in the response to the crisis, countries should keep the Sustainable Development Goals and climate commitments in focus, taking note of the “United in Science 2020” report compiled by the World Meteorological Organization, and emphasizing the importance of countries keeping their commitments to the implementation of the Paris Agreement,

Noting with great concern the threat to human health, safety and well-being caused by the COVID-19 pandemic, as well as the severe disruption to societies and economies and the devastating impact on lives and livelihoods, and that the poorest and most vulnerable are the hardest hit by the pandemic, reaffirming the ambition to get back on track to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals by designing sustainable and inclusive recovery strategies to accelerate progress towards the full implementation of the 2030 Agenda and to help to reduce the risk of future shocks, and recognizing that the COVID-19 pandemic requires a global response based on unity, solidarity and renewed multilateral cooperation,

Acknowledging that action on adaptation to climate change is an urgent priority and a global challenge faced by all countries, in particular developing countries, especially those that are particularly vulnerable to the adverse effects of climate change, recognizing that the current need for adaptation is significant and that greater levels of mitigation can reduce the need for additional adaptation efforts, and bearing in mind that the provision of scaled-up financial resources should aim to achieve a balance between adaptation and mitigation,

Welcoming the convening of the twenty-sixth session of the Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, the sixteenth session of the Conference of the Parties serving as the Meeting of the Parties to the Kyoto Protocol and the third session of the Conference of the Parties serving as the Meeting of the Parties to the Paris Agreement, presided over by the Government of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, in Glasgow, from 1 to 12 November 2021,

Recalling the United Nations Millennium Declaration,³ the Johannesburg Declaration on Sustainable Development⁴ and the Plan of Implementation of the World Summit on Sustainable Development (Johannesburg Plan of Implementation),⁵ the 2005 World Summit Outcome,⁶ the outcome document of the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development, held in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, from 20 to 22 June 2012, entitled “The future we want”,⁷ the outcomes of the sessions of the Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change and of the sessions of the Conference of the Parties serving as the Meeting of the Parties to the Kyoto Protocol, the Programme of Action for the Least Developed Countries for the Decade 2011–2020, adopted at the Fourth United Nations Conference

³ Resolution 55/2.

⁴ *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 1, annex.

⁵ *Ibid.*, resolution 2, annex.

⁶ Resolution 60/1.

⁷ Resolution 66/288, annex.

on the Least Developed Countries, held in Istanbul, Turkey, from 9 to 13 May 2011,⁸ the Political Declaration of the Comprehensive High-level Midterm Review of the Implementation of the Istanbul Programme of Action for the Least Developed Countries for the Decade 2011–2020, held in Antalya, Turkey, from 27 to 29 May 2016,⁹ the Vienna Programme of Action for Landlocked Developing Countries for the Decade 2014–2024, adopted at the second United Nations Conference on Landlocked Developing Countries, held in Vienna from 3 to 5 November 2014,¹⁰ the Programme of Action for the Sustainable Development of Small Island Developing States,¹¹ the Mauritius Declaration¹² and the Mauritius Strategy for the Further Implementation of the Programme of Action for the Sustainable Development of Small Island Developing States,¹³ the SIDS Accelerated Modalities of Action (SAMOA) Pathway,¹⁴ the Sendai Declaration and the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015–2030,¹⁵ the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action,¹⁶ and the New Urban Agenda, adopted at the United Nations Conference on Housing and Sustainable Urban Development (Habitat III), held in Quito from 17 to 20 October 2016,¹⁷

Noting the contribution of various initiatives, including the Global Platform for Disaster Risk Reduction, as well as regional and subregional platforms for disaster risk reduction, to promoting coherence between disaster risk reduction, sustainable development and efforts to mitigate climate change and the findings of the 2019 *Global Assessment Report on Disaster Risk Reduction*, and recognizing that disaster risk reduction efforts consistent with the Sendai Framework contribute to strengthening resilience and climate change adaptation, and in this regard highlighting synergies which help to ensure progress towards sustainable 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,

Reaffirming also 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

⁸ *Report of the Fourth United Nations Conference on the Least Developed Countries, Istanbul, Turkey, 9–13 May 2011 (A/CONF.219/7)*, chap. II.

⁹ Resolution 70/294, annex.

¹⁰ Resolution 69/137, annex II.

¹¹ *Report of the Global Conference on the Sustainable Development of Small Island Developing States, Bridgetown, Barbados, 25 April–6 May 1994* (United Nations publication, Sales No. E.94.I.18 and corrigenda), chap. I, resolution 1, annex II.

¹² *Report of the International Meeting to Review the Implementation of the Programme of Action for the Sustainable Development of Small Island Developing States, Port Louis, Mauritius, 10–14 January 2005* (United Nations publication, Sales No. E.05.II.A.4 and corrigendum), chap. I, resolution 1, annex I.

¹³ *Ibid.*, annex II.

¹⁴ Resolution 69/15, annex.

¹⁵ Resolution 69/283, annexes I and II.

¹⁶ *Report of the Fourth World Conference on Women, Beijing, 4–15 September 1995* (United Nations publication, Sales No. E.96.IV.13), chap. I, resolution 1, annexes I and II.

¹⁷ Resolution 71/256, annex.

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,

Noting with concern the findings contained in the special report of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change on the impacts of global warming of 1.5 degrees Celsius above pre-industrial levels and related global greenhouse gas emission pathways, *Global Warming of 1.5°C*, in the context of strengthening the global response to the threat of climate change, sustainable development and efforts to eradicate poverty,

Noting also with concern the findings contained in the special report of the Intergovernmental Panel entitled *Climate Change, Desertification, Land Degradation, Sustainable Land Management, Food Security, and Greenhouse Gas Fluxes in Terrestrial Ecosystems*, and noting further with concern the findings contained in the special report of the Intergovernmental Panel entitled *The Ocean and Cryosphere in a Changing Climate*,

Reiterating its support for the objectives and guiding principles of the Green Climate Fund, including a gender-sensitive approach in its process and operations, and stressing its goal of ensuring efficient access to its resources through simplified approval procedures and enhancing readiness support, which will help to deliver outcomes in developing countries so as to limit or reduce greenhouse gas emissions and help them adapt to the impacts of climate change,

Welcoming the pledges made to the Green Climate Fund as a part of the current first formal replenishment process, including at the 2019 Climate Action Summit convened by the Secretary-General, held on 23 September, and at the high-level pledging conference of the Green Climate Fund, held in Paris in October 2019, totalling 9.99 billion United States dollars as at 12 November 2020,¹⁸ which, including credits earned due to early payment and/or encashment based on the reference exchange rate for the first replenishment of the Fund, brings total pledges to well over 10 billion United States dollars at today's exchange rate, emphasizing the importance of a successful process so that the Fund continues to be one of the main channels to enable the flow of financial resources to developing countries under the Paris Agreement and the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change,

Stressing that low greenhouse gas emission development can create employment opportunities and quality jobs, in accordance with nationally defined development priorities,

Recalling the United Nations strategic plan for forests 2017–2030,¹⁹ and acknowledging that all types of forests contribute substantially to climate change mitigation and adaptation,

Noting that forests are addressed under the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, and noting also article 5 of the Paris Agreement,

Recognizing that climate change is a major and growing driver of biodiversity loss and ecosystem degradation and that the conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity, and ecosystem functions and services, contribute significantly to climate

¹⁸ Green Climate Fund, status of pledges and contributions (first replenishment: GCF-1) as at 31 October 2020, available at www.greenclimate.fund/sites/default/files/document/status-pledges-irm-gcf1_0.pdf.

¹⁹ See resolution 71/285.

change adaptation and mitigation, disaster risk reduction and food security and nutrition,

Welcoming the summit on biodiversity held on 30 September 2020, and looking forward to the fifteenth session of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity, to be held in Kunming, China, from 17 to 30 May 2021, which will adopt a post-2020 global biodiversity framework,

Noting the need for enhanced coordination and cooperation at all levels among the parties to and secretariats of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification in Those Countries Experiencing Serious Drought and/or Desertification, Particularly in Africa,²⁰ and the Convention on Biological Diversity,²¹ as appropriate, while respecting their individual mandates,

Noting also the contribution of the United Nations Environment Assembly to addressing the challenge of, inter alia, climate change, within its mandate and in collaboration with other relevant organizations and stakeholders,

Recalling its resolution 71/312 of 6 July 2017, entitled “Our ocean, our future: call for action”, and looking forward to the 2021 United Nations Conference to Support the Implementation of Sustainable Development Goal 14: Conserve and sustainably use the oceans, seas and marine resources for sustainable development,

Recognizing that, in undertaking its work, the United Nations should promote the protection of the global climate for the well-being of present and future generations of humankind,

Recalling the entry into force on 1 January 2019 of the Kigali Amendment to the Montreal Protocol on Substances that Deplete the Ozone Layer,²² welcoming its ratification by 111 countries and one regional economic integration organization, while encouraging further ratifications as soon as possible, and recalling the thirty-first Meeting of the Parties to the Montreal Protocol, held on 14 and 15 November 2019 in Rome,

Noting with appreciation the interactive dialogue on Harmony with Nature convened by the President of the General Assembly under the overall theme “Mother Earth approach” in the implementation of education and climate action in harmony with nature, held on 22 April 2019, in commemoration of International Mother Earth Day,

Noting the contributions of the International Civil Aviation Organization to global efforts to combat climate change, and noting also the contributions of the International Maritime Organization in this regard,

Encouraging Member States to advance innovative pathways to achieving sustainable consumption and production in line with United Nations Environment Assembly resolution 4/1,²³

1. *Reaffirms* that climate change is one of the greatest challenges of our time, expresses profound alarm that the emissions of greenhouse gases continue to rise globally, remains deeply concerned that all countries, particularly developing countries, are vulnerable to the adverse impacts of climate change and are already experiencing an increase in such impacts, including persistent drought and extreme weather events, land degradation, sea level rise, coastal erosion, ocean acidification

²⁰ United Nations, *Treaty Series*, vol. 1954, No. 33480.

²¹ *Ibid.*, vol. 1760, No. 30619.

²² UNEP/OzL.Pro.28/12, annex I.

²³ UNEP/EA.4/Res.1.

and the retreat of mountain glaciers, further threatening food security, water availability and livelihoods, and efforts to eradicate poverty in all its forms and dimensions and achieve sustainable development, recognizes the substantial risks posed by climate change to health, and emphasizes in this regard that mitigation of and adaptation to climate change represent an immediate and urgent global priority;

2. *Urges* Member States to adopt a climate- and environment-responsive approach to COVID-19 recovery efforts, including by aligning investments and domestic policies with the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development²⁴ and the goals of the Paris Agreement for its parties, and the ultimate objective of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, in order to build back better and accelerate a transition to low-emission, climate-resilient, inclusive and sustainable economies and societies, in this regard stresses the need to strengthen the global response to climate change by increasing the ability of countries to adapt to the adverse effects of climate change, fostering resilience, accelerating the full implementation of all the Goals and targets of the 2030 Agenda and integrating climate change measures into national policies, strategies and planning, urges parties to the Paris Agreement to communicate or update ambitious nationally determined contributions by 2020, noting that article 4, paragraph 3, of the Agreement states that each party's successive nationally determined contribution will represent a progression beyond the party's then current nationally determined contribution and reflect its highest possible ambition, reflecting its common but differentiated responsibilities and respective capabilities, in the light of different national circumstances, encourages parties to formulate and communicate long-term strategies on the basis of the best available scientific knowledge and with a view to achieving the purpose of the Agreement and make financial flows consistent with a pathway towards low greenhouse gas emissions and climate-resilient development, and stresses the importance of mobilizing means of implementation from all sources, including adequate financial support, inter alia, for mitigation and adaptation, 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;

3. *Reaffirms* the Paris Agreement and its early entry into force, encourages all the parties to the Agreement to fully implement the Agreement and parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change that have not yet done so to deposit their instruments of ratification, acceptance, approval or accession, where appropriate, as soon as possible, and highlights the synergies between the implementation of the 2030 Agenda and the Paris Agreement;

4. *Recalls* that the Paris Agreement, in enhancing the implementation of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, including its objective, aims to strengthen the global response to the threat of climate change, in the context of sustainable development and efforts to eradicate poverty, including by holding the increase in the global average temperature to well below 2 degrees Celsius above pre-industrial levels and pursuing efforts to limit the temperature increase to 1.5 degrees Celsius above pre-industrial levels, recognizing that this would significantly reduce the risks and impacts of climate change, increasing the ability to adapt to the adverse impacts of climate change and foster climate resilience and low greenhouse gas emissions development in a manner that does not threaten food production, and making finance flows consistent with a pathway towards low greenhouse gas emissions and climate-resilient development;

5. *Welcomes* the nationally determined contributions submitted to date, and recalls that the regular updating of such contributions will reflect the highest possible level of ambition, in the light of different national circumstances, and provide the

²⁴ Resolution 70/1.

information necessary for clarity, transparency and understanding, in accordance with the relevant decisions;

6. *Notes with concern* that the nationally determined contributions presented thus far by the parties to the Paris Agreement are not sufficient and that action is needed to hold the increase in the global average temperature to well below 2 degrees Celsius above pre-industrial levels and to pursue efforts to limit the temperature increase to 1.5 degrees Celsius above pre-industrial levels, and underlines the importance of the request in decision 1/CP.21²⁵ of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention to the Parties to the Paris Agreement, as appropriate, to communicate or update by 2020 their nationally determined contributions;

7. *Stresses* the urgent need to enhance adaptive capacity, strengthen resilience and reduce vulnerability to climate change and extreme weather events, and in this regard urges Member States to continue to engage in adaptation planning processes and to enhance cooperation, namely disaster risk reduction;

8. *Welcomes* the Paris Agreement work programme, commonly referred to as the Katowice Rulebook, adopted at the third part of the first session of the Conference of the Parties serving as the Meeting of the Parties to the Paris Agreement,²⁶ and encourages Parties to the Paris Agreement to finalize outstanding decisions in upcoming sessions;

9. *Takes note* of the report of the Executive Secretary of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change on the twenty-fifth session of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention;²⁷

10. *Emphasizes* the need for collective efforts to promote sustainable development in its three dimensions in an innovative, coordinated, environmentally sound, open and shared manner;

11. *Underlines* the need to address the economic, social and environmental impacts of climate change, and emphasizes the need for action at all levels, to enhance efforts to build resilience through, inter alia, the sustainable management of ecosystems, and to build resilience to reduce the impacts and costs of natural disasters;

12. *Recognizes* 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;

13. *Acknowledges* the work undertaken under the auspices of the Marrakech Partnership for Global Climate Action,²⁸ and encourages non-party stakeholders to scale up their efforts to address and respond to climate change;

14. *Welcomes* the holding of the 2019 Climate Action Summit convened by the Secretary-General on 23 September, notes the multi-partner initiatives and commitments presented during the Summit and notes also the Youth Climate Summit, held on 21 September 2019;

15. *Also welcomes* the convening by the President of the General Assembly of the high-level meeting during the seventy-third session of the General Assembly on the issue of the protection of the global climate for present and future generations of humankind in the context of the economic, social and environmental dimensions of the 2030 Agenda;

16. *Reiterates* the resolve of the Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, as set out in paragraphs 3 and 4

²⁵ See [FCCC/CP/2015/10/Add.1](#).

²⁶ See [FCCC/CP/2018/10/Add.1](#).

²⁷ [A/75/256](#), sect. I.

²⁸ See [FCCC/CP/2016/10/Add.1](#).

of its decision 1/CP.19,²⁹ to accelerate the full implementation of the decisions constituting the agreed outcome pursuant to its decision 1/CP.13³⁰ and to enhance ambition in the pre-2020 period in line with decision 1/CP.21, in order to ensure the highest possible mitigation efforts under the Convention by all parties;

17. *Welcomes* the further acceptance or ratification of the Doha Amendment to the Kyoto Protocol³¹ by 146 countries and one regional economic integration organization, meeting the threshold for its entry into force, and welcomes the efforts of those parties that were already implementing the Doha Amendment prior to its entry into force;

18. *Recognizes* the importance for all countries of averting, minimizing and addressing loss and damage associated with the adverse effects of climate change, including extreme weather events and slow-onset events, and the role of sustainable development in reducing the risk of loss and damage, and in that regard looks forward to the outcome of the review of the Warsaw International Mechanism for Loss and Damage associated with Climate Change Impacts, in the context of relevant decisions of the Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change and article 8 of the Paris Agreement;

19. *Looks forward* to the hosting by the Government of the United Kingdom, in Glasgow, of the twenty-sixth session of the Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, the sixteenth session of the Conference of the Parties serving as the Meeting of the Parties to the Kyoto Protocol and the third session of the Conference of the Parties serving as the Meeting of the Parties to the Paris Agreement, from 1 to 12 November 2021;

20. *Urges* Member States, taking into account that women and girls are often disproportionately affected by climate change owing to gender inequalities and the dependence of many women on natural resources for their livelihoods, to promote the integration of a gender perspective into environmental and climate change policies and to strengthen mechanisms and provide adequate resources towards achieving the full and equal participation of women in decision-making at all levels on environmental issues, and stresses the need to address the challenges posed by climate change that affect women and girls in particular, including through the full implementation of the new gender action plan adopted by the Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change at its twenty-third session,³² and looks forward to its review with a view to advancing towards the goal of promoting gender-responsive and equal and meaningful participation of women in support of climate action;

21. *Recalls* the action plan for integrating sustainable development practices into Secretariat-wide operations and facilities management submitted by the Secretary-General³³ and endorsed in its resolution [72/219](#);

22. *Notes* the ongoing work and potential of the Local Communities and Indigenous Peoples Platform of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, established for the exchange of experiences and sharing of best practices on mitigation and adaptation in a holistic and integrated manner, and recalls decision 2/CP.23 of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention on the Platform's

²⁹ See [FCCC/CP/2013/10/Add.1](#).

³⁰ See [FCCC/CP/2007/6/Add.1](#).

³¹ See [FCCC/KP/CMP/2012/13/Add.1](#).

³² [FCCC/CP/2017/11/Add.1](#), decision 3/CP.23, annex.

³³ [A/72/82](#).

purpose and functions³⁴ and decision 2/CP.24 of the Conference of the Parties on the Platform's governance and further operationalization;³⁵

23. *Decides* to include in the United Nations calendar of conferences and meetings for the years 2022 and 2023 the sessions of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention and its subsidiary bodies envisaged for the years 2022 and 2023;

24. *Invites* the secretariat of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change to report, through the Secretary-General, to the General Assembly at its seventy-sixth session, on the work of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention, and decides to include in the provisional agenda of its seventy-sixth session, under the item entitled "Sustainable development", the sub-item entitled "Protection of global climate for present and future generations of humankind".

*48th plenary meeting
21 December 2020*

³⁴ See [FCCC/CP/2017/11/Add.1](#).

³⁵ See [FCCC/CP/2018/10/Add.1](#).