

**ZERO DRAFT**

**Doha Programme of Action for Least Developed Countries**

**Introduction -- Istanbul Priorities to**

1. Fifty years ago in September 1981, the international community met in Paris, France for the First United Nations Conference on the Least Developed Countries and launched the Substantial New Programme of Action for the Least Developed Countries (SNPA) for the 1980s with an ambitious objective of transforming the economies of the least developed countries (LDCs) toward self-sustained development and enabling them to provide at least internationally accepted minimum standards of nutrition, health, transport, communication, housing and education as well as job opportunities to their citizens, particularly to the rural and urban poor.

2. Now, we are meeting for the fifth time, in the most unprecedented of circumstances, in which a health and socio-economic crisis has shaken everyone, individually and collectively. The world is plagued by growing poverty, inequality, digital divide, vaccine divide, complex conflicts, insecurity, climate change and pandemics. Of greatest concern is that one in every three people in LDCs still live in extreme poverty and the pandemic has caused this figure to rise further. We call for greater action and extraordinary measures by all countries, and strengthened international cooperation, to address these challenges affecting LDCs.

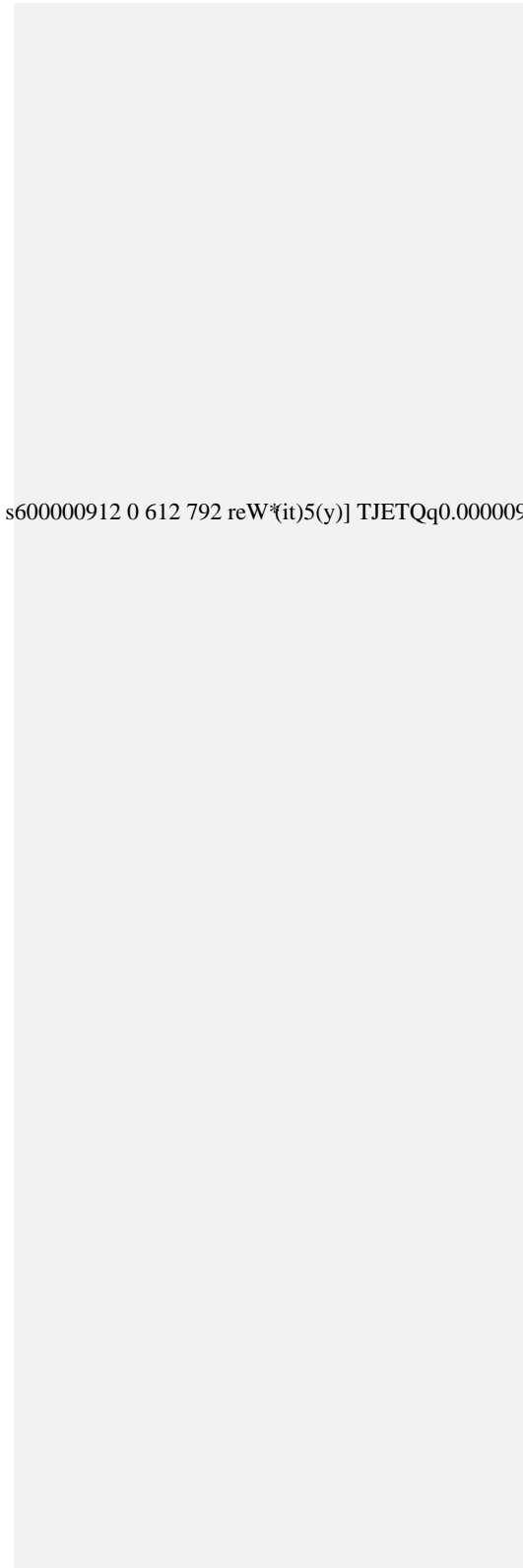
3. We have entered the Decade of Action the most critical time of our generation-to realize our collective ambitions of building back better from COVID-19 and leaving no one behind. We reaffirm our commitment to implementing the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and full realization of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) in LDCs. We commit to taking more tangible steps to support the LDCs and to reach the furthest behind first.

4. The LDCs saw their economies significantly shrink in 2020, amidst a severe global recession caused by the COVID-19 pandemic; external



11. in only a handful of countries; tax to gross domestic product ratios that increased very slowly; and the national adaptation plans that hardly meet the requirements of the Sendai Framework.

12. We further note with concern that progress towards the Sustainable Development Goals in the LDCs has been uneven and is not on pace to achieve the goals and targets by 2030. The number of people living in extreme poverty remained at around 32 percent and those suffering from hunger is on the rise; the inequalities between LDCs and the rest of the world as well as within LDCs are rising; infant and maternal mortality is exorbitantly high; access to energy and broadband connectivity is moving at a slower pace; structural transformation is not taking hold; infrastructure building is lagging far behind the actual needs; productive capacity and export competitiveness are weak; climate change is occurring much faster than anticipated, as evidenced by, inter alia, the devastating impacts on oceans and seas, the loss of vulnerable ecosystems, land degradation, the retreat of mounta

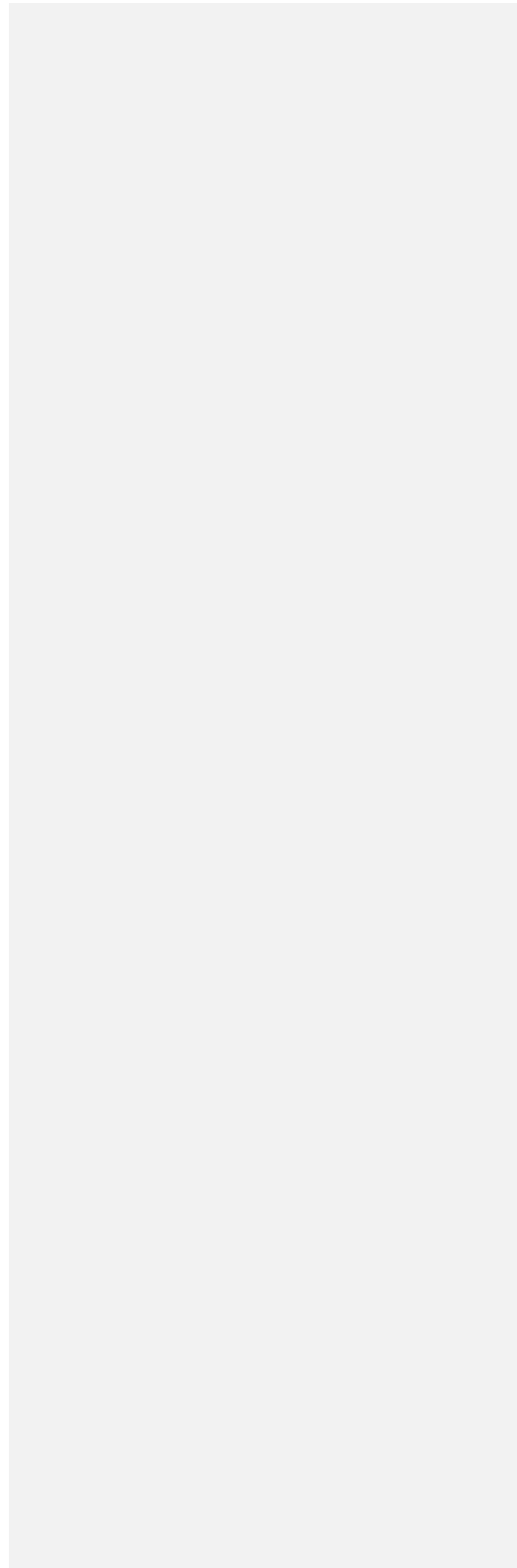


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17.18. The private sector, civil society and foundations will be encouraged to contribute

[18.19.](#) The COVID-19 pandemic, the Ebola crisis, the financial crisis and climate

| commitments- must be met, and action must be taken beyond existing commitments to bring about transformational change in LDCs. The United Nations system, including its specialized agencies as well as the



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World Bank Group and IMF, provide technical support, assistance and policy advice to all priority areas for the LDCs, and this support will be improved including through additional concessional finance and the coordination between agencies and departments, using approaches such as the Integrated National Financing Frameworks.

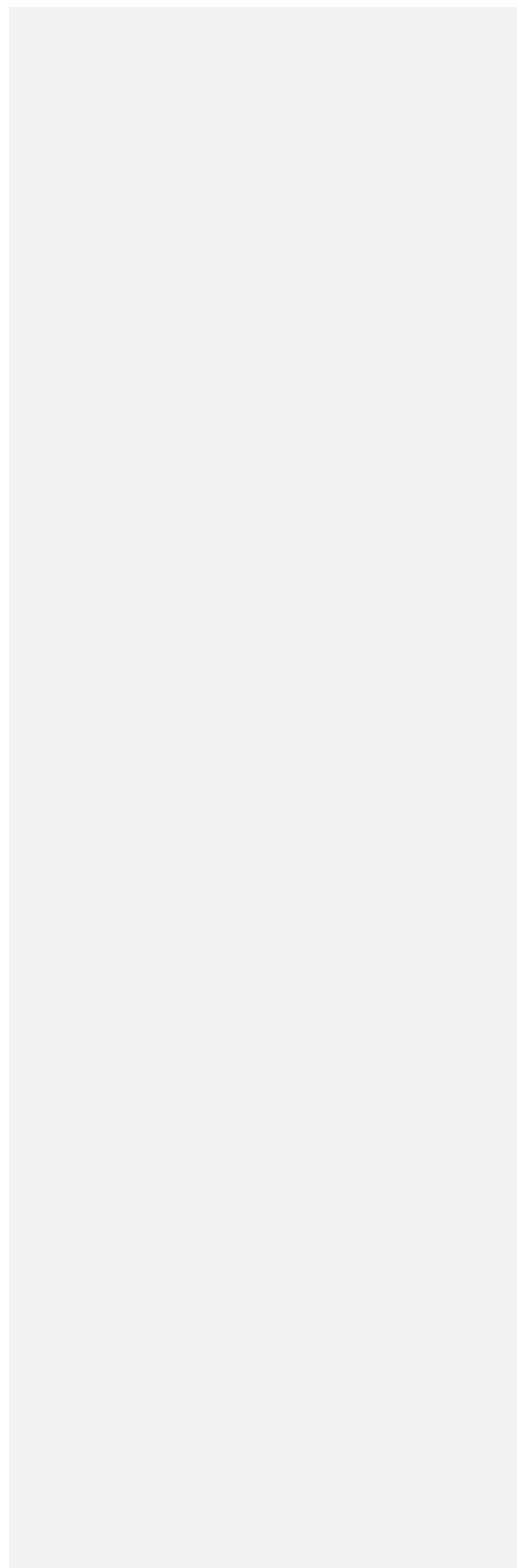
24.25. We affirm that the national and local governments

well-educated population, with the knowledge and skills needed for productive capacity building and full participation in the decision making process are crucial to achieving sustainable development. However, LDCs still face challenges in ensuring universal access to quality education and health care



**Achieving universal access to quality education**

37.38.



~~44.45.~~ We commit to supporting the LDCs to access digital equipment, including low-cost laptops or other devices, as well as educational radio and television programmes and the distribution of equipment such as radios and textbooks to the poorest and marginalized households, especially for girls. We further commit to supporting large-scale national efforts to utilize technology in support of remote learning and online education.

~~45.46.~~ We will enhance interaction, collaboration and exchange programmes of students as well as share scientific studies and research papers between academic institutions of LDCs and the rest of the world. We will significantly increase the number of scholarships to LDCs and invite higher education institutes to allocate places and scholarships for students and trainees from LDCs, in particular in the fields of science, technology, engineering, medicines and business administration in developed countries and other developing countries.

~~46.47.~~ We will establish an online university for LDCs with high academic excellence and international standard and global recognition of its certification, primarily dedicated to teaching graduate and post-graduate studies on S

making in political, economic, and public life, including through institutional reforms.

50.51. We commit to eliminating all forms of violence against all women and girls in the public and private spheres,

in LDCs.

~~58-59.~~ We reaffirm the decision of the Council for TRIPS on the Extension of the Transition Period Under Article 66.1 of the TRIPS Agreement for LDCs Members for Certain Obligations With Respect to Pharmaceutical Products until 1 January 2033, and commit to providing financial and technical support to LDCs through technology transfer as obliged under Article 66.2 of the TRIPS Agreement with a view to enabling LDCs to produce life-saving medicines including the vaccine for COVID-19. We call on WTO members to extend the same benefits for twelve years for countries graduated from LDC category.

~~59-60.~~ We commit to providing necessary support to LDCs to ensure birth registration for all newborns in LDCs and provide a national identity or social security number to them.

### **Investing in youth**

~~60-61.~~ In 2020, 66.9 per cent of the population was below 30 years old. By 2030 one in five of the youth in the world will be born in the LDCs. In 2019, more than one in five of the youth were not in employment, education or training (NEET), almost unchanged since 2005. Since young women were already twice as likely to be jobless and not in education nor training than young men, and as women have been disproportionately pushed into inactivity during the pandemic, the COVID-19 crisis is likely to worsen the NEET gender gap among youth.

~~61-62.~~ **Targets:** Ensure, by 2030, that all youth achieve literacy and numeracy

Ensure access to lifelong digital learning opportunities for skills development

Increased youth participation in decision making process as well as opportunities for skills development through cooperation mechanisms as provided by north-south and south-south cooperation.

Access to decent employment opportunities, knowledge and skills for all youth in the LDCs

Promote entrepreneurial training to youth **including**

## **Water, sanitation and hygiene**

[64.65.](#) The proportion of the population with access to basic drinking water services was 64.6 per cent in 2018, with 84.1 per cent access in urban areas compared to 55 per cent of the population with access in rural areas. Access to basic sanitation services remains very low in the LDCs at an average 34% of the population, in particular in rural areas.

[65.66.](#) **Target:** Achieve universal and equitable access to safe and affordable drinking water, sanitation and hygiene for all in LDCs by 2030.

### **We agree to take the following actions:**

[66.67.](#) We commit to providing adequate finance and technology to develop water and sanitation infrastructure in the LDCs and develop water- and sanitation-related activities and programmes, including water harvesting, desalination, water efficiency, wastewater treatment, recycling and reuse technologies. We also commit to providing access to adequate water, sanitation, and hygiene facilities, including handwashing facilities and menstrual hygiene facilities in schools and health facilities in LDCs.

## **Urbanization and shelter**

[67.68.](#) The average



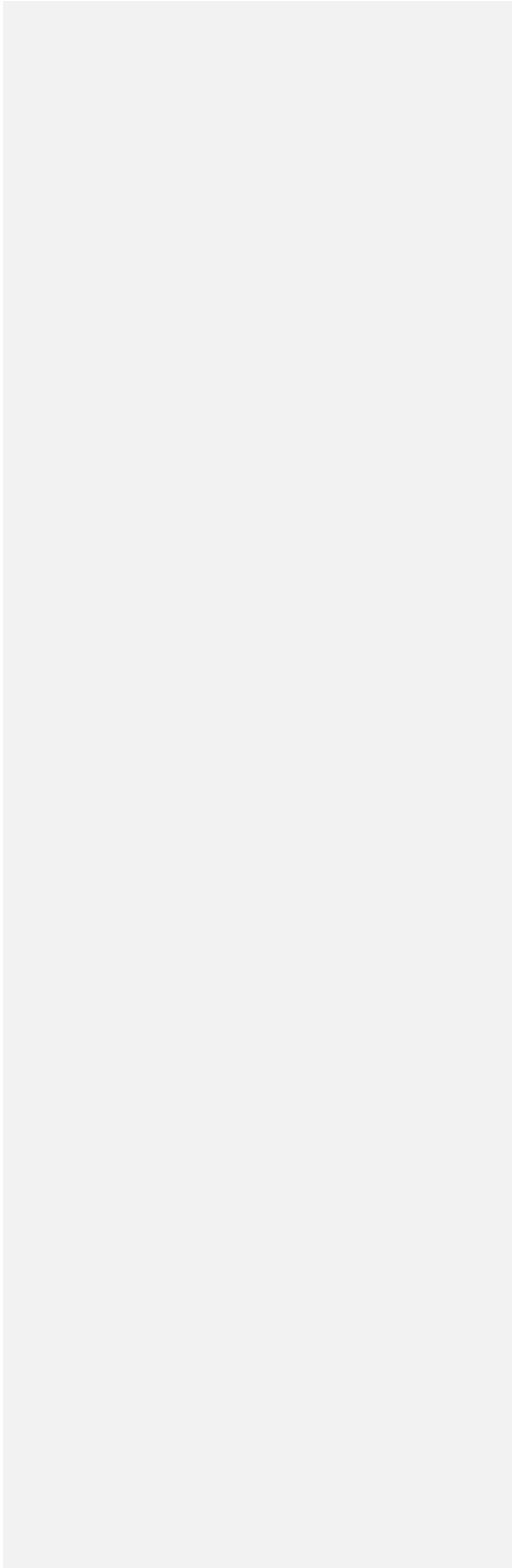


~~77-78.~~ Many LDCs have made progress in governance in the past decade. However, more needs to be done and several countries are still in conflict and post-conflict situations. In 2018, 33 million forcibly displaced people originated from LDCs, which is a growing problem acting as a drag on governance appraisals. The average e-government development index developed by the Department of Economic and Social Affairs for the delivery of public services in LDCs increased from 0.23 in 2010 to 0.34 in 2020 but remains lower than the world average of 0.6.

~~78-79.~~ We reaffirm the importance of the principle of sovereign equality enshrined in Article 2.1 of the United Nations Charter and of broadening and strengthening the voice and participation of



domestic product was 0.6 per cent or less between 2011-2017, compared with around 2 per cent of developed



101 We agree to support LDCs to build capacity to scale up the deployment of and utilization of emerging technologies for the SDGs and incorporate them into the local production of food, manufactured goods, and services for both rapidly growing regional markets as well as global value chains.

102 We commit to strengthening the science-policy interface and expanding LDCs knowledge and understanding of and access to new technology trends by building partnerships and interfaces with academies of science, universities, labs, innovation incubators, and private sector entities at the forefront of this technological change including those located in developed countries.

103 We commit to enhancing LDCs cybersecurity capabilities to better respond to cyberthreats and ensure enhanced protection of their national infrastructure, including the critical ICT infrastructure, thereby making the internet safer and protecting internet users including online safety of women and children, to serve national priorities and maximize socio-economic benefits.

104 We commit to providing enhanced financial and technical support to LDCs to establish and strengthen national and regional science institutes to promote research and development in science, technology and innovations as well as adaptation and application of modern technologies for domestic uses. We will also promote local innovation capabilities of LDCs for inclusive and sustainable economic development by bringing together local scientific, vocational and engineering knowledge. We will address gender disparities by enhancing participation of women and girls in science, technology and innovation activities.

105 We will support LDCs to move away from low value-added natural resources and low-technology products to higher value-added and higher-technology products; and integration into Global Value Chains (GVCs) to build productive capacities and diversify their export matrix.

106 We call upon Member States and the United Nations development system, and encourage other stakeholders to facilitate improved level of participation of scientists and engineers from LDCs in international collaborative research, STI projects; and to strengthen their support for the different science, technology and innovation partnerships with LDCs in primary, secondary and higher education, vocational education and continuing education; business opportunities for the private sector; science, technology and innovation infrastructure.

**Science, Technology, and Innovation for development and recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic and building resilience against emerging challenges**

107 We acknowledge that STI offers an opportunity for LDCs to recover from the COVID-19 pandemic, build back better and resilient to future systemic shocks and crises and emerging

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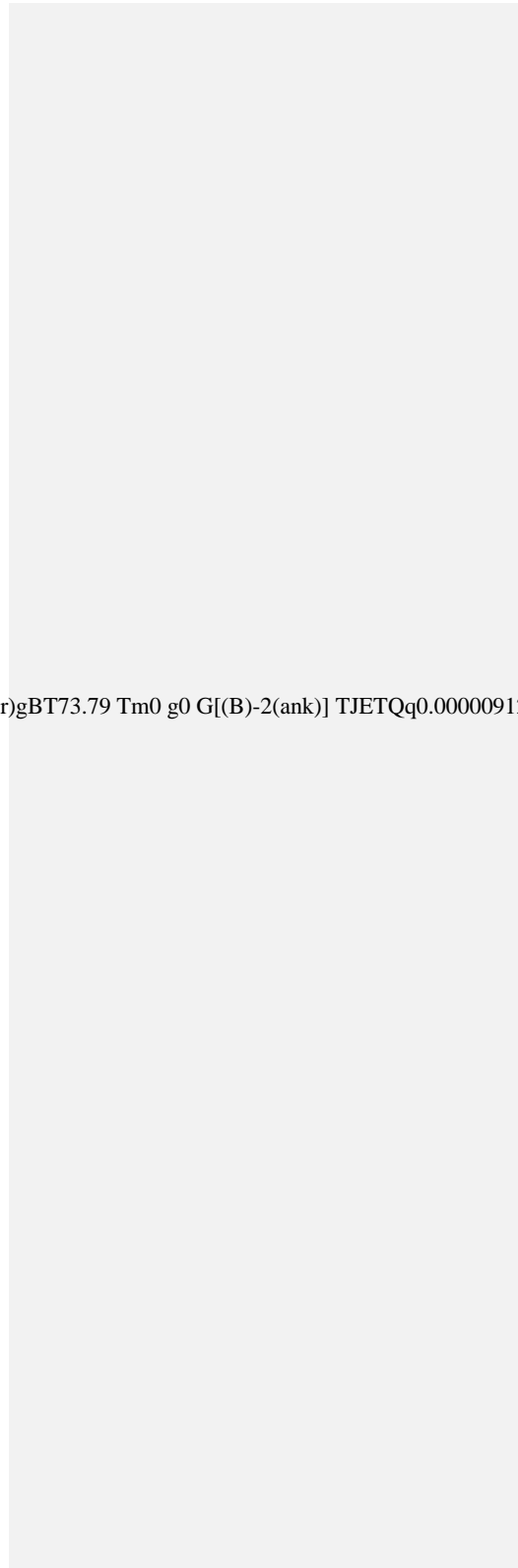
**We agree to take the following actions:**

109 We commit to bridging the STI divide and provide financial and technical support and technology transfer to LDCs including through south-south and triangular cooperation to ensure that all LDCs can engage effectively in low emission and climate resilient development that will also protect the lives of our populations, economies and systems.

110 We commit to increasing investment in education, including digital skills and e-education, and to improving education and training, including lifelong learning endeavors in LDCs, especially in science, technology, engineering, and mathematics to close the digital divide in rural and urban areas, as well as between women and men and increase human capacity and labor productivity. We will enhance collaboration in research, data and knowledge sharing to cope with the immediate impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic and strengthen resilience.

111 We will provide enhanced funding for innovative solutions of LDCs -specific problems, including in the areas of agriculture and food production, energy and development, infrastructure development, disaster risk reduction, and climate resilience.

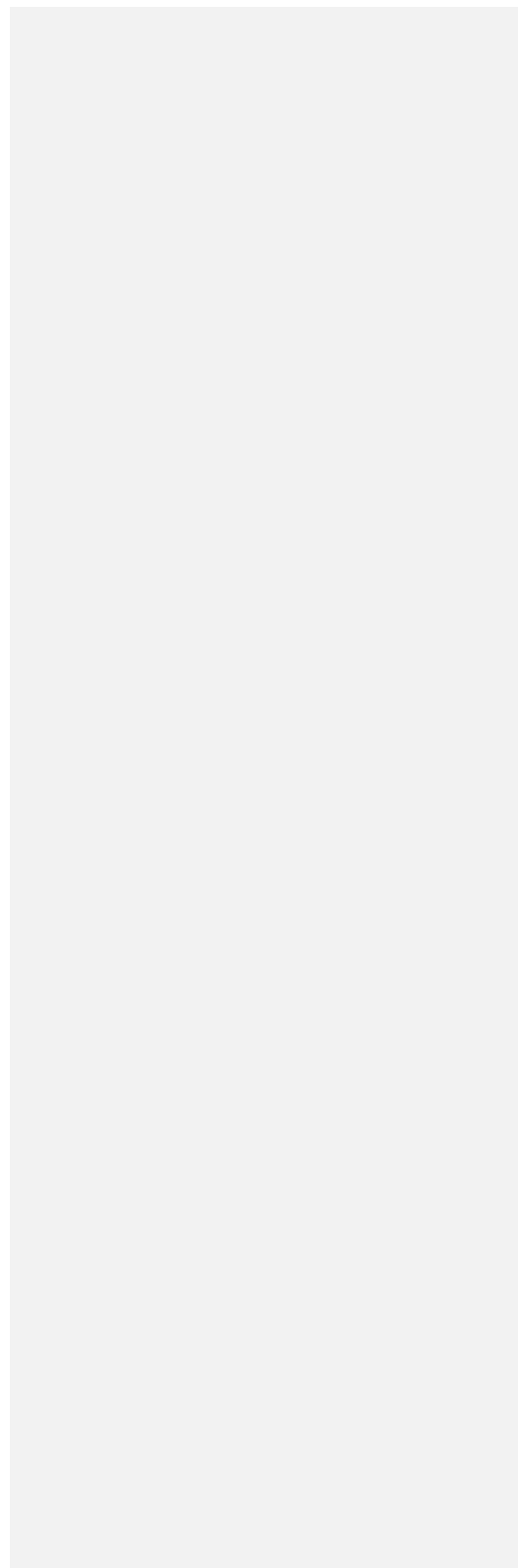
112 We agree to enhance the capacity of and providing financial and in-kind resources to the United Nations Technology Bank



focused, and development agencies to facilitate technology transfer, exploit research and innovation and build the necessary capacities and technical competencies of LDCs.

117 We call upon the development partners to enhance their support to LDCs to build their broadband infrastructure, connectivity, access and productive use; incentivize investors to invest in broadband infrastructure in LDCs to meet their investment gaps including through leveraging existing investment guarantee arrangements, such as [Multilateral Investment Guarantee Agency \(MIGA\)](#);

123 We commit to promoting and supporting the formulation of national strategies aimed at increasing diversification, value addition, efficiency, and competitiveness in the manufacturing, agriculture, and services sectors; and call for enhancing financial and technical support from development



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capacity. The establishment of a secure, reliable, and efficient transport system including rail transport, road transport, seaports, and air transport is critical for LDCs to reduce transport costs, facilitate trade, link to regional and international markets and enhance their competitiveness.

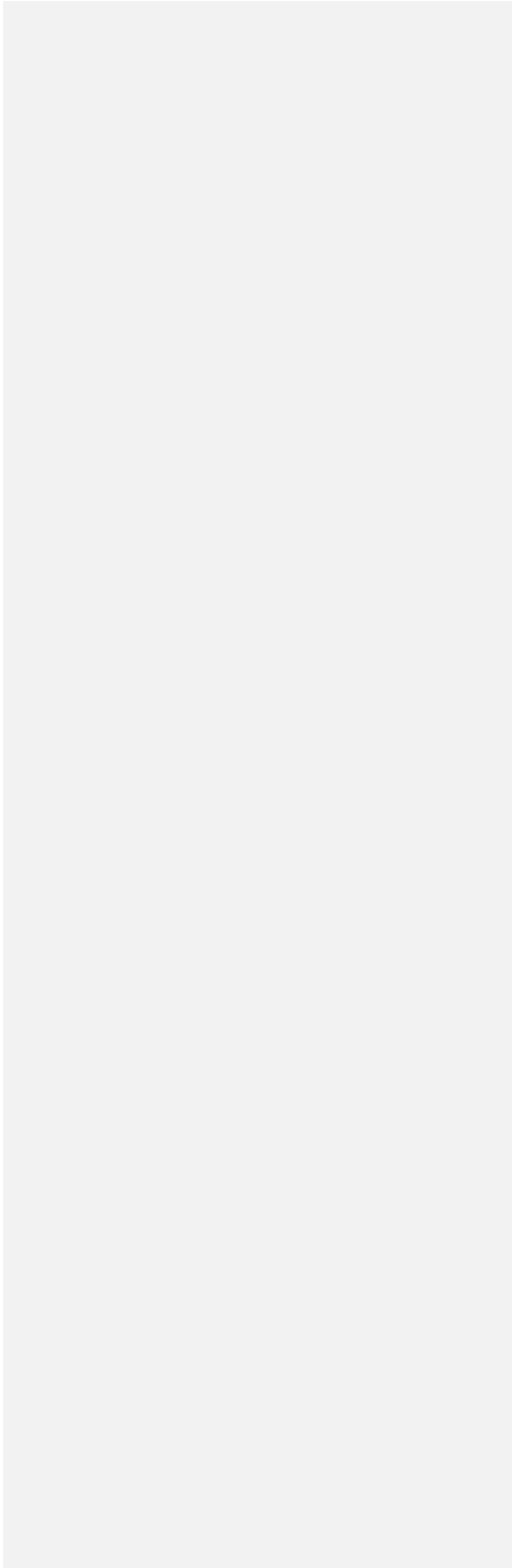
132 **Target:** Significantly expand, upgrade, and maintain all forms of transport infrastructure and closing the missing links, and strengthening the institutional capacities and transport services.

**We agree to take the following actions:**

133 We agree to develop and implement comprehensive national [and green](#) policies for transport infrastructure development and maintenance, encompassing all modes of transportation. We will ensure the transport infrastructure to be climate- resilient that can withstand the impacts of natural disaster, climate change and rising sea levels. In this regard, we will be mobilizing domestic and international resources and share experiences on transport infrastructure



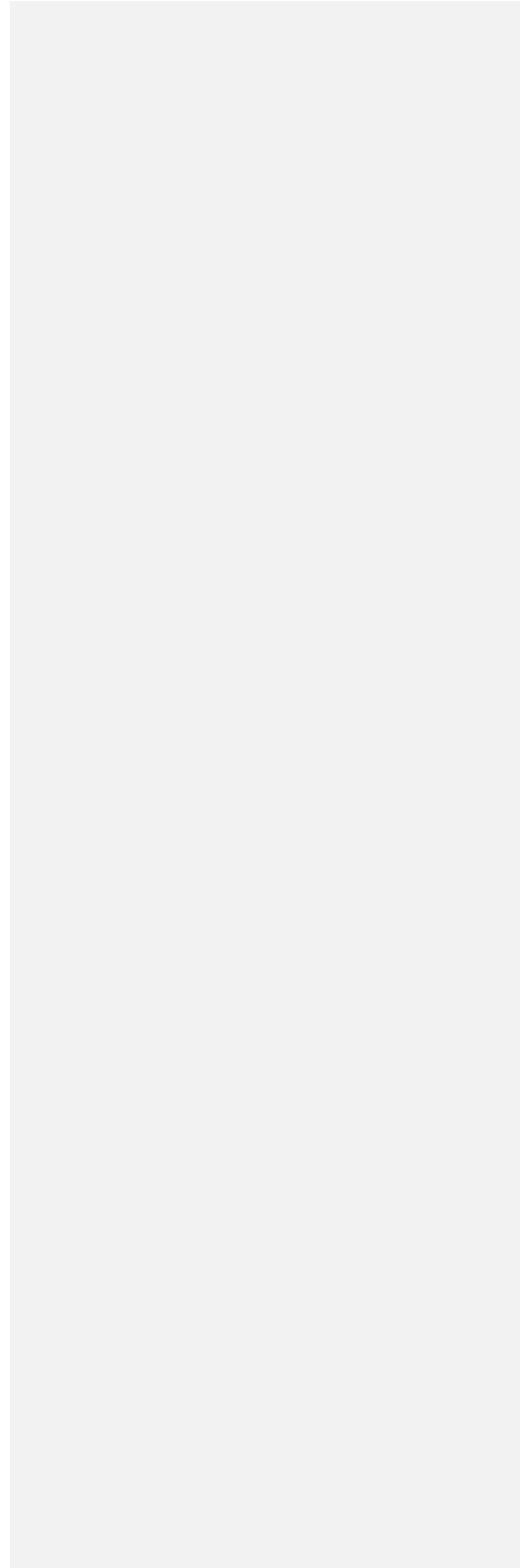
with access to clean fuel for cooking as low as 7% and several LDCs have overall access to clean



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144 We call upon LDCs to create enabling environment including appropriate regulatory



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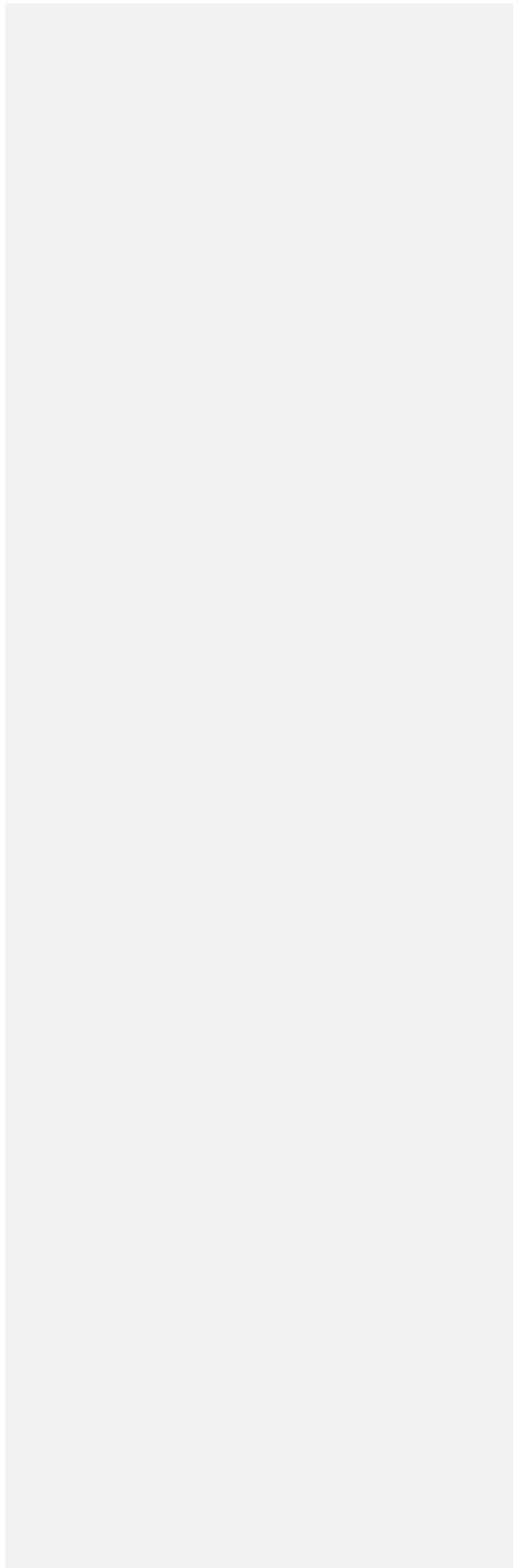
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157 We are concerned that due to COVID-19, trade value for LDCs has plunged considerably. Merchandise exports of LDCs fell by 10.3 per cent against the global average decline of 7.7 per cent in 2020. Preliminary evidence suggests that in 2020, the value of global services trade was down 40% year-on-year. Micro, small and medium-sized enterprises (MSMEs) have been adversely impacted by the pandemic. Limited export diversification has heightened the vulnerability of LDCs to the impact of the pandemic on global trade. The crisis also highlighted the fundamental importance of trade in making essential goods and services available to countries and people in need.

158 We are concerned that the rising protectionist tendencies and shifts towards bilateral and regional trade agreements are threatening to further weaken the role of the

| well as other LDC specific trade benefits and flexibilities to the countries graduated from the LDC.



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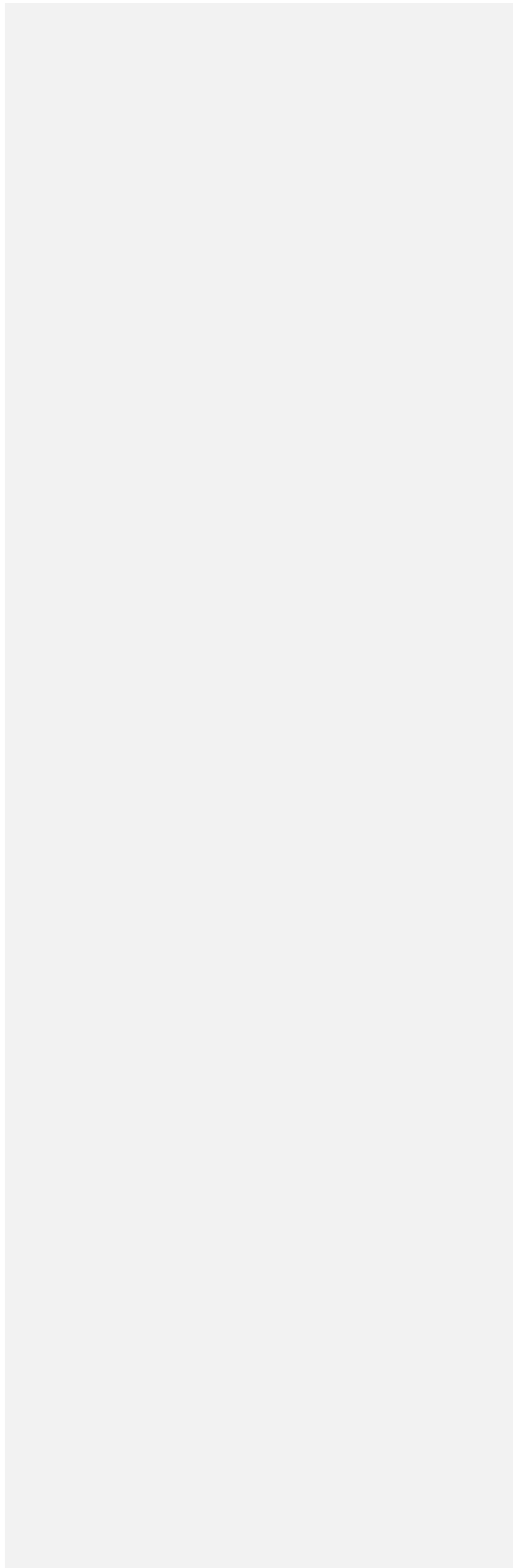
category for a fix period of time of at least twelve years after their graduation to ensure sustainable and irreversible graduation and achieve the 2030 Agenda.

164 We commit to rejecting vaccine nationalism and protectionism, fully meeting our transparency obligations on trade measures and meaningfully improving access for all countries, especially LDCs, to COVID-19 vaccines, including through facilitating technology transfer within the framework of multilateral rules, so as to encourage research and innovation while at the same time allowing licensing agreements and any other arrangements that help scale up manufacturing.

**Preferential rules of origin and non-tariff barriers**

165 We note that considerable progress has been made towards ensuring that preferential rules of origin are simple and transparent and contribute to facilitating market access of imports from LDCs. World Trade Organization

| **We agree to take the following actions:**



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170 We call upon the WTO members to take concrete measures including meaningful preferences for LDCs services and service suppliers in accordance with the WTO decisions in 2011, 2013 and 2015 on the operationalization of the



strengthen their human, institutional and regulatory capacities in trade policy and trade negotiations to ensure their accession.

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178 We will provide financial and technical support to LDCs to facilitate and accelerate the negotiations for the accession of LDCs to the WTO.

**Trade-Related Aspects of Intellectual Property Rights (TRIPS)**

179 We welcome the entry into force of the TRIPS Amendment aiming to facilitate access to medicines for countries having limited manufacturing capacities. We note that pursuant to the decision on the implementation of Article 66.2, developed Members have provided annual reports on actions taken or planned under Article 66.2. We welcome that in 2021, the duration of the general transition period under Article 66.1 has been further extended until 1 July, 2034. Similarly, in 2015, the specific transition period to implement patent protection for pharmaceutical products was extended until 1 January 2033 for LDCs. We also invite all members of the WTO to extend to graduated countries the LDC specific flexibilities under Article 66.1 for a period of twelve years after their graduation from LDC status.

180 **Target:** Support LDCs in order to enable them to create a sound and viable technological base, including by **providing** incentives to enterprises and institutions in developed country member territories

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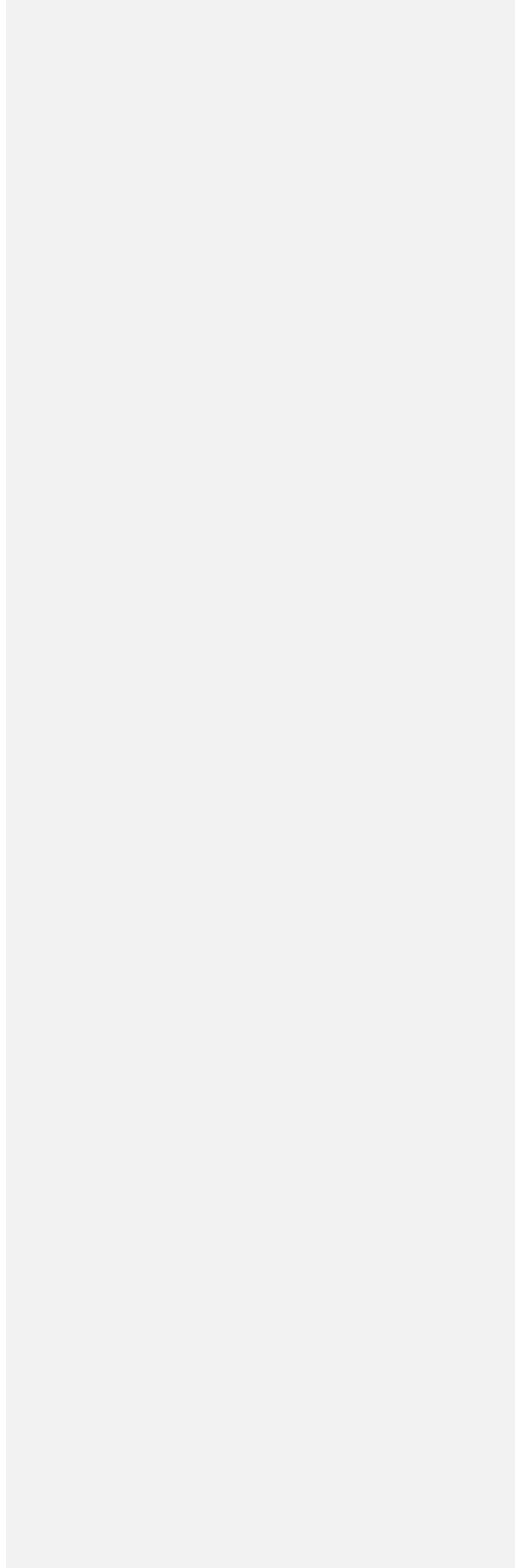
185 We call for correcting and preventing trade restrictions and distortions in world agricultural markets, including through the parallel elimination of all forms of agricultural export subsidies and all export measures with equivalent effect, in accordance with the mandate of the Doha Development Round.

193 We will promote e-commerce in LDCs by building digital eco-system and providing capacity building support. We urge the development partners to provide additional and substantial support to LDCs to build required infrastructure in energy, electricity, internet penetration; data protection; upgrade workforce skills, ensure affordable and reliable access to broadband and mobile networks and Wi-Fi connectivity; facilitate mobile banking with low or no fee of digital payment; build the ability of LDCs suppliers to participate fairly in, and establish their own, e-commerce platforms to directly trade their goods and services; strengthen productive capacity and structural transformation along with transparent and fair regulations for promoting e-commerce and integration of LDCs in the

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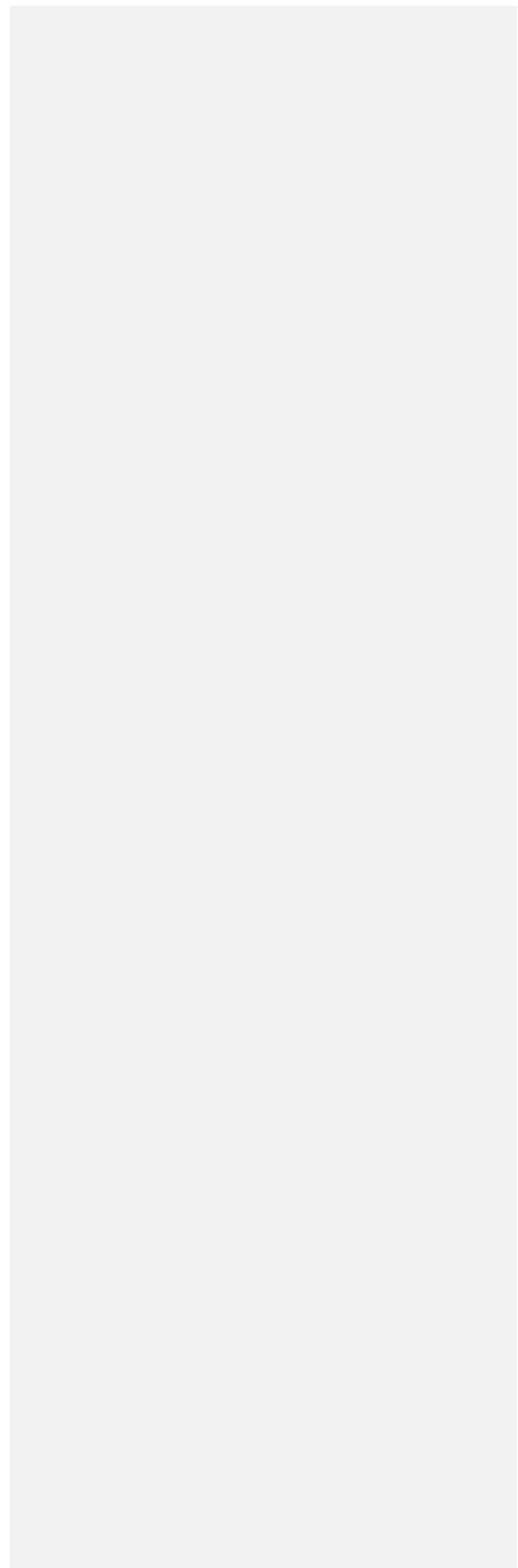
regional agreements.



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199 We commit to supporting LDCs efforts in promoting subregional and regional cooperation, including export promotion



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and support the provisions contained in international agreements on climate change and disaster risk reduction.

### **Key Action Areas**

#### **Building sustainable, equitable and resilient recovery from COVID-19**

206 On average, the projection suggests that the LDCs are expected to take three to five years or more to recover to their pre-crisis level of gross domestic product per capita. The persistent challenges posed by climate change will further deteriorate the recovery efforts.

207 **Target:** Declare vaccine as a global public good and provide sufficient COVID-19 vaccines immediately to vaccinate all eligible citizens of LDCs free of cost

- Ensure technology transfer to harness production capacities of vaccines of LDCs

- Provide \$5 billion as direct budgetary support to LDCs for social protection system

- Ensure widespread testing and tracing, maintaining adequate stocks of therapeutics and protective gears and ventilations

- Provide adequate support to build health infrastructure of the LDCs to tackle the current and future shocks

#### **We agree to take the following actions:**

208 We take note of the Statement dated 28 April 2020 of the Group of LDCs on the coronavirus disease (COVID-19): burgeoning challenges and a global stimulus package for the least developed countries contained in A/74/843 and commit to supporting for its full implementation.

209 We declare the COVID-19 vaccine as a global public good 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, once safe, quality, efficacious, effective, accessible and affordable vaccines are available.

210 We stress that vaccinations need to be supported with essential complementary measures to minimize the loss of lives and morbidity from this pandemic and urge development partners to provide to LDCs in a timely manner, access to quality, safe, efficacious and affordable diagnosis, therapeutics, medicines and medical science-based treatment protocols, vaccines, and essential health technologies, and their components, as well as equipment, for the COVID-19 response.

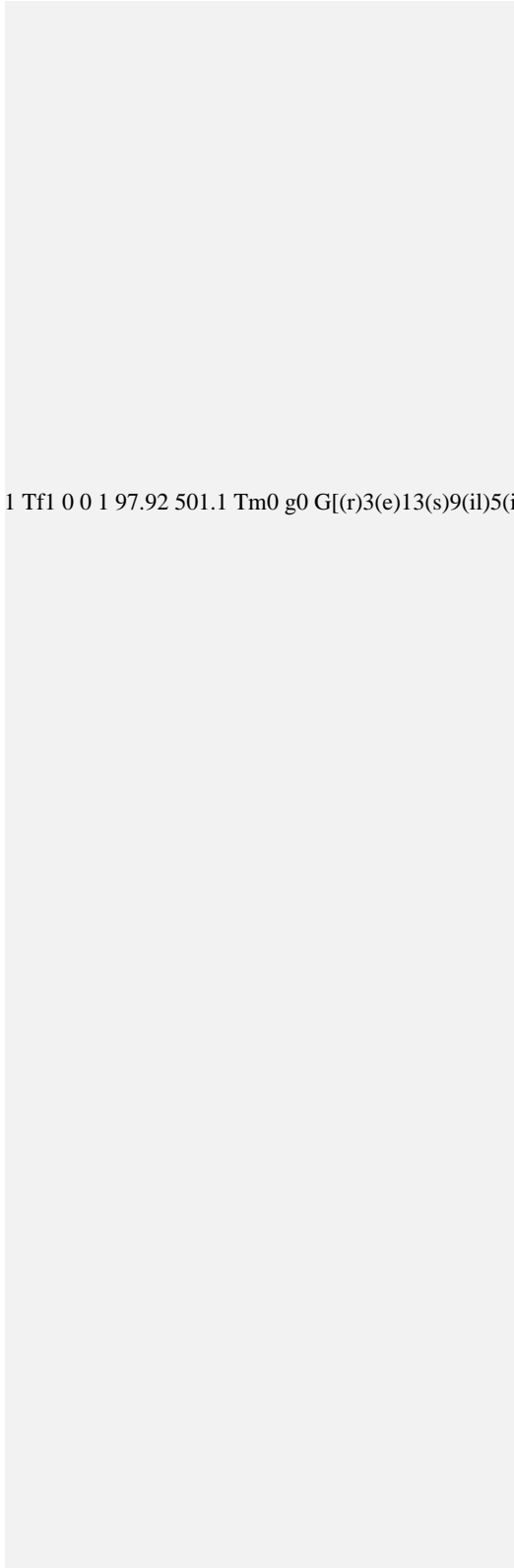
211 We commit to ensuring that LDCs receive adequate and timely access to sufficient number of reliable vaccines to vaccinate all of their eligible citizens free of cost including through the COVAX facility, adequate support to address liquidity and fiscal space constraints and debt through that international trade measures are put in place to support their recovery that is sustainable and build resilience against future shocks.

212 In the spirit of global solidarity, multilateralism and collaboration between governments, international organizations, international financial institutions, civil society and the private sector, we call upon development partners to provide financial and in-kind support to least developed

countries as direct budgetary support and to increase the resources of relevant regional and multilateral emergency financing facilities and to ease the conditions of access to these facilities.

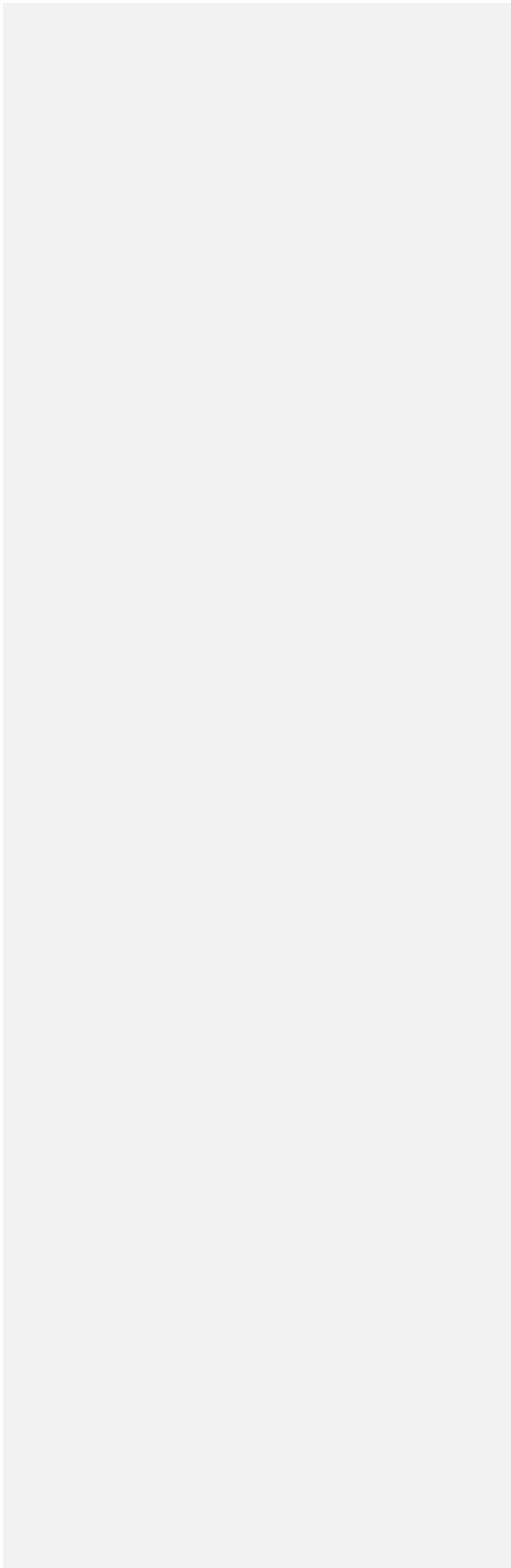
213 We commit to establishing and strengthening social protection mechanisms to protect the most vulnerable populations, including provision of direct support in the form of cash or food to at least 350 million people living in extreme poverty in LDCs. In this regard, we call upon the development partners to provide \$5 billion allocation in emergency assistance for cash transfer to the extreme poor people living in LDCs.

214 We agree to ensure that stimulus measures are aligned with and contribute to fast recovery from the pandemic and building resilience in LDCs, including among others: nature-based solutions, including conserving and restoring natural ecosystems; sustainable agriculture; resilience of





well as through additional and complementary means, in order to address medium to long term



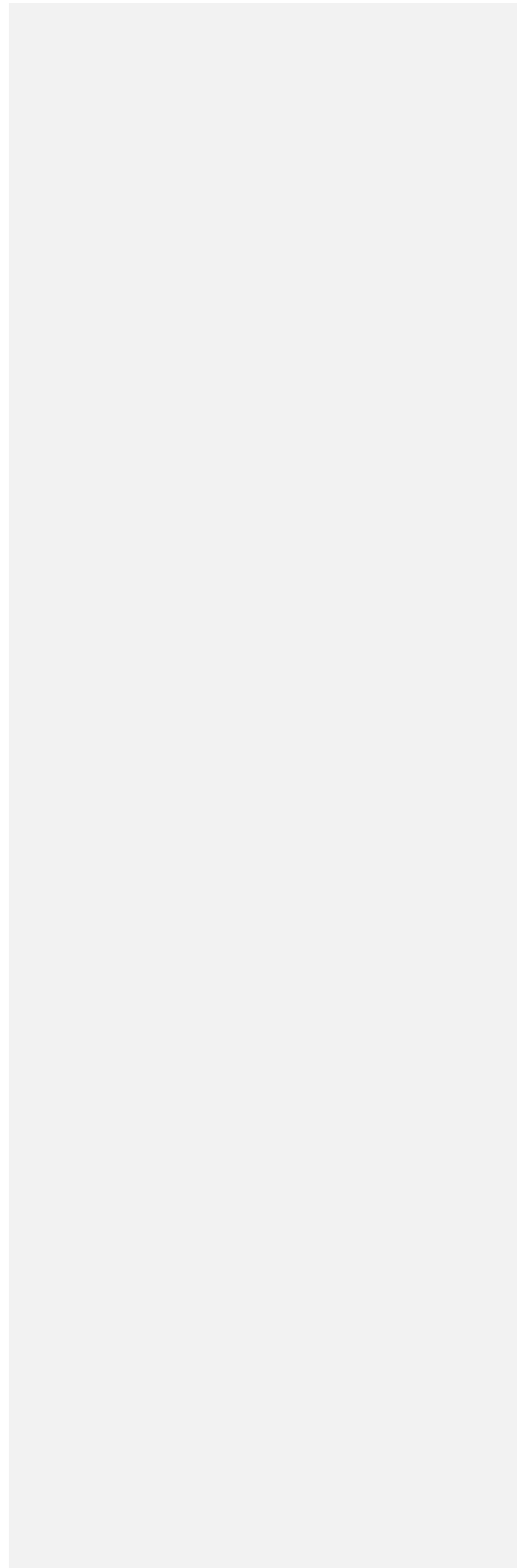
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adaptation- needs- through- the- formulation- of- national- adaptation- plans- and- subsequent implementation of the policies, programmes and projects identified by them.

219 We agree to enhance technical assistance to LDCs to develop operational national risk indices and related products that support policy and decision-making by all stakeholders, including national and local governments, private sector

Provide 50 per cent of the total share of climate finance provided by all developed countries and multilateral development banks



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234 We agree to increase our investments in prevention and risk reduction, including risk-informed and resilient infrastructure and public services; the adoption of legislation, policies and standards that regulate and incentivize investors and companies to adopt a risk-informed approach; and for monetary and regulatory authorities to incorporate the impact of disaster and climate risks into regulatory and policy frameworks.

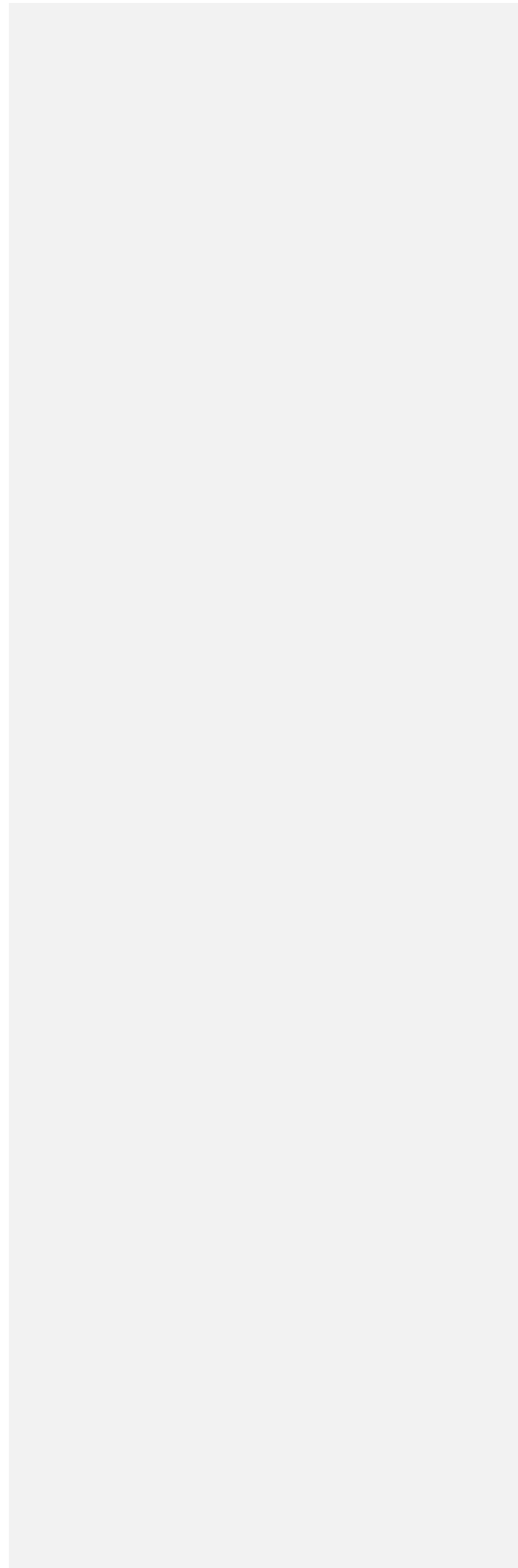
235 We commit to significantly scaling-up existing catastrophe-triggered financial instruments and initiatives such as the Caribbean Catastrophe Risk Insurance Facility and African Risk Capacity and the Pacific Catastrophe Risk Assessment and Financing Initiative, as well as developing and enhancing instruments and derivatives that provide risk insurance and guarantees for where they are most needed, such as micro, small and medium enterprises (MSMEs) and low-income households.

236 We commit to providing financial and technical assistance and facilitate technology transfer to LDCs to develop and implement

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cater to the diversified needs of private enterprises, MSMEs, and consumers, including women.



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248 We commit to substantially reducing illicit financial flows by 2030 in order to help LDCs to mobilize resources, including through increased international cooperation to stem corruption and identify, freeze and recover stolen assets and return them to their countries of origin, in a manner consistent with the United Nations Convention against Corruption and to developing their capacities to track financial transactions, administer taxation, facilitate customs services and investigate and prosecute offences to contribute to the success of efforts to deal with illicit financial flows.

**Traditional and innovative sources of finance to meet the funding gaps in least developed countries**

249 We note with concern that official development assistance (ODA) to LDCs by Development Assistance Committee (DAC) members declined in real terms over the past decade and the average share of gross national income provided as ODA to LDCs from DAC donors declined from 0.1 per cent in 2011 to 0.09 per cent in 2019. At the same time ODA remained crucial for financing investments for sustainable development in LDCs, while innovative sources of finance, such as blended finance, remained limited in these countries. There is a clear need for much more detailed efforts by developed countries to fulfill, and where possible to

255 We urge development partners to recapitalize multilateral, regional and national development banks and accelerate the timetable for agreeing on a fresh replenishment of funds, including concessional windows of MDBs and immediate steps should be taken by the international community to significantly expand concessional financing and deliver it to LDCs through simplified procedures.

256 We welcome continued efforts to improve the quality, impact and effectiveness of development cooperation and other international efforts in public finance, including adherence to agreed development cooperation effectiveness principles. We will align activities with national priorities of LDCs, including by reducing fragmentation, accelerating the untying of aid. We will promote country ownership and results orientation and strengthen country systems, use programme-based approaches where appropriate,





268 We commit to enhancing efforts to increase support, including financial and technical assistance, for institutional capacity-building in LDCs to enhance sustainable upstream and downstream debt management as an integral part of national development strategies, including by promoting transparent and accountable debt management systems and negotiation and renegotiation capacities and through supporting legal advice in relation to tackling external debt litigation and debt data reconciliation between creditors and debtors so that debt sustainability may be achieved and maintained.

269 We urge official creditors, including international financial institutions, to include state-contingent clauses in public debt contracts to automatize standstills in times of crisis, and to set a precedent for private markets, including through granting suspension of debt service.

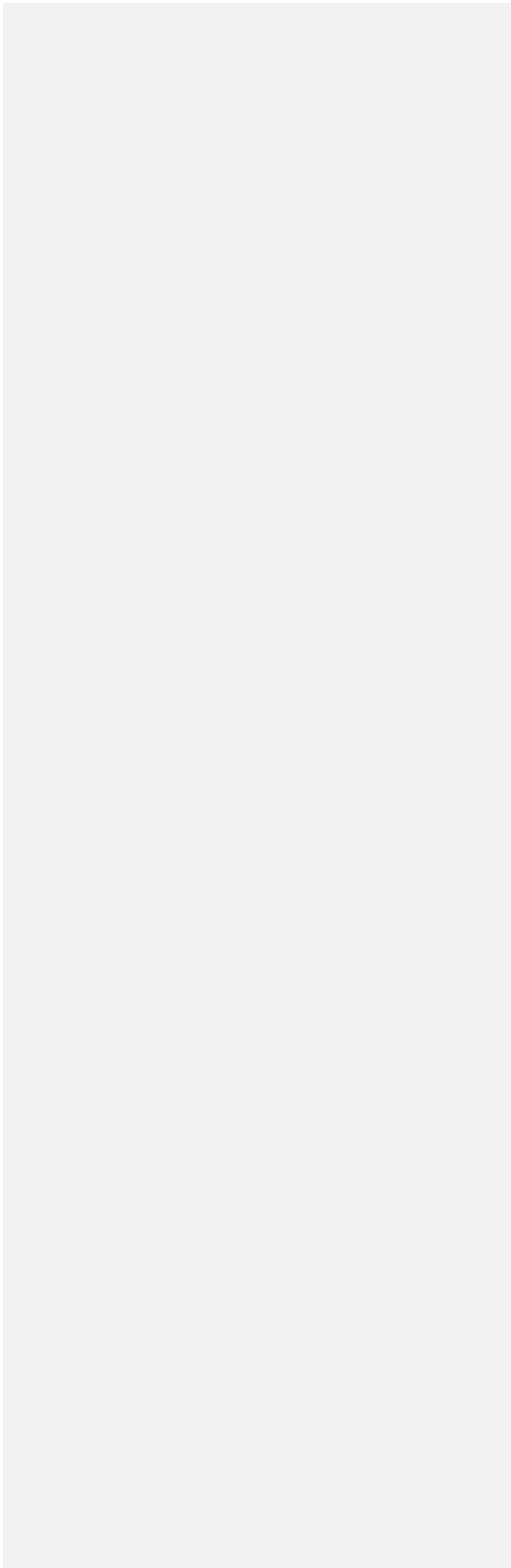
270 We invite creditors and debtors to further explore, where appropriate and on a mutually agreed, transparent and case-by-case basis, the use of debt instruments, such as debt swap initiatives, for sustainable development and climate action.

#### **Remittances**

271 We note that remittances to LDCs have increased significantly over the past decade but declined in 2020 due to COVID-19. At the same time costs of remittances to LDCs have remained disproportionately high.

272 **Target:** Reduce cost of remittances to maximum 3 per cent of the amount of remittances by 2030.

vulnerability to economic and climatic shocks. Furthermore, we are concerned by the simultaneous



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283 We recognize the need for enhanced support to countries before and after graduation, through appropriate predictable and additional incentives and support measures, including in the following areas:

Technical assistance for preparing and implementing a smooth transition strategy, including capacity development and technical assistance for analysis and identification of support needs

Enhanced availability of credit











305 We invite the Office of the High Representative for the LDC, LLDC, and SIDS to prepare a comprehensive roadmap for accelerated implementation

and convene meetings of the focal points biannually to share experiences and best practices on mainstreaming the Programme of Action and SDGs into national development processes as well their implementation and follow up; network among the peers; and better understand existing means of implementation, including viable financing and business models.

309 With a view to ensuring the effective implementation of the functions of Office of the High Representative for the LDC, LLDC, and SIDS and strengthening its capabilities and its effectiveness to support the LDCs, as well as the effectiveness of the United Nations system support provided to LDCs, we request the Secretary-General to prepare a report, in consultation with Member States and the relevant specialized agencies, funds, programmes and regional commissions, taking into account the work done by the United Nations system, and to submit it with recommendations to the General Assembly at its seventy-seventh session.

310 The United Nations