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Macroeconomic policy questions: international trade and development

Resolution adopted by the General Assembly on 21 December 2020

[on the report of the Second Committee (A/75/455/Add.1, para. 6)]

75/203. International trade and development

The General Assembly,

Recalling its resolutions [56/178](#) of 21 December 2001, [57/235](#) of 20 December 2002, [58/197](#) of 23 December 2003, [59/221](#) of 22 December 2004, [60/184](#) of 22 December 2005, [61/186](#) of 20 December 2006, [62/184](#) of 19 December 2007, [63/203](#) of 19 December 2008, [64/188](#) of 21 December 2009, [65/142](#) of 20 December 2010, [66/185](#) of 22 December 2011, [67/196](#) of 21 December 2012, [68/199](#) of 20 December 2013, [69/205](#) of 19 December 2014, [70/187](#) of 22 December 2015, [71/214](#) of 21 December 2016, [72/202](#) of 20 December 2017, [73/219](#) of 20 December 2018 and [74/201](#) of 19 December 2019,

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 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,



Recognizing the need to ensure that the benefits of trade are more widely shared,

Reaffirming World Trade Organization decision WT/MIN(15)/48-WT/L/982 of 19 December 2015 on the implementation of preferential treatment in favour of services and service suppliers of the least developed countries and increasing their participation in services trade and decision WT/L/508/Add.1 of 25 July 2012 on accession by the least developed countries, encouraging progress on the implementation of the World Trade Organization work programme on small economies, which supports their efforts towards sustainable development, as also reflected in the outcome document of the third International Conference on Small Island Developing States, the SIDS Accelerated Modalities of Action (SAMOA) Pathway,¹ and stressing that Aid for Trade and targeted trade-related capacity-building are essential to integrating developing countries, in particular the least developed countries, landlocked developing countries and small island developing States, into the international trading system,

Recognizing the critical role of women as producers and traders and the need to address their specific challenges in order to facilitate their equal and active participation in domestic, regional and international trade,

Recognizing also that multilateral rules and disciplines are the best guarantee against protectionism and are fundamental to the transparency, predictability and stability of international trade,

Noting the commitments to working to ensure that bilateral, regional and plurilateral trade agreements complement the multilateral trading system, recognizing that they can play an important role in complementing global liberalization initiatives, and in this regard recalling the entry into force of the Agreement Establishing the African Continental Free Trade Area, on 30 May 2019,

Noting with great concern the threat to human health, safety and well-being caused by the coronavirus disease (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,

Deeply concerned that the COVID-19 pandemic, owing to its severe disruptions to societies, economies, employment, global trade, supply chains and travel, as well as to agricultural, industrial and commercial systems, is having a devastating impact on sustainable development and humanitarian needs, including on poverty eradication, livelihoods, ending hunger, food security and nutrition, education, environmentally sound waste management and access to health care, especially for the poor and people in vulnerable situations, in particular in developing countries, including countries in special situations and those countries most affected by the pandemic and its socioeconomic consequences, and is making the prospect of achieving all Sustainable Development Goals more difficult, including eradicating poverty in all its forms and dimensions by 2030, ending hunger and achieving food security and improved nutrition,

Reiterating the pledge that no one will be left behind, reaffirming the recognition that the dignity of the human person is fundamental, and the wish to see the Goals and targets met for all nations and peoples and for all segments of society, and recommitting to endeavour to reach the furthest behind first,

¹ Resolution 69/15, annex.

1. *Takes note* of the report of the Trade and Development Board of the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development² and the note by the Secretary-General;³
2. *Reaffirms* that international trade is an engine for inclusive growth and poverty eradication and that it contributes to the promotion of sustainable development, structural transformation and industrialization, particularly in developing countries;
3. *Reiterates* that States will not be able to achieve the ambitious Goals and targets of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development⁴ without a revitalized and enhanced global partnership and comparably ambitious means of implementation, and that a revitalized global partnership will facilitate an intensive global engagement in support of the implementation of the 2030 Agenda, bringing together Governments, civil society, the private sector, the United Nations system and other actors and mobilizing all available resources;
4. *Reaffirms* the commitments made through the adoption of the Addis Ababa Action Agenda of the Third International Conference on Financing for Development⁵ in, inter alia, international trade as an important action area for sustainable development;
5. *Notes with concern* that the World Trade Organization is increasingly affected by insufficient progress in multilateral trade negotiations and that it is imperative for the World Trade Organization to address issues that are at the heart of current problems in international trade, and recognizes in this regard the need to strengthen the World Trade Organization, with a view to ensuring the continued viability and effectiveness of its dispute settlement, negotiating and monitoring functions;
6. *Recommits firmly* to promoting a universal, rules-based, open, transparent, predictable, inclusive, non-discriminatory and equitable multilateral trading system under the World Trade Organization, as well as meaningful trade liberalization;
7. *Emphasizes* the urgent need to combat protectionism in all its forms and to rectify any trade-distorting measures that are inconsistent with World Trade Organization rules, recognizing the right of countries, in particular developing countries, to fully utilize flexibilities consistent with their World Trade Organization commitments and obligations, and also emphasizes that the work of the World Trade Organization shall maintain development at its centre, with provisions for special and differential treatment remaining integral;
8. *Also emphasizes* that the COVID-19 pandemic has disrupted the normal functioning of open markets, global supply chain connectivity and the flow of essential goods and services, and that these disruptions hinder the fight against poverty, hunger and inequality, ultimately undermining efforts to achieve the 2030 Agenda, reaffirms that emergency measures must be targeted, proportionate, transparent and temporary, that they must not create unnecessary barriers to trade or disruption to global supply chains, and that they must be consistent with World Trade Organization rules, and calls upon Member States to reaffirm the critical importance of connected global supply chains in ensuring the unimpeded flow of vital medical and food supplies and other essential goods and services across borders, by air, by land and by sea, and to encourage cooperation to facilitate cross-border travel of persons for essential purposes without undermining efforts to prevent the spread of the virus, highlights, in this regard, the critical role of digital technologies in sustaining business continuity and supply chains throughout the COVID-19 pandemic, and to strengthen cooperation among the World Trade Organization, the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development and other trade-related

² [A/75/15 \(Part I\)](#).

³ [A/75/225](#).

⁴ Resolution [70/1](#).

⁵ Resolution [69/313](#), annex.

organizations and forums, as well as to promote further economic integration through regional trade agreements to ensure faster trade recovery and development as an important source of world economic growth, and in this regard welcomes the Agreement Establishing the African Continental Free Trade Area;

9. *Urges* the international community to adopt urgent and effective measures to eliminate the use of unilateral economic, financial or trade measures that are not authorized by relevant organs of the United Nations, that are inconsistent with the principles of international law or the Charter of the United Nations or that contravene the basic principles of the multilateral trading system and that affect, in particular, but not exclusively, developing countries;

10. *Calls upon* all members of the World Trade Organization to urgently conclude negotiations on fisheries subsidies in 2020, consistent with the decision of the eleventh Ministerial Conference of the World Trade Organization⁶ and with a view to meeting the Sustainable Development Goals;

11. *Underlines* the importance of the Agreement on Trade Facilitation annexed to the Protocol amending the Marrakesh Agreement Establishing the World Trade Organization in improving transparency, expediting the movement, release and clearance of goods, including goods in transit, and thereby reducing trade costs, and in this regard encourages its full and effective implementation, including through enhanced support towards its implementation;

12. *Looks forward* to the convening of the fifteenth session of the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development in Barbados from 25 to 30 April 2021;

13. *Welcomes* the proposal to convene the twelfth Ministerial Conference of the World Trade Organization in June 2021, looks forward to achieving positive outcomes in a balanced, inclusive and transparent way, and expresses its appreciation to the Government of Kazakhstan for offering to host the meeting;

14. *Reiterates* the important role of the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development as the focal point within the United Nations system for the integrated treatment of trade and development and interrelated issues in the areas of finance, technology, investment and sustainable development, and in contributing to supporting the implementation of the 2030 Agenda;

15. *Reaffirms* the commitment at the very heart of the 2030 Agenda to leave no one behind and commit to taking more tangible steps to support people in vulnerable situations and the most vulnerable countries and to reach the furthest behind first;

16. *Requests* the Secretary-General, in collaboration with the secretariat of the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development, to submit to the General Assembly at its seventy-sixth session a report on the implementation of the present resolution and on developments in the international trading system, including concrete recommendations to accelerate the implementation of the Addis Ababa Action Agenda in this regard, and decides to include in the provisional agenda of its seventy-sixth session, under the item entitled "Macroeconomic policy questions", the sub-item entitled "International trade and development".

*48th plenary meeting
21 December 2020*

⁶ WT/MIN(17)/64-WT/L/1031 of 13 December 2017.