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Ministerial Declaration of the Group of 77 and China on the occasion of UNCTAD XII

1. We, the Ministers of the member States of the Group of 77 and China, met in Accra, Ghana, on 20 April 2008 on the occasion of the twelfth United Nations Conference on Trade and Development. We express our appreciation and gratitude to the Republic of Ghana and its people for the excellent organization and hosting of the Ministerial Meeting and the warm hospitality which has been bestowed on us in the city of Accra since our arrival.

2. We reaffirm the central role of UNCTAD as the focal point within the United Nations for the integrated treatment of trade and development and interrelated issues in the areas of finance, technology, investment and sustainable development. UNCTAD is pre-eminently placed to respond to the current and emerging challenges facing developing countries. The mandate and functions of UNCTAD give the Organization a special role in the overall configuration of multilateral institutions and the United Nations system. In this regard, we call for the strengthening of UNCTAD's three pillars (research and analysis, consensus-building and technical cooperation) and the intergovernmental machinery. We urgently call for the maintenance of the existing intergovernmental structure of UNCTAD comprising three commissions, one of which should be devoted to globalization to give advice to developing countries on issues relating to the challenges of globalization.

3. We recognize UNCTAD's unique orientation and its commitment to serving the goal of development and are assured that it will continue to play a vital role in providing insights on strategic and systemic issues. The three pillars of UNCTAD must work in an integrated and holistic manner to contribute directly to the global debate on development as we move towards the 2015 review meeting on the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). That occasion presents us with an excellent opportunity to further enhance the role of the United Nations in international economic governance, and its centrality in development in the United Nations agenda.

4. We underscore the importance of strengthening multilateralism and the United Nations system in the face of growing unilateralism. We also reject one-size-fits-all policies and rules limiting the policy space available to developing countries

and their ability to choose appropriate economic policies. Recognizing our commitments to international obligations, we reaffirm that policy space is necessary to fully implement them in a manner best suited to our diverse national circumstances and conditions.

5. We reaffirm the Bangkok Plan of Action and the São Paulo Consensus, UNCTAD XII constitutes an excellent occasion to, building on this basis, review and reinvigorate international economic cooperation with a view to enhancing the development of all developing countries and to providing a development-oriented policy paradigm, policy dialogue, and consensus-building. The Conference can advance this aim by galvanizing support for a more development-friendly global economic, trade and financial system. We call on development partners to continue to strengthen the North–South dialogue in pursuit of a shared development agenda.

6. We appreciate the importance of achieving the internationally agreed development goals, as outlined at previous United Nations summits and other forums. Furthermore, we look forward to the General Assembly high-level event on the Millennium Development Goals with a focus on Africa in September 2008 to review progress made in the fulfilment of all the commitments set out in the United Nations Millennium Declaration. We therefore welcome the United Nations Secretary-General's initiative to scale up efforts to achieve the MDGs to enable the 'bottom billion' to finally escape the poverty trap. In this context, we welcome the setting-up of the MDG Africa Steering Group, as it draws together United Nations agencies and other key partners to address systematically the special needs of African countries in their pursuit of development.

7. The current global institutional architecture for global economic governance requires fundamental reforms to provide an adequate framework for dealing with the realities of today's international economic and financial relations and to respond to the needs of the vast majority of the poor. Progress must be made in enhancing the coherence of the international economic architecture, particularly the interplay of the multilateral trading system and the international financial and monetary systems. There is a need for more inclusive and transparent governance of global economic relations, with an adequate voice and participation of developing countries in international economic decision-making. We therefore call on UNCTAD to give policy recommendations on all trade and development-related matters, including those sectors being pursued in the WTO negotiations. This will help developing countries maximize development gains from multilateral trading system.

8. We are particularly concerned that the Doha Round negotiations in the WTO have not concluded yet and met the expectations of developing countries. All WTO members should uphold and reiterate their commitment for WTO to promote an open, equitable, rule-based, predictable, non-discriminatory and development-friendly multilateral trading system. They must demonstrate their political will and shared interest in achieving the success of the Doha Round and the realization of its development agenda, with the necessary special and differential treatment for developing countries. The Doha Round should therefore also facilitate the beneficial integration of developing countries, particularly LDCs, into the multilateral trading system, and its final results should ensure fair, equitable and realizable commitments. The specific and particular needs of LDCs must be addressed appropriately to fulfill promises made at Doha and at subsequent trade negotiation forums. We also support the Maseru LDC Ministerial Declaration and urge the international community to address the needs of LDCs. We call on UNCTAD to strengthen and prioritize its effort to help all developing countries derive development gains from their participation in the multilateral trading system and trade negotiations.

9. The Doha Round should bring about improvements in multilateral rules that address and remove existing asymmetries and enhance the fairness and equity of the multilateral trading system. In this light, the centrality of agriculture needs to be stressed: the fundamental basis for the existence of a fair and balanced trade in agriculture is the removal of the distortions currently present in agricultural trade. Agricultural domestic support granted for agricultural production by some developed countries must be effectively and substantially reduced, in accordance with the Doha mandate. Moreover, the Doha Round must eliminate all forms of export subsidies. We urge those developed countries providing subsidies for the cotton sector to eliminate expeditiously both export subsidies and production-related domestic support, particularly with a view to fully addressing the concerns of cotton producers in Africa. The possible adverse impacts on LDCs and net food-importing developing countries of a WTO agreement, including implementation costs and other concerns, must be adequately addressed. Aid for Trade should be adequately funded through additionality and predictability of resources, to ensure that the needs of all developing countries, particularly LDCs, are met.

10. The North–South dialogue and negotiations, including triangular cooperation as a means of simultaneously promoting South–South and North–South cooperation, require genuine cooperation for development through global partnership. The growing number and complexity of North–South trade agreements, such as bilateral free trade agreements (FTAs) and economic partnership agreements (EPAs) between the African, Caribbean and Pacific (ACP) countries and the European Union, point to the importance of ensuring coherence for sustainable development and a positive interface between regional trade agreements (RTAs) and the multilateral trading system, as well as with national development strategies of developing countries, so that these agreements more effectively contribute to the attainment of the MDGs and poverty eradication. RTAs should be compliant with WTO rules, taking into account their development dimension. North–South RTAs should not result in additional burdens for developing countries, particularly for LDCs.

11. We emphasize the importance of strengthening WTO universality and accession. The accession process should be accelerated without political impediments and in an expeditious and transparent manner for developing countries, especially for LDCs applying to join the Organization. This would contribute to the rapid and full integration of these countries into the multilateral trading system. UNCTAD's unique role in and quality assistance for WTO accession should be strengthened and prioritized.

12. We note with concern that recent escalations in food and grain prices have caused social destabilization and market instability in several of our member States. Collective urgent measures at the global level are required to assure the world of adequate food security and stable food and grain markets. Renewed attention is required for the development of the agricultural sector, particularly in Africa and the net food-importing developing countries.

13. We call on UNCTAD to help developing countries address the impact of commodity dependence, as well as the diversification of production structures in economies dependent on a few commodities. Domestic commodity diversification efforts need to be supported by specific actions by the international community to address the productive capacity deficiencies of commodity-dependent countries, particularly the LDCs. UNCTAD has been, and should remain, at the forefront of efforts to resolve the trade and development problems associated with commodity dependence. Policy options should be developed to garner assistance for commodity-dependent developing countries through UNCTAD's pillars in order to

mainstream commodity policies into their national and regional development strategies.

14. We underscore the importance of the Arusha Declaration and Plan of Action on African Commodities (2005), the African Union Trade Ministers' declaration on UNCTAD XII (2008), the outcome of the pre-UNCTAD XII Brasilia Conference on the Global Initiative on Commodities (2007), the Arusha outcome of the expert meeting of LDCs (2007) in preparation for UNCTAD XII and General Assembly resolution 61/190, and request the support of the international community for their full implementation. We also underscore the importance of achieving a development-oriented outcome within the context of the Doha Round of negotiations. The work programme emerging from UNCTAD XII should culminate in the setting-up of an effective intergovernmental mechanism (e.g. multi-year meetings of experts) on commodities to evolve a consensus on viable strategies and accordingly advise the Trade and Development Board (TDB).

15. We express concern over the current subprime financial and credit crisis as well as the recent financial market instability and their adverse impact on the development prospects of developing countries, including the latter's access to crucial finance and credits. These situations require a vigorous international response to ensure that the sustained growth of the world economy and the development efforts of developing countries are not severely affected. In this respect, we also highlight the need for the establishment of a new international financial architecture which guarantees the full participation of developing countries, including through reforms of the monitoring and regulatory systems. This architecture should further improve response capabilities for dealing with the emergence and spread of financial crises, and should give developing countries greater flexibility and autonomy in the management of capital flows. The discussions on the reform of the international financial architecture should place greater emphasis on the democratization of international economic decision-making, enhanced measures to mitigate excessive volatility, and financing for development.

16. We are concerned about the decline in levels of official development assistance (ODA) to less than one-third of the internationally agreed target of 0.7 per cent of the Gross National Product (GNP) of donor countries. We reiterate the need to meet, in an expeditious manner, the internationally agreed targets for ODA of 0.7 per cent of GNP of donor countries to developing countries and of an additional 0.15 per cent to 0.2 per cent of GNP to the least developed countries by 2015, in accordance with the Monterrey Consensus and the renewed commitments undertaken in various subsequent forums. We reiterate the call made by the leaders of the Group of 77 and China at the Second South Summit in 2005 in Qatar for the establishment of an effective monitoring mechanism to ensure that the internationally agreed ODA targets, most recently those established for Africa, are met.

17. We look forward to the Follow-up International Conference on Financing for Development to Review the Implementation of the Monterrey Consensus, later this year at Doha, Qatar. This should contribute, inter alia, to building consensus on a durable solution to developing countries' external debt problems, including through debt relief from developed country creditors. The review should also address ways and means of addressing the long-term needs and challenges in the area of development financing, inter alia by ensuring a conducive global environment for development.

18. We call on UNCTAD to assist developing countries in addressing the development dimension of intellectual property and the trade-related aspects of intellectual property rights, including improvements in the transfer of technology to

developing countries, the development dimension and implications of the establishment and enforcement of intellectual property rights, as well as protection of traditional knowledge, genetic resources and folklore and fair and equitable benefit-sharing. We further call on the international community to continue its efforts towards a balanced international intellectual property system, in accordance with the Development Agenda of the World Intellectual Property Organization.

19. We call on UNCTAD to take a proactive role in addressing the trade and development dimension of the new and emerging issues of energy, climate change and migration. With regard to energy, we acknowledge the need to address the issue of renewable sources of energy, including biofuels. Special attention must be paid to the maintenance of food security while producing biofuels. Moreover, we are fully committed to the effective follow-up to the United Nations Climate Change Conference (Bali, 2007). Finally, we recognize the challenges posed by migration; however, developing countries need to be enabled to derive development-friendly benefits from it. Special attention to these issues is needed, because of their bearing on development efforts.

20. We recognize the increased relevance of South–South cooperation, both as a strategy in support of development efforts of developing countries and as a means of enhancing the participation of developing countries in the emerging global economy. We reaffirm commitments to implement fully the Havana Programme of Action, the Marrakech Framework of Implementation of South–South Cooperation and the Doha Plan of Action, which, taken together, represent a comprehensive framework for intensified cooperation among developing countries.

21. We welcome General Assembly resolution 62/209 for the convening of a High-level Conference on South-South Cooperation in commemoration of the 30th Anniversary of the adoption of the Buenos Aires Plan of Action, and welcome in this regard the generous offer made by the Government of Argentina to host this event in the first half of 2009. We look forward to the follow-up in 2008 to the Buenos Aires Plan of Action (1978) for promoting and implementing TCDC, and its success, and to the outcome of the Ministerial Meeting of the Africa–South America Summit, to be held in Marrakech (Morocco) in June 2008.

22. We welcome the progress made in the third round of the Global System of Trade Preferences (GSTP), as an important instrument for South–South trade. In this regard, we take note of the efforts of the participants in the Third Round of the GSTP towards the successful conclusion of the negotiations by the end of 2008.

23. We firmly reject the imposition of laws and regulations that entail extraterritorial consequences and all other forms of coercive economic measures, including unilateral sanctions against developing countries. We urge the international community to adopt urgent and effective measures to eliminate the use of such measures.

24. Support to the Palestinian people must be sustained by analysing and alleviating the adverse economic impact of the prolonged Israeli occupation and conflict conditions, with a view to ending the occupation and achieving a sovereign, economically viable and independent Palestinian State. In this regard, UNCTAD's programme of assistance to the Palestinian people should intensify its policy advice and related operational activities and dedicate adequate resources to its activities in this regard.

25. Recognizing the different levels of development and size of economies among the developing countries, we call on UNCTAD to enhance its work on the special problems of LDCs, African countries, small island developing countries, structurally weak, vulnerable and small economies and the related problems and

challenges faced by middle-income countries. In addition, we call on UNCTAD to provide appropriate support to facilitate the implantation of the Brussels Programme of Action for the Least Developed Countries, the Barbados Programme of Action and the Mauritius Strategy. We recognize the special needs of the landlocked developing countries (LLDCs), and call on the UNCTAD to continue to address those needs and provide appropriate support for the comprehensive and timely implementation of the Almaty Ministerial Declaration and Programme of Action. All efforts must be made to ensure that the outcome of the Mid-term Review of the Implementation of the Almaty Programme of Action to be held in 2008 contributes to establishing efficient transport systems and integration of LLDCs into the international trading system and addressing the challenges and problems faced by transit developing countries. We also take note of the Ulaanbaatar Declaration.

26. We reiterate the need to continue strengthening the capabilities of the Group of 77 and China to address today's challenges and opportunities through, inter alia, further enhancing coordination among the various chapters based in the various United Nations host cities at both the formal and informal levels, and strengthening coordination and cooperation with relevant South institutions, including through the use of modern technology, so that the collective wisdom and experience of the Group could be brought to bear in addressing the international agenda, inter alia through multilateral negotiations. In accordance with the Second South Summit outcomes, the Group should continue to explore ways to establish an open-ended working group to study possible ways and means of strengthening the G77 and China and its Secretariat, including identifying common modalities to facilitate inter-chapter cooperation as well as innovative approaches to address resource and personnel requirements of the G77 Secretariat so that it may meet the needs of the entire Group of 77 and China.

27. We call on the donors to increase their contribution to UNCTAD in order to enable it to effectively discharge its mandate for the benefits of all developing countries.

28. We welcome and endorse the generous offer of the Government of Qatar to host UNCTAD XIII in 2012.

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Corrigendum

Please replace paragraphs 12, 14 and 25 with the following paragraphs:

12. We note with concern that recent escalations in food and grain prices have caused social and political destabilization and market instability in several of our member States. Collective urgent measures at the global level are required to assure the world of adequate food security and stable food and grain markets. Renewed attention is required for the development of the agricultural sector, particularly in Africa and the net-food-importing developing countries.

14. We underscore the importance of the Arusha Declaration and Plan of Action on African Commodities (2005), the African Union Trade Ministers' declaration on UNCTAD XII (2008), the outcome of the pre-UNCTAD XII Brasilia Conference on the Global Initiative on Commodities (2007), the Arusha outcome of the expert meeting of LDCs (2007) in preparation for UNCTAD XII and General Assembly resolution 61/190, and request the support of the international community for their full implementation. We also underscore the importance of achieving a development-oriented outcome within the context of the Doha Round of negotiations. We call on the Secretary-General of the United Nations to urgently establish a subprogramme on commodities at UNCTAD during the current UNCTAD work programme, taking into account the recommendations of regional and international organizations; and we invite UNCTAD members to establish a commodity-specific intergovernmental machinery, in the form of a multi-year committee or a group of experts entrusted with the monitoring of the above-mentioned programme. The subprogramme on commodities should take into account work being undertaken in regional/international organizations, including the World Trade Organization.

25. We recognize the different levels of development and size of economies among the developing countries, and call on UNCTAD to enhance its work on the special problems of LDCs, African countries, small island developing States, structurally weak, vulnerable and small economies and the related problems and challenges faced by middle-income countries. In addition, we call on UNCTAD to

provide appropriate support to facilitate the implementation of the Brussels Programme of Action for the Least Developed Countries, the Barbados Programme of Action and the Mauritius Strategy. We recognize the special needs of the landlocked developing countries (LLDCs), and call on UNCTAD to continue to address those needs and provide appropriate support for the comprehensive and timely implementation of the Almaty Ministerial Declaration and Programme of Action. All efforts must be made to ensure that the outcome of the Mid-term Review of the Implementation of the Almaty Programme of Action to be held in 2008 contributes to establishing efficient transport systems and integration of LLDCs into the international trading system and addressing the challenges and problems faced by transit developing countries. We also take note of the Ulaanbaatar Declaration.
