



United Nations Conference on Trade and Development

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The Accra Declaration

We, the member States of UNCTAD, gathered in Accra, Ghana, from 20 to 25 April 2008, for the twelfth session of the Conference, agree on the following declaration:

1. The visionaries who created UNCTAD in 1964, just as most people on this great continent of Africa were winning their independence, would have felt vindicated by today's interconnected world and its globalized economy. Their founding tenet, that broad-based and sustainable prosperity cannot be achieved without both trade and development working in harmony in an interdependent world, has never been more pertinent.

2. We commend UNCTAD – as the focal point of the United Nations for the integrated treatment of trade and development and the interrelated issues in the areas of finance, technology, investment and sustainable development – for its substantial contribution to advancing the development agenda and supporting developing countries to address challenges and maximize benefits from the globalized world economy. We reiterate our commitment to UNCTAD.

3. Today, we recommit ourselves to uphold a well-functioning, universal, rules-based, open, non-discriminatory and equitable multilateral trading system which promotes development. We strongly emphasize global partnership to maximize development gains for all from globalization. We uphold the decisions taken at UNCTAD XII and urge member States and UNCTAD to put into effect the Accra Accord.

4. The outcome of this Conference will make an important contribution towards equitable and inclusive access to benefits of globalization arising from trade, finance, investment, technology and innovation, and full and productive employment. It will also inform the forthcoming major events on development, including the Development Cooperation Forum of the Economic and Social Council, the Accra High-level Forum on Aid Effectiveness, the high-level event on the Millennium Development Goals during the sixty-second session of the General Assembly, and the Financing for Development Review Conference, as well as other relevant initiatives on development.

5. Our deliberations at UNCTAD XII took place near the mid-point in the global effort to achieve the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). Our collective record in attaining the MDGs is mixed. If the current trend is sustained, the MDG poverty-reduction target will be met for the world as a whole and for most regions. Yet some regions are not on track to achieve all the MDGs, and the projected shortfalls are most severe in sub-Saharan Africa. Moreover, challenges such as rising food and energy prices, and global economic uncertainties, compounded by climate change, have the potential to decelerate global and developing countries' growth, undermine gains from poverty reduction efforts, and pose direct risks to the poor, as well as to the social and political fabric in many countries. We must remain vigilant to ensure that our economic policies and the work of UNCTAD promote inclusive growth that will help countries attain and sustain the internationally agreed development goals, including the MDGs.

6. We resolve to find integrated solutions to these challenges. We recommit ourselves to redouble our efforts to combat poverty and hunger, and pledge to take immediate steps to bolster the world's food security. We will take all necessary measures to meet urgent humanitarian needs in developing countries, particularly least developed countries (LDCs) and Africa. We will pay special attention to the food and nutritional needs of mothers and children. Care should be taken to ensure that trade in food products is not unnecessarily inhibited. In the medium to longer term, we will support national efforts towards increased food production, especially in Africa, LDCs and net food-importing developing countries. These efforts need to be accompanied by collective measures at the global level and an enabling environment – particularly by meaningful reform and liberalization of trade in agriculture and improved official development assistance (ODA) flows to the agricultural sector of developing countries. We also welcome the decision of the Secretary-General of the United Nations to establish a high-powered task force, comprised of eminent experts and leading policy authorities, to address the food security issue.

7. We recognize that rising food prices and agriculture input costs reflect an emerging new global commodity economy. These developments also present a unique opportunity to promote economic growth and sustainable development by improving the productivity of the commodity sectors of developing countries. We will strengthen the commodity sectors by substantially increased public and private investment, and greater value added and diversification.

8. UNCTAD XII took place at an important point in the evolution of the world economy. It followed a five-year run of robust global economic growth, prior to the onset of current difficulties. A new phase of globalization has emerged, in which the developing countries play an important role as a new and additional engine of the global economy. Although many old development challenges persist, including enduring poverty and inequality in many parts of the world, the emergence of some developing countries as regional and global dynamos of trade and investment presents fresh opportunities for development. The potentials of South–South cooperation should be fully harnessed as a real complement to, and not a substitute for, North–South cooperation.

9. We recognize that many developing countries, especially African countries and the LDCs, continue to remain on the margins of the globalization process, and are lagging behind in the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals. Their development will remain a key priority of the international community. We commend the efforts of these countries to scale up their development performance, and encourage them to deepen such efforts. The international community will make further efforts – including through mobilizing development finance and technical cooperation, broadening market access and effectively dealing

with trade-distorting non-tariff measures – to accelerate development and promote positive integration into the world economy. We will strengthen support to the ongoing integration process in Africa, in particular the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD).

10. The outcome of the Doha Round of trade negotiations should ensure fair, balanced, equitable and market-opening commitments, which can deliver major benefits for development. We resolve to redouble efforts towards an expeditious conclusion of the negotiations, with meaningful and significant development outcomes. The agreement reached at the Sixth World Trade Organization Ministerial Conference, held in Hong Kong, China, to provide duty-free and quota-free market access for LDCs should be respected and implemented. The commitments made at the same conference with regard to cotton should be honoured.

11. In the context of Aid for Trade, we call for stronger national action and international support to help build domestic productive competitive export supply capacities, as well as trade-supportive logistics for developing countries, including Africa, LDCs, landlocked developing countries, small island developing States and other structurally weak and vulnerable small economies. Aid for Trade could make a meaningful contribution to respond to these challenges. Aid for Trade should be adequately resourced and implemented, through multilateral and bilateral channels, with the United Nations and other multilateral organizations playing an important role. Implementation, monitoring and evaluation mechanisms should ensure efficient and effective utilization of Aid for Trade resources.

12. We recognize that mobilizing public and private financial resources for development is an integral element of the global partnership for development. We are concerned at the decline in the levels of ODA in recent years. We commend the sharp increase in ODA by a number of donor countries, and call upon all donors to honour their ODA commitments and to improve the effectiveness of ODA in support of nationally-owned national development strategies. We also emphasize the special importance of continued work towards durable solutions to the debt sustainability and management problems of developing countries.

13. Foreign direct investment can generate employment, transfers of technology and knowledge, access to international markets and competition, and can be complementary to national, regional and international efforts to mobilize resources for development. To seize opportunities, countries need active and well-sequenced policies to maximize the development benefits of investment flows. All countries should contribute to an enabling environment to attract foreign direct investment and increase domestic investment. In this context, investment in infrastructure, development of human resources and strengthening of institutional capacities are all relevant for sustained economic growth.

14. Financial systems continue to adapt to the realities of the twenty-first century, and should have the capacity to help reduce uncertainty and support economic growth. All countries can contribute to international financial resiliency by promoting transparent, predictable and effective regulatory regimes. In order to complement national development efforts, we recognize the urgent need to enhance coherence, governance and consistency of the international monetary, financial and trading systems. There is now greater urgency to enhance the voice and participation of developing countries and countries with economies in transition in policymaking in the areas of trade, money and finance. We encourage further progress in this regard.

15. Inclusive globalization will require fuller participation of all countries in today's global knowledge and information society. We will encourage public sector, private sector and civil society actors to strengthen efforts to put the dynamic forces

of information, technology, innovation, creativity and diversity at the service of fair and equitable development for all.

16. While development is the primary responsibility of each country, domestic efforts should be facilitated and complemented by an enabling international environment based on multilaterally agreed and applied rules. It is for each Government to evaluate the trade-off between the benefits of accepting international rules and commitments, and the constraints posed by the loss of policy space. We also underline the importance of sound policies and good governance at all levels, and the effective participation and contribution of all stakeholders, including the Government, private sector and civil society. We call for further progress in enhancing the role of women at all levels of society. We also emphasize the importance of competition policies to improve consumer welfare and competitiveness.

17. Climate change currently poses a significant challenge, especially to the poor, who are least equipped to adapt. Climate change adaptation and mitigation need to be urgently addressed, in accordance with the provisions and principles of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, bearing in mind the principle of common but differentiated responsibilities and respective capabilities, and taking into account social and economic conditions and other relevant factors. Adequate financing and technology will be critical to help developing countries to rise to this challenge. The trade and development aspects of climate change are important for development prospects of developing countries, and should be adequately taken into account in mitigation and adaptation strategies.

18. Our accomplishments in Accra, and our actions to strengthen UNCTAD by enhancing its developmental role, impact and institutional effectiveness, represent our abiding commitment to the vision of global economic growth and shared prosperity that our UNCTAD founders brought to this process 44 years ago. We best honour them by translating our decisions at this Conference into concrete actions for the benefit of future generations. To this end, we pledge to keep our multilateral trade and development institutions strong. In this spirit, let us move forward together towards UNCTAD XIII in Qatar.
