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Strengthening of the coordination of humanitarian and disaster relief assistance of the United Nations, including special economic assistance

Strengthening of the United Nations system

Letter dated 14 April 2020 from the Permanent Representative of Guyana to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

I have the honour to transmit herewith a statement by the Group of 77 and China, dated 3 April 2020, on the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic.

On behalf of the Group of 77 and China, I would appreciate having the present letter and its annex circulated as a document of the General Assembly, under agenda items 9, 17, 18, 19, 20, 22, 23, 25, 71 and 123.

(Signed) Michael R. **Ten-Pow**
Permanent Representative of the Co-operative
Republic of Guyana to the United Nations
Chair of the Group of 77



Annex to the letter dated 14 April 2020 from the Permanent Representative of Guyana to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

Statement by the Group of 77 and China on the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic (New York, 3 April 2020)

1. At this time of global uncertainty, with the evolving catastrophic impacts of the novel Coronavirus pandemic – COVID-19, the Group of 77 and China expresses its solidarity with all countries as we battle its effects. We are saddened by the loss of lives and extend our heartfelt condolences to the families of those who have lost loved ones. We also wish those who have been affected and are faced with seemingly insurmountable challenges a speedy and full recovery. We salute the dedicated and hard-working healthcare professionals, medical researchers racing to develop vaccines and treatments, and other frontline workers around the world, who are bearing the brunt of the response to the current health crisis.

2. The Group of 77 and China commends those Governments that have swiftly implemented measures to combat the spread of the disease. We call on those that have not yet done so to take urgent steps in this direction. We are especially concerned by the immediate and longer-term impacts of the disease on developing countries and commend those donor partners and institutions that have initiated special measures to assist developing countries in their efforts to combat the pandemic. The Group welcomes the G20 statement on COVID-19 and its commitments to safeguard the global economy and support developing countries amidst the pandemic. We also commend the solidarity and cooperation among developing countries, within the framework of South-South cooperation, in contributing to the efforts to confront the pandemic.

3. The Group congratulates the Secretary-General of the United Nations for his strong leadership in this time of crisis and welcomes the launch of the United Nations COVID-19 Response and Recovery Fund to strengthen health systems and assist vulnerable populations across the globe. The Fund underpins the UN's coordinated multi-agency and multi-sectoral approach to addressing the socioeconomic impacts of the COVID-19 crisis at the national and local levels. In this connection, the Group calls for greater sharing of information and technology for the detection, prevention, treatment and control of the pandemic.

4. The Group also welcomes the announcements by various Heads of United Nations Funds, Programmes and Agencies of measures to provide immediate and longer-term assistance to developing countries for addressing the human and socio-economic impacts of COVID-19. The pandemic and the challenges posed by climate change and other development obstacles together serve to underscore the urgency of the Decade of Action and Delivery for Sustainable Development and the importance of the 75th Anniversary of the United Nations, as an opportunity for reflection and recalibration of our efforts.

5. We are undoubtedly at a decisive juncture. Many of our member countries are confronted by debilitating economic uncertainties, including severe fiscal and foreign exchange constraints, amidst the inevitable slowdown in global economic growth. Now more than ever, our global community must remain focused on accelerating the implementation of the people-centered 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. Ending global poverty and leaving no one and no country behind now require tangible action, including the acceleration of efforts to achieve universal health coverage by 2030. To that end, our efforts must be redirected to the immediate challenge of strengthening our collective action to combat the pandemic using effective strategies. We call upon the international community to take coordinated and effective measures

to maintain the stability of global financial markets and supply chains, including by cutting tariffs and removing trade barriers, particularly for pharmaceuticals and health supplies, in order to facilitate the unfettered flow of trade and promote global economic recovery. We also call on the international financial institutions to help mitigate the impacts of the pandemic on developing countries, through greater flexibility in assessing their fiscal situation and through use of appropriate financial instruments.

6. We appreciate the World Health Organization (WHO) for its leading role in coordinating pandemic preparedness and response and encourage it to also take the lead in developing a strategy to ensure that Governments have adequate supplies of essential medical equipment to contain the spread of COVID-19 and to mitigate its impacts. We also call on national Governments and local authorities to engage their publics in the effort to stem the spread of the disease and we appeal for greater coordination of these efforts at the regional and international levels, including the sharing of information and data in real time.

7. The Group of 77 and China considers that at this juncture, the enactment and application of unilateral coercive economic measures will have a negative impact on the capacity of States to respond efficiently, specifically in the acquisition of medical equipment and supplies to adequately treat their populations in the face of this pandemic. Ultimately, these measures also affect the essential cooperation and solidarity that should prevail among nations. We therefore call upon the international community to adopt urgent and effective measures to eliminate the use of unilateral coercive economic measures against developing countries.

8. The Group of 77 and China is resolved not to allow any stigmatization or discrimination of States, peoples or individuals in connection with the COVID-19 pandemic. This is a time for the international community, developed and developing countries alike, to demonstrate our capability to work together in solidarity to mitigate the impacts of COVID-19 and to build a community of shared future for humankind.
