

DRAFT 2012 HLS MINISTERIAL DECLARATION OF ECOSOC

“PROMOTING PRODUCTIVE CAPACITY, EMPLOYMENT AND DECENT WORK TO ERADICATE POVERTY IN THE CONTEXT OF INCLUSIVE, SUSTAINABLE AND EQUITABLE ECONOMIC GROWTH AT ALL LEVELS FOR ACHIEVING THE **MILLENNIUM DEVELOPMENT GOALS**”

We, the Ministers and Heads of Delegations, participating in the high-level segment of the substantive session of the Economic and Social Council, held in New York from 2 to 9 July 2012,

Having considered the theme of the high-level segment, “Promoting productive capacity, employment and decent work to eradicate poverty in the context of inclusive, sustainable and equitable economic growth at all levels for achieving the Millennium Development Goals”,

Reaffirming the commitments to promoting productive capacity, employment and decent work made at the major United Nations conferences and summits in the economic, environmental, social and related fields,

Recalling the outcome of the thirteenth session of the UN conference on trade and development, and expressing our gratitude to the government and people of the State of Qatar for hosting the conference,

Recalling the outcome of the UN Conference on Sustainable Development, The Future We Want, and expressing our gratitude to the government and people of Brazil for hosting the conference,

Recalling the holding of the UNESCO Third International Congress on Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET), held in Shanghai, China, from 13 to 16 May 2012,

Looking forward to the International High-Level Conference on Decent Work to be held in Moscow on 11-12 December 2012,

Reaffirming the resolve to make the goals of full and productive employment and decent work for all, including for women and young people, a central objective of our relevant national and international policies as well as our national development strategies, including poverty eradication strategies, as part of our efforts to achieve the Millennium Development Goals,

Reaffirming that eradicating poverty is one of the greatest global challenges facing the world today, particularly in Africa and in Least Developed Countries, and in some middle-income countries, and underlining the importance of accelerating sustainable, broad based, inclusive economic growth, including full and productive employment generation and decent work,

Recalling Article 23 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights on the right to work, to free choice of employment, to just and favourable conditions of work and to protection against unemployment, and reaffirming the international commitments and obligations of states parties to the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, as well as the relevant internationally agreed labour standards of the ILO, and all human rights, including the right to development,

Reaffirming our commitment to the achievement of all the internationally agreed development goals, including the Millennium Development Goals, inter alia by promoting productive capacities, full and productive employment and decent work for all,

Recalling the ILO Declaration on Social Justice for a Fair Globalization and the ILO Declaration on Fundamental Principles and Rights at Work and its Follow-up,

Reaffirming the leading role of the ILO in promoting full and productive employment and decent work for all,

Expressing deep concern about the continuing high levels of unemployment and underemployment, particularly among young people,

Recognizing the need to strengthen the productive capacity of developing countries, in particular LDCs, including to address their infrastructure deficits,

Recognizing the contribution of the 2012 ECOSOC Youth Forum to the deliberations of ECOSOC on productive capacity, employment and decent work,

Recognizing the contributions and recommendations of the regional preparatory meetings for the Annual Ministerial Review of 2012,

Have adopted the following declaration:

1. We express deep concern about the ongoing adverse impacts, particularly on development, of the world financial and economic crisis, cognizant that the global economy is entering a challenging new phase with significant downside risks, including the turbulence in global financial and commodity markets and widespread fiscal strains, which threaten the global economic recovery, and stress the need to continue to address systemic fragilities and imbalances and the need for continuing efforts to promote productive capacity, employment and decent work.

2. We further recognize that the world faces serious social, environmental and economic challenges, and that the achievement of sustained, inclusive and equitable economic growth and sustainable development remains critical. We reaffirm the resolve to take concrete action to implement the Monterrey Consensus and to address the challenges of financing for development in the spirit of global partnership and solidarity in support of the achievement of the internationally agreed development goals, including the Millennium Development Goals.

3. We recognize that people are at the centre of sustainable development and in this regard we strive for a world that is just, equitable and inclusive, and we commit to work together to promote sustained and inclusive economic growth, social development and environmental protection and thereby to benefit all.

4. We acknowledge the need to further mainstream sustainable development at all levels integrating economic, social and environmental aspects and recognizing their interlinkages, so as to achieve sustainable development in all its dimensions.

5. We recall the resolve to take urgent action to achieve sustainable development. We therefore reaffirm our commitment to sustainable development, assessing the progress to date and the remaining gaps in the implementation of the outcomes of the major summits on sustainable development and addressing new and emerging challenges. We reiterate our determination to address the themes of the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development, namely, a green economy in the context of sustainable development and poverty eradication, and the institutional framework for sustainable development.

6. We stress that the promotion of sustained, inclusive and equitable economic growth is necessary for accelerating progress towards achieving the Millennium Development Goals, as well as for promoting sustainable development, but is not sufficient, and that growth should enable everyone, in particular the poor, to participate in and benefit from economic opportunities and should lead to job creation and income opportunities, and be complemented by effective social policies.

7. We call for increased efforts to enhance coordination at all levels, with a view to strengthening national development strategies, stimulating investment in productive capacities, helping start and grow businesses and promoting opportunities for full and productive employment and decent work for all.

8. We support continued efforts to put productive employment at the heart of actions to restore growth and promote a job-rich recovery at national, regional and global levels, including through sustained, inclusive and equitable economic growth, by reinforcing cooperation and coherence in this area within the UN system and together with the International Financial Institutions.

9. We commit to embrace the policy approaches contained in the Global Jobs Pact, as appropriate, and introduce measures tailored to each country's circumstances and priorities.

10. We stress the need to provide social protection to all members of society, fostering growth, resilience, social justice, and cohesion, including those who are not employed in the formal economy. In this regard, we strongly encourage national and local initiatives aimed at providing social protection floors for all citizens. We support global dialogue on best practices for social protection programmes that takes into account the three dimensions of sustainable development and, in this regard, we note the International Labour Organization Recommendation 202 concerning National Floors of Social Protection.

11. We reiterate the need to adopt forward-looking policies, including macroeconomic policies, that aim at delivering sustained, inclusive and equitable economic growth, full and productive employment and decent work for all, poverty eradication, and low and stable inflation, and seek to minimize domestic and external imbalances to ensure that the benefits of growth reach all people, especially the poor, and to integrate these policies, in a coherent manner, to social and employment objectives with a focus on mutually supportive strategies which lead to rapid expansion of productive employment at adequate remuneration.

12. We emphasize the need for more effective government involvement so as to ensure an appropriate regulation of the market that promotes productive capacity, full employment and decent work.

13. We recognize that a dynamic, inclusive, well-functioning and socially responsible private sector is a valuable instrument for generating economic growth and reducing poverty, emphasize the need to pursue, at the national level and in a manner consistent with national laws, appropriate policy and regulatory frameworks through which to encourage public and private initiatives, including at the local level, and to foster a dynamic and well-functioning business sector, while improving income growth and distribution, raising productivity, empowering while improving empowerment of women, and protecting labour rights and the environment, and reiterate the importance of ensuring that the benefits of growth reach all people by empowering individuals and communities.

14. We recognize that in order to achieve equitable development and foster a vibrant economy, it is vital to have a financial infrastructure that provides access to a variety of sustainable products and services for micro-, small- and medium-sized businesses, with particular emphasis on women, rural populations and the poor. We will make sure that the benefits of growth reach all people by empowering individuals and communities and by improving access to services in the fields of finance and credit. We recognize that micro- finance, including microcredit, has proven to be effective in generating productive self-employment, which can contribute to the achievement of the internationally agreed development goals, including the Millennium Development Goals.

15. We also reaffirm the need to develop and promote active labour market policies, including the full participation of women and men in both rural and urban areas to alleviate unemployment and underemployment.

16. We recognize the need to design education and training programmes that improve employability and individual capacities through skills development.

17. We urge States and, as appropriate, the relevant entities of the United Nations system, international and regional organizations, within their respective mandates, as well as civil society, the private sector, employer organizations, trade unions, media and other relevant actors to continue to develop and strengthen policies, strategies and programmes to enhance the employability of women and youth and ensure their access to full and productive employment and decent work, including through improving access to formal and non-formal education, skills development and vocational training, lifelong learning and retraining, long-distance education, including in information and communications technology and entrepreneurial skills, particularly in developing countries, including with a view to supporting women's economic empowerment in the different stages of their lives.

18. We encourage Member States to adopt and implement human resources development strategies premised on national development objectives that ensure a strong link between education, health, training and employment, help to maintain a productive and competitive workforce and are responsive to the needs of the economy.

19. We recognize the importance of developing policies, including effective labour market policies and legislation, as appropriate, that support statutory or negotiated minimum wage systems, acceptable conditions of work, strengthened labour standards, where necessary, institutions of collective bargaining and labour administration, in order to, inter alia, avoid deflationary wage spirals, increase demand, promote economic stability, reduce poverty and inequality and achieve social justice.

20. We stress the need to build a critical mass of viable and competitive productive capacity in agriculture, manufacturing and services in the Least Developed Countries, which is essential if they are to benefit from greater integration into the global economy, increase resilience to shocks, sustain inclusive and equitable growth as well as poverty eradication, achieve structural transformation, and generate full and productive employment and decent work for all.

21. We encourage improvements in agricultural productivity to improve food security, access to goods and services as well as the development of employment along the agricultural value chain, and trade-capacity building in the agricultural sector, to raise incomes in farm and non-farm sectors in rural areas and help poor households cope with higher food prices, and reiterate the importance of empowering rural women as critical agents for enhancing agricultural and rural development and food security and nutrition.

22. We reaffirm the important work and inclusive nature of the Committee on World Food Security (CFS), including through its role in facilitating country-initiated assessments on sustainable food production and food security, and we encourage countries to give due consideration to implementing the CFS Voluntary Guidelines on the Responsible Governance of Tenure of Land, Fisheries and Forests in the Context of National Food Security.

23. We support the promotion of innovative approaches in the design and implementation of employment policies and programmes for all, including the long-term unemployed.

24. We recognize the importance of providing social protection schemes for the formal and informal economy as instruments to achieve equity, inclusion and stability and cohesion of societies, and emphasize the importance of supporting national efforts aimed at bringing informal workers into the formal economy. We urge Governments, with the cooperation of relevant entities, to develop systems of social protection and to extend or broaden, as appropriate, their effectiveness and coverage, including for workers in the informal economy, recognizing the need for social protection systems to provide social security and support labour-market participation, and urge Governments, while taking account of national circumstances, to focus on the needs of those living in, or vulnerable to, poverty and give particular consideration to universal access to basic social security systems, recognizing that social protection floors can provide a systemic base to address poverty and vulnerability.

25. We emphasize the need for improved regulatory environments and policy initiatives that promote entrepreneurship, stressing the positive role entrepreneurship plays in driving job creation.

26. We support national regulatory and policy frameworks that enable business and industry to advance sustainable development initiatives taking into account the importance of corporate social responsibility. We call on the private sector to engage in responsible business practices, such as those promoted by the UN Global Compact.

27. We stress the importance of promoting universal access to social protection systems including by establishing, and maintaining, as applicable, nationally determined social protection floors as a fundamental element of national social security systems, and in line with ILO Recommendation 202 (2012) on National Floors of Social Protection and bearing in mind ILO Social Security (Minimum Standards) Convention 102 (1952) as an important means of assisting those living in or vulnerable to poverty while also helping to stabilize the economy, maintaining and promoting employability and protecting and further consolidating the gains towards the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals.

28. We reaffirm the importance of promoting and attaining the goals of universal and equitable access to quality education, the highest attainable standards of physical and mental health and the access of all to primary healthcare as part of the effort to eradicate poverty, promote full and productive employment and foster social integration. We recognize the continued need to address the impact of [non-communicable diseases, HIV/AIDS, malaria and tuberculosis, and other major infectious diseases on social and economic development.

29. We also reaffirm the importance of the Dakar Framework of Action for Education for All, and reaffirm the commitment to ensure by 2015 access to and complete, free and compulsory primary education of good quality and to achieve gender equality in education by 2015, and resolve to strengthen policies aimed at ensuring full and equal access to education at all levels through lifelong learning, including adult and long-distance education and training, adopting, promoting and attaining the goals of universal and equitable access to quality education , in particular of women and girls.

30. We recognize that it is necessary to increase vigilance and to achieve respect for international labour standards and reaffirm our commitment to promote opportunities for full, freely chosen and productive employment as well as decent work for all, with full respect for fundamental principles and rights at work under conditions of non-discrimination, equity, equality, security and dignity.

31. We recognize the need to universally respect, promote and realize fundamental principles and rights at work, in accordance with the International Labour Organization Declaration on Fundamental Principles and Rights at Work.

32. We stress the need to remove the obstacles to the full realization of the right of self determination of peoples living under colonial and foreign occupation, which adversely affect their economic and social development, including their exclusion from labor markets and to promote their productive capacity employment and decent work.

33. We further stress the importance of removing obstacles to the social and economic development, and promoting the productive capacity, employment, and decent work of people living in areas affected by complex humanitarian emergencies and terrorism.

34. We stress the importance of promoting and protecting the rights of women workers, to take action to remove structural and legal barriers to, as well as eliminate stereotypical attitudes towards, gender equality at work, and to initiate positive steps towards promoting equal pay for equal work or for work of equal value.

35. We encourage Member States to undertake gender analyses of national labour laws and standards and to establish gender-sensitive policies and guidelines for employment practices, building on multilateral instruments, including the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women and other relevant Conventions of the International Labour Organization.

36. We recognize need to improve opportunities for young people to gain access to productive employment and decent work through increased investment in youth employment, active labour-market support and public-private partnerships, as well as through the creation of enabling environments to facilitate the participation of young people in labour markets, in accordance with international rules and commitments.

37. We stress the need to address the special challenges of youth employment in countries affected by conflict. In this respect, we urge strong collaboration between all relevant actors to promote and scale up best practices.

38. We further encourage efforts by the international community to promote balanced, coherent and comprehensive approaches to international migration and development and recognize the important contribution of migrant workers for both countries of origin and destination. We should resist unfair and discriminatory treatment of migrant workers and the imposition of unreasonable restrictions on labour migration in order to maximize the benefits of international migration, while complying with the relevant national legislation and applicable international obligations. We also recognize the need for Member States to continue considering the multidimensional aspects of international migration and development in order to identify appropriate ways and means of maximizing the development benefits and minimizing the negative impacts, including by exploring ways to lower the transfer costs of remittances, garnering the active engagement of expatriates and fostering their involvement in promoting investment in countries of origin and entrepreneurship among non-migrants.

39. We stress the importance of public-private partnerships in a wide range of areas, with the aim of eradicating poverty and promoting full and productive employment and decent work for all and social integration, as appropriate.

40. We emphasize that effective policies should be formulated and implemented through inclusive processes, in particular through broad-based social dialogue with workers' and employers' representatives, and attention to the quality of governance and public services.

41. We recognize the need for significant mobilization of resources from a variety of sources and effective use of financing, in order to promote full and productive employment and decent work for all, and in this regard:

(a) We recall the resolve of Member States to enhance and strengthen domestic resource mobilization and fiscal space, including, where appropriate, through modernized tax systems, more efficient tax collection, the broadening of the tax base and the effective combating of tax evasion and capital flight.

(b) We recall that the ongoing fight against corruption at all levels is a priority, and reaffirms the need to take urgent and decisive steps to continue to combat corruption in all its manifestations in order to reduce obstacles to effective resource mobilization and allocation and to prevent the diversion of resources away from activities that are vital for development.

(c) We recognize it is important to enhance the development impact of direct investment, including foreign direct investment, including by strengthening the productive sector and contributing to job creation. In order to contribute to development, efforts should be made by all stakeholders to promote FDI in a way so as to complement [the development priorities of host countries. FDI requires a stable, predictable and enabling investment climate. National capacities of developing countries should be strengthened in this regard. Investment policies should have a strong focus on sustainable development and inclusive growth.

(d) We reaffirm that international trade is an engine for development and sustained economic growth, and also reaffirm the critical role that a universal, rules-based, open, non-discriminatory and equitable multilateral trading system, as well as meaningful trade liberalization, can play in stimulating economic growth and development worldwide, thereby benefiting all countries at all stages of development, as they advance towards sustainable development.

(e) We urge the Members of the WTO to redouble their efforts to achieve an ambitious, balanced and development-oriented conclusion to the Doha Development Agenda, while respecting the principles of transparency, inclusiveness and consensual decision-making, with a view to strengthen the multilateral trading system. In order to effectively participate in the WTO work programme and fully realize trade opportunities, developing countries need assistance and enhanced cooperation of all relevant stakeholders.

(f) We underline the fact that the fulfillment of all official development assistance commitments is crucial, including the commitments by many developed countries to achieve the target of 0.7 per cent of gross national product for official development assistance to developing countries by 2015 as well as the target of 0.15 per cent to 0.20 per cent of gross national product for official development assistance to least developed countries, and urge developed countries that have not yet done so to fulfill their commitments for official development assistance to developing countries.

(g) We stress the essential role that official development assistance plays in complementing, leveraging and sustaining financing for development in developing countries and in facilitating the achievement of development objectives, including the internationally agreed development goals, in particular the Millennium Development Goals, and welcome steps to improve the effectiveness and quality of aid based on the fundamental principles of national ownership, alignment, harmonization, managing for results and mutual accountability.

(h) We note that the aid architecture has significantly changed in the current decade. New aid providers and novel partnership approaches, which utilize new modalities of cooperation, have contributed to increasing the flow of resources. Further, the interplay of development assistance with private investment, trade and new development actors provides new opportunities for aid to leverage private resource flows.

(i) We consider that innovative mechanisms of financing can make a positive contribution towards assisting developing countries in mobilizing additional resources for financing for development on a voluntary basis and that such financing should supplement and not be a substitute for traditional sources of financing.

42. We encourage the sharing of experiences and best practices on ways to address the high levels of unemployment and underemployment, in particular among youth.

43. We call for strengthened policy coherence and partnerships across the UN system including the international financial institutions, as appropriate, while still recognizing the respective mandates and governance structures of its constituent parts, with a view to promoting the creation of decent work through enhanced policy dialogue, research and analysis, data collection, including sex, age and disability disaggregated data, and technical

assistance provision, and in this regard we recognize the role of the United Nations inter-agency cluster on trade and productive capacity.

44. We are concerned about labour market conditions and widespread deficits of available decent work opportunities, especially for young women and men. We urge all governments to address the global challenge of youth employment by developing and implementing strategies and policies that provide young people everywhere access to decent and productive work, as over the coming decades, decent jobs will need to be created to be able to ensure sustainable and inclusive development and reduce poverty.

45. We invite and encourage donors, international organizations including the UN system, as well as the IFIs, regional development banks, major groups and the private sector to support the implementation of global strategies on employment.

46. We call upon the UN agencies, funds and programmes to continue to coordinate in a coherent manner their activities in order to support national governments, upon their request, to develop and expand social protection floors, in line with ILO recommendation 202, including through the facilitation and promotion of South-South cooperation.

47. We further call upon UN agencies and programmes to enhance their efforts to help countries develop employment and entrepreneurship friendly and coherent policies, including macroeconomic policies, and highlight the role of ECOSOC in providing a global forum for discussion of those issues.

48. We encourage all stakeholders to consider collaborating with the UN system to create a youth volunteers programme under the umbrella of the UN Volunteers, and support the Secretary-General's call for a stronger partnerships with and for youth, by inter alia strengthening the youth focus of programmes on employment.

49. We stress the importance of keeping full and productive employment and decent work for all as a key cross-cutting theme on the UN agenda.

50. We further call on Member States to consider productive capacity, employment and decent work in the discussions of the post-2015 development agenda.