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Sustainable development: sustainable mountain development

Resolution adopted by the General Assembly on 19 December 2019

[on the report of the Second Committee (A/74/381/Add.12)]

74/227. Sustainable mountain development

The General Assembly,

Recalling its resolutions [55/189](#) of 20 December 2000, [57/245](#) of 20 December 2002, [58/216](#) of 23 December 2003 and [59/238](#) of 22 December 2004, and its resolutions [60/198](#) of 22 December 2005, [62/196](#) of 19 December 2007, [64/205](#) of 21 December 2009, [66/205](#) of 22 December 2011, [68/217](#) of 20 December 2013 and [71/234](#) of 21 December 2016, entitled “Sustainable mountain development”,

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,

Recalling that the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, inter alia, recognizes that economic and social development depends on the sustainable management of our planet’s natural resources and confirms the determination of the international community to conserve and sustainably use oceans and seas and freshwater resources, as well as forests, mountains and drylands, and to protect biodiversity, ecosystems and wildlife,

Reaffirming 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,

Reaffirming also the Paris Agreement¹ and its early entry into force, encouraging all its parties to fully implement the Agreement, and parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change² that have not yet done so to deposit their instruments of ratification, acceptance, approval or accession, where appropriate, as soon as possible,

Highlighting the synergies between the implementation of the 2030 Agenda and the Paris Agreement, and noting with concern the findings contained in the special reports entitled *Global Warming of 1.5°C* and *The Ocean and Cryosphere in a Changing Climate* of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change,

Noting with concern the adverse impacts of climate change on high mountains, including the retreat of mountain glaciers, permafrost thaw, mass loss of ice sheets and the decline in the depth, extent and duration of snow cover,

Welcoming the holding of the 2019 Climate Action Summit, convened by the Secretary-General, on 23 September, taking note of the multi-partner initiatives and commitments presented during the Summit, and taking note also of the Youth Climate Summit, held on 21 September,

Recalling that the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, inter alia, recognizes that developing countries with fragile mountainous ecosystems are among the countries that are particularly vulnerable to the adverse effects of climate change,

Recalling also the Convention on Biological Diversity,³ the Aichi Biodiversity Targets contained in its Strategic Plan for Biodiversity 2011–2020⁴ and its programme of work on mountain biodiversity,

Noting with concern the findings of the Intergovernmental Science-Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services, stressing the urgent need to address the unprecedented global decline in biodiversity, and in this regard looking forward to the 2020 summit on biodiversity and the fifteenth meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity, which is to adopt a post-2020 global biodiversity framework,

Recalling the United Nations strategic plan for forests 2017–2030⁵ and the United Nations Decade on Ecosystem Restoration (2021–2030),⁶ and noting with appreciation the Bonn Challenge,

Recognizing the Sendai Declaration and the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015–2030, adopted at the Third United Nations World Conference on Disaster Risk Reduction,⁷ the latter of which, inter alia, identifies a need for focused action in investing in disaster risk reduction for resilience, and in this regard considers it important to promote, at the national and local levels, the mainstreaming of disaster

¹ See [FCCC/CP/2015/10/Add.1](#), decision 1/CP.21, annex.

² United Nations, *Treaty Series*, vol. 1771, No. 30822.

³ *Ibid.*, vol. 1760, No. 30619.

⁴ United Nations Environment Programme, document UNEP/CBD/COP/10/27, annex, decision X/2, annex.

⁵ See resolution [71/285](#).

⁶ See resolution [73/284](#).

⁷ Resolution [69/283](#), annexes I and II.

risk assessment, mapping and management into rural development planning and management of, inter alia, mountains, including through the identification of areas that are safe for human settlement, and at the same time preserving ecosystem functions that help to reduce risks,

Recalling the outcome document of the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development, entitled “The future we want”,⁸ Agenda 21,⁹ the Plan of Implementation of the World Summit on Sustainable Development (Johannesburg Plan of Implementation)¹⁰ and the Aichi Biodiversity Targets of the Strategic Plan for Biodiversity 2011–2020,

Recognizing that the benefits derived from mountain regions are essential for sustainable development and that mountain ecosystems play a crucial role in providing water and other essential resources and services to a large portion of the world’s population,

Recognizing also that mountain ecosystems are highly vulnerable to the increasing adverse impacts of climate change, extreme weather events, deforestation, forest fires and forest degradation, land-use change, land degradation and natural disasters, from which they recover slowly, and that mountain glaciers around the world are retreating and getting thinner, with increasing impacts on the environment, sustainable livelihoods and human well-being,

Acknowledging that, despite the progress that has been made in promoting the sustainable development of mountain regions and the conservation of mountain ecosystems, including their biodiversity, the prevalence of poverty, food insecurity, social exclusion, environmental degradation and exposure to the risk of disasters is still increasing, particularly in developing countries, and access to safe and affordable drinking water and basic sanitation as well as to sustainable modern energy services continues to be limited,

Reaffirming that gender equality and the empowerment of all women and girls will make a crucial contribution to progress across all the Sustainable Development Goals and targets, and that the achievement of full human potential and sustainable development is not possible if one half of humanity continues to be denied full human rights and opportunities,

Noting with deep concern that about 340 million people in rural mountain areas in developing countries – 55 per cent of the total rural mountain population – were considered vulnerable to food insecurity in 2017, a steep increase compared with 2012, and in this regard acknowledging the need to prioritize the special and urgent attention needed by mountain areas, including by focusing on the specific challenges they face and the opportunities they provide,

Encouraging Member States to advance innovative pathways to achieve sustainable consumption and production in line with United Nations Environment Assembly resolution 4/1 of 15 March 2019,¹¹

Noting the collaborative efforts of the International Partnership for Sustainable Development in Mountain Regions (Mountain Partnership), launched during the World Summit on Sustainable Development as a multi-stakeholder approach

⁸ Resolution 66/288, annex.

⁹ *Report of the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development, Rio de Janeiro, 3–14 June 1992*, vol. I, *Resolutions Adopted by the Conference* (United Nations publication, Sales No. E.93.I.8 and corrigendum), resolution 1, annex II.

¹⁰ *Report of the World Summit on Sustainable Development, Johannesburg, South Africa, 26 August–4 September 2002* (United Nations publication, Sales No. E.03.II.A.1 and corrigendum), chap. I, resolution 2, annex.

¹¹ [UNEP/EA.4/Res.1](#).

benefiting from the committed support of 381 members, including 60 Governments, 16 intergovernmental organizations, 297 major groups and 8 subnational authorities, and engaged in the promotion of sustainable development in its three dimensions – economic, social and environmental – in mountain regions,

Noting with appreciation the establishment of groups of friends aimed at the promotion of sustainable mountain development, such as the Mountain Focus Group, in 2001 and the Group of Friends of Mountainous Countries, in 2019,

1. *Takes note* of the report of the Secretary-General on sustainable mountain development;¹²

2. *Encourages* States to adopt a long-term vision and holistic approaches, including through incorporating mountain-specific policies into national sustainable development strategies, increase efforts to end poverty in all its forms and dimensions, address food insecurity and malnutrition, promote the conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity, traditional crops and diets, and fight against social exclusion, environmental degradation and disaster risk in mountain areas, taking into account that an integrated landscape approach which addresses natural resources management, including watershed and sustainable forest management as well as climate change resilience through multi-stakeholder approaches, can lead to the sustainable development of highland areas, the improvement of the livelihood of the local mountain communities and the sustainable use of mountain resources;

3. *Encourages* Member States, and invites international organizations and other relevant stakeholders, with respect to sustainable mountain development, to reduce and reverse biodiversity loss and the degradation of land and soil, contributing to the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals;

4. *Takes note* of the Mountain Partnership, the only United Nations voluntary alliance of partners dedicated to improving the lives of people living in mountain areas and protecting mountain environments around the world, and also takes note of the Mountain Partnership framework for action for implementing the 2030 Agenda for mountains, as well as the work of the Mountain Partnership Products initiative;

5. *Stresses* the special vulnerability of people living in mountain environments, in particular local communities and indigenous peoples, often with limited access to health, education and economic systems and particularly at risk because of the negative impact of extreme natural phenomena, and invites States to strengthen cooperative action, with the effective involvement and sharing of knowledge and experience of all relevant stakeholders, including traditional knowledge of indigenous peoples living in mountain areas and knowledge of local mountain communities and their cultures, by strengthening existing arrangements, agreements and centres of excellence for sustainable mountain development, as well as exploring new arrangements and agreements, as appropriate;

6. *Also stresses* the importance of innovative solutions for the diversification of livelihoods and income enhancement opportunities for local mountain communities, and in this regard encourages the promotion of innovative solutions and entrepreneurship within local mountain communities, as appropriate, to end poverty and hunger;

7. *Further stresses* the importance of mountain family farming communities and indigenous peoples as one of the custodians of natural and cultural heritage, and encourages Member States to support the activities related to the United Nations Decade of Family Farming (2019–2028), in line with its global action plan, to promote national policies, as appropriate, that support secure land tenure, provide access to resources, ensure gender equality and women's empowerment, empower

¹² A/74/209.

people in vulnerable situations and to implement practical actions that can safeguard decent work opportunities, particularly for youth, in rural areas;

8. *Stresses* that the traditions and knowledge of indigenous peoples living in mountain areas and the knowledge of local mountain communities, particularly in the fields of agriculture, medicine and management of natural resources, should be fully considered, respected and promoted in development policy, strategies and programmes in mountain regions, and underlines the need to promote the full participation and involvement of local mountain communities in decisions that affect them and to integrate indigenous and local knowledge, heritage and values in all development initiatives, in consultation with and with the consent of the concerned indigenous peoples and local mountain communities, as appropriate;

9. *Recognizes* the need to increase the adaptive capacity, resilience and sustainability of food and agricultural production with regard to climate change, notes that sustainable production practices, agroforestry and the conservation of agrobiodiversity in mountain areas ensure food security and nutrition and dietary diversity and quality, generate income for smallholder farmers and aid conservation and restoration, addressing the particular vulnerabilities of food production systems to the adverse impacts of climate change, and also notes that mountain farmers and pastoralists play a key role in agroecology;

10. *Also recognizes* that urgent action is needed to reduce poverty in mountain areas, and in this regard encourages Member States and all relevant stakeholders to take concrete and targeted measures to eradicate poverty in mountain areas;

11. *Notes* that women are often the primary managers of mountain resources and the main actors in agriculture, underlines the need for improved access to resources and productive assets, including land and economic and financial services, for women in mountain regions, as well as the need to strengthen the role of women in mountain regions in decision-making processes that affect their communities, cultures and environments, and encourages Governments and intergovernmental organizations to mainstream a gender perspective, including through data disaggregated by sex, in mountain development activities, programmes and projects towards the achievement of gender equality and women's empowerment;

12. *Recognizes* that mountains provide sensitive indications of climate change through phenomena such as modifications to biological diversity, the retreat of mountain glaciers, flash floods and changes in seasonal run-off, which are having an impact on major sources of freshwater in the world, and stresses the need to undertake actions to minimize the negative effects of these phenomena, promote adaptation measures and prevent the loss of biological diversity;

13. *Also recognizes* that the mountain cryosphere has an impact on surrounding lowland areas, even far from the mountains, and that widespread cryosphere changes affect physical, biological and human systems in the mountains and surrounding lowlands, with impacts evident even in the ocean;

14. *Encourages* Member States to collect at the local, national and regional levels, as appropriate, disaggregated scientific data on mountain areas through systematic monitoring, including of trends of progress and change, based on relevant criteria, to support interdisciplinary research programmes and projects and to enhance an integrated and inclusive approach to decision-making and planning, and in this regard notes that the Mountain Green Cover Index is included in the global indicator framework for the Sustainable Development Goals and targets of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development¹³ as an indicator for target 15.4 of the Sustainable

¹³ Resolution 70/1.

Development Goals, and also notes the need to validate the related national data and improve its data accuracy and analysis at the country level for the implementation of appropriate policies aimed at restoring and protecting mountain environments;

15. *Encourages* Member States and all relevant stakeholders to continue to increase public awareness, including through the commemoration of International Mountain Day, on 11 December, established in its resolution [57/245](#), with respect to the economic benefits that mountains provide, for instance through ecosystem services or sustainable tourism, not only to highland communities but also to a large portion of the world's population living in lowland areas;

16. *Welcomes*, in this regard, the contribution of sustainable tourism initiatives in mountain regions as a way to enhance environmental protection and generate socioeconomic benefits for local communities and indigenous peoples, including opportunities for productive employment, economic growth and the promotion of local culture and products;

17. *Expresses its deep concern* at the number and scale of natural and man-made disasters and their increasing impact in recent years, which have resulted in massive loss of life and long-term negative social, economic and environmental consequences for societies throughout the world, and recognizes that disaster risk reduction requires a broader and more people-centred preventive approach and an all-of-society engagement and partnership, empowerment and inclusive, accessible and non-discriminatory participation, paying special attention to people disproportionately affected by disasters, many of which are exacerbated by climate change, especially the poorest, and also taking into account the vulnerability of people living in mountain environments, especially those in developing countries;

18. *Encourages* States, as appropriate, to strengthen disaster risk governance, to invest in disaster risk reduction for resilience and to develop and improve disaster risk strategies in mountain regions through increased generation and use of climate and disaster risk information, improved risk communication and participation of mountain communities, development of hazard risk maps and platforms, improvement of early warning systems and application of the risk-based approach in all development planning, in order to cope with such extreme events as rockfalls, avalanches, glacial lake outburst floods and landslides, which can be exacerbated by climate change and deforestation, consistent with the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015–2030;¹⁴

19. *Encourages*, in this regard, the increased involvement of local authorities, as well as other relevant stakeholders, in particular the rural population, indigenous peoples, civil society and the private sector, in the development and implementation of programmes, land-use planning and land tenure arrangements, and in other relevant activities related to sustainable development in mountains;

20. *Notes with concern* that the access to services and infrastructure is lower in the highlands than in other areas, and encourages Member States to improve basic infrastructure in mountain areas towards achieving the Sustainable Development Goals;

21. *Notes* the importance of ensuring the conservation of mountain ecosystems, including their biodiversity, in order to enhance their capacity to provide benefits that are essential for human well-being, economic activity and sustainable development, and of developing innovative means of implementation for their protection, in this regard recognizes with appreciation the establishment of relevant funds, including the Mountain Partnership Secretariat beneficiary fund, and the efforts made by relevant United Nations entities to promote the conservation of

¹⁴ Resolution [69/283](#), annex II.

mountain ecosystems, and encourages Member States and all relevant stakeholders to financially support it on a voluntary basis;

22. *Encourages* greater efforts by States, all relevant stakeholders and the international community towards the conservation of mountain ecosystems and the enhancement of the well-being of their local populations, including by promoting investment in infrastructure in mountain areas, such as transport and information and communications technologies, and supporting education, extension and capacity-building programmes, especially among local mountain communities and other relevant stakeholders, taking into account the extent of the current challenges that they face and bearing in mind the increased economic, social and environmental costs that inaction might represent for countries and societies;

23. *Underlines* the fact that action at the national level is a key factor in achieving progress in sustainable mountain development, welcomes its steady increase in recent years with a multitude of events, activities and initiatives, and invites the international community to support the efforts of developing countries to develop and implement strategies and programmes, including, where required, enabling policies and laws for the sustainable development of mountains, within the framework of national sustainable development plans, including by building and strengthening institutional capacities, as appropriate;

24. *Encourages* the further undertaking of multi-stakeholder and transboundary initiatives at the national, regional and global levels, where appropriate, such as those supported by all relevant international and regional organizations, to enhance sustainable development in mountain regions, and notes in this regard the numerous initiatives undertaken, including the fifth global meeting of the Mountain Partnership, held in Rome from 11 to 13 December 2017, the fourth World Mountain Forum, held in Bishkek from 23 to 26 October 2018 and the High Mountain Summit, held in Geneva from 29 to 31 October 2019;

25. *Encourages* Member States and all relevant stakeholders to consider, as appropriate, mountain-related issues in the processes of United Nations conventions and other relevant global forums, including the process related to a post-2020 global biodiversity framework;

26. *Encourages* Member States to promote ecosystem-based adaptation, bearing in mind the guidelines adopted by the fourteenth meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity, in 2018, and climate-smart wildlife conservation as tools for reducing impacts on communities and species, and welcomes the efforts of partners such as the United Nations Environment Programme, the International Union for Conservation of Nature and the Mountain Institute in promoting ecosystem-based adaptation in mountain regions;

27. *Encourages* all relevant entities of the United Nations system, within their respective mandates, to further enhance their constructive efforts to strengthen inter-agency collaboration to promote sustainable mountain development;

28. *Recognizes* that mountain ranges are usually shared among several countries, and in this context encourages transboundary cooperation approaches where the States concerned agree to the sustainable development of mountain ranges and information-sharing in this regard;

29. *Notes with appreciation*, in this context, the Convention on the Protection of the Alps¹⁵ and the Framework Convention on the Protection and Sustainable Development of the Carpathians, and the recent adoption of the Protocol on Sustainable Agriculture and Rural Development and the entry into force of the

¹⁵ United Nations, *Treaty Series*, vol. 1917, No. 32724.

Protocol on Sustainable Transport, which promote constructive new approaches to integrated, sustainable mountain development and provide a forum for dialogue among stakeholders, and notes other transboundary approaches and initiatives such as the Andean Initiative, the Scientific Network for the Caucasus Mountain Region and the established Caucasus Mountain Forum, the African Mountains Regional Forum, the European Union Strategy for the Alpine Region and the Zurich process, the Hindu Kush Himalayan Partnership for Sustainable Mountain Development, the Hindu Kush Himalayan Monitoring and Assessment Programme, the International Snow Leopard and Ecosystem Forum of 2017, the third World Nomad Games, in 2018 and the Pyrenean Climate Change Observatory, as well as other relevant initiatives promoting transboundary cooperation and dialogue supported by the United Nations Environment Programme and other partners;

30. *Requests* the Secretary-General to report to the General Assembly at its seventy-seventh session on the implementation of the present resolution under the sub-item entitled “Sustainable mountain development” of the item entitled “Sustainable development”.

*52nd plenary meeting
19 December 2019*