

**Draft statement of the G77 plus China at the general debate of the
56th session of the UN Commission on Population and Development
(April 10, 2023)**

H.E. Gheorghe Leucă, Permanent Representative of the Republic of Moldova to the United Nations and Chair of the fifty-sixth session of the Commission on Population and Development;

I have the honor to deliver this statement on behalf of the Group of 77 and China and its Member States.

I would like to congratulate you on your assumption of the Chairmanship of the CPD in the year in which such an important topic for all countries, especially the developing countries, is being addressed.

I also congratulate the other members of the Bureau for their hard work in conducting the work of this session.

Mr. Chair,

We are met in a context of a global, systemic and multidimensional crisis that has a crosscutting impact on the education sector and is aggravated by the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic, the deepening of social and economic inequalities, climate change and the widening of the digital divide, among other reasons.

The Group of 77 and China regard education as a basic human right and a prerequisite for consolidating peace, sustainable development and social justice. We consider education to be a global public and common good and an essential tool for shaping the shared future of mankind.

The aspiration of the 2030 Agenda to "leave no one behind" is far from being fulfilled: 771 million youth and adults are illiterate, two-thirds of them women; 258 million children and youth are out of school worldwide; 70% of countries spend less than 4% of their GDP on education; while gaps in education systems within and among countries are deepening.

Achieving Sustainable Development Goal 4 requires urgently reversing this scenario. We must revolutionize education. In this common endeavor, we reaffirm UNESCO's leadership in this area and its coordinating role in assisting countries in the implementation of the Education Agenda.

To this end, Ministers of Education and heads of delegation of the G-77 and China, gathered in Havana, Cuba on February 2, 2023, to deliberate challenges and to initiate common strategies for intensifying commitment and action towards meeting Sustainable Development Goal 4, maximizing cooperation between the nations of the South on its implementation, promoting a real transformation of education in response to the challenges faced by the developing countries, while enhancing our ability to act together in the interest of a more sustainable and equitable future.

Mr. Chair,

The G77 and China believes that there is a need to work towards achieving the objective of eradicating illiteracy, through steps to promote basic and higher-level education, strengthening the infrastructure and using non-formal methods of education. We reassert the importance of guaranteeing inclusive, and equitable quality education and promoting opportunities for lifelong learning for all, in particular to women and girls.

The Group is also committed to assuring the application and research of science, technology and innovation in ensuring inclusive, evenhanded and high-quality education, while creating opportunities for lifelong learning for all. It is also important to promote public policies, which address learning and encourage the building and use of open educational resources and open-access digital tools, for teachers and students in the countries of the South.

We are ready to step up cooperation in education as a fundamental human right; on meeting SDG 4 and on transforming education, whereby we move forward together towards a peaceful, inclusive and sustainable future for humankind and the planet.

In that regard, the G77 and China believes that greater efforts are needed to support developing countries towards achieving commitments on education, and we call to fulfill and strengthen pledges on official development

assistance, not only to increase predictable financial and technical support and capacity building, but also to channel ways that strengthen national educational systems, especially taking into account the current financial and debt challenges facing the developing countries.

In this regard, it is crucial that we recommit to substantially expand globally the number of scholarships available to developing countries, in particular least developed countries, small island developing States and African countries, for enrolment in higher education, including vocational training and information and communications technology, technical, engineering and scientific programmes, in developed countries and other developing countries and recommit further to substantially increasing the supply of qualified teachers, including through international cooperation for teacher training in developing countries.

There remains a lot to be accomplished in our collective efforts for poverty eradication, which is a major as a prerequisite for sustainable development, and for eradicating illiteracy, and for achieving a world with equitable and universal access to quality education at all levels.

Thank you.