

23 September 2016

71st session of the General Assembly

**Statement by H.E. Peter Thomson,
Ministerial Meeting of the Like-Minded Countries Supporters
of Middle-Income Countries**

H.E. Mr. Manuel Gonzalez Sanz, Minister of Foreign Affairs of Costa Rica,
Honorable Ministers, Excellencies,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

It is a pleasure to be here at the first Ministerial Meeting of Middle-Income Countries to be held in the margins of the General Assembly High-Level week.

I congratulate all the Member States present today for their initiative in establishing this dialogue.

First of all, I want to acknowledge the great diversity of Member States classified as Middle-Income Countries. Based on the per capita income criteria, Middle Income Countries simultaneously encompass the majority of the world's poor, as well some of the most dynamic national economies.

Members States in this category have both shared interests, and highly diverse needs.

The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, however, provides them with significant opportunity to address many of the challenges.

If implemented urgently, effectively, and at scale, the 2030 Agenda will eliminate extreme poverty; build prosperity; sustain peace; and combat climate change.

This is why we have made the principle objective of the 71st Session of the General Assembly, to be to drive a universal push for meaningful progress in implementing all 17 Sustainable Development Goals.

Middle Income Countries will be vital to the successful implementation of the 2030 Agenda including by sharing their development experiences of with other developing countries.

As both recipients and providers of international development cooperation, Middle Income Countries have a special role to play, such as through South-South and triangular cooperation, to support sustainable development.

Empowering Middle-Income Countries, including through greater access to policy advice, capacity building and technology, will be instrumental in enabling them to play a bigger role in international cooperation for sustainable development.

There is clearly much to be gained by improving political coordination and support between the UN system and Middle-Income Countries.

In order to accurately assess their needs, however, it is important to go beyond the current per capita income criteria, and to look at other variables that more accurately reflect Middle Income Countries' specific development challenges.

Last year's resolution on Middle Income Countries notably recognized the limitations of the current approach, and the need to better understand these challenges, so that the UN system can provide more efficient, effective, better-focused and better-coordinated support to strengthen the efforts of Middle Income Countries.

The QCPR resolution, which will be negotiated later this year, could provide an opportunity to further these discussions.

Excellencies, my message to you today is thank you for your engagement in looking to find innovative ways to contribute to sustainable development.

I am looking forward to engaging with you throughout the 71st session, and I count on your continued support in advancing our shared aspirations through the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

Thank you.