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**"Maintenance of International Peace and Security: Exclusion, Inequality and
Conflict"**

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Check against delivery

Thank You, Mr. President,

At the outset, let me commend the delegation of Mexico—*our brothers and sisters by virtue of shared histories, identities and possibilities of our Americas*—for convening today's discussion and I thank you, President Lopez Obrador, for a most memorable statement earlier today. I also thank the briefers for their remarks.

Mr. President,

The linkages between inequality, exclusion and conflict have long been well-established. Security risks are often materialised amidst striking disparities which stoke social divisions, obstruct successful mediation, and expose the foundations on which peaceful communities are erected. In fragile contexts, where socioeconomic and political marginalisation, *and the human hardships occasioned by underdevelopment*, are most pronounced, these inequalities foment disputes that—*all too frequently*—metamorphose into violent conflict. They also create fertile breeding grounds for extremist ideologies, terrorist activity, and transnational organised crime - *all which serve to undermine state sovereignty, circumvent territorial integrity, and erode the prospects for lasting peace and development.*

Greater efforts are clearly needed—in terms of both political will and developmental initiatives—to repair social fractures, strengthen institutions, and bolster national ownership over peace processes. This is the most effective means of advancing the pacific settlement of conflicts. Indeed, as many states in post-conflict situations could attest; only when social fabrics are mended, public trust is restored, and national processes of political dialogue, consensus-building, and reconciliation are earnestly pursued, would the deep fissures that breed unrest and instability be finally, and conclusively, repaired.

It is unfortunate, to say the least, that during this age of scientific advancement—and the global expansion of individual freedoms—that so many structural disparities exist across our societies and between our respective nations. This unbalanced global development, which manifests itself in severe health, economic, social, and security challenges, represents a moral blemish in the face of this multilateral order. To be sure, against the stark backdrop of the COVID-19 pandemic, the growing Climate Crisis, and protracted conflicts, all which disproportionately and unfairly affect developing countries; the time is upon us to fashion a more fair and inclusive multilateralism.

All organs and specialised agencies of the United Nations must work more closely together—with the support of Member States, regional and sub-regional organisations, and the International Financial Institutions (IFIs)—to advance practical and people-centred solutions across the peace and security-development-humanitarian nexus. Developed countries should scale up their Overseas Development Assistance (ODA) commitments, and counterproductive measures - *in particular unilateral sanctions, spurious blacklists, and other forms of economic sabotage* - should be withdrawn. We cannot successfully tackle exclusion within countries so long as these exclusionary and discriminatory practices are maintained by some members of the international community.

Mr. President,

No thesis of exclusion, inequality and conflict, *in the academic world or in our practical diplomatic affairs*, can be complete without due consideration to the ignoble roles of past empires and some present day powers. Reparatory justice for the historical abuses of chattel slavery and native genocide—*from which lasting legacies of underdevelopment and inequality emerged*—remain an urgent priority. And in our deliberations as a Council, we must always bear in mind the legitimate voices and perspectives of the disempowered:

- of stateless persons, refugees, and internally displaced peoples; the indigenous and other ethnic and religious minorities; and women and girls; and,
- of those that suffer the worst effects of COVID-19 and of Climate Change and environmental degradation, including Small Island Developing States.

The peoples of Haiti and of the Sahel and Lake Chad Basin, *as do those elsewhere*, deserve a more just and equitable social and political order in which the fruits of human ingenuity - *including COVID-19 vaccines* - are made readily available to all. During this pivotal Decade of Action to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals, let us work together to deliver peace, security and prosperity to *all* of humanity, without exemption or exclusion. I close by echoing your profound words, Mr President, “only by being good can we be happy”. I thank you.