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[*without reference to a Main Committee (A/75/L.83 and A/75/L.83/Add.1)*]

75/278. Declaring the Aral Sea region a zone of ecological innovations and technologies

The General Assembly,

Guided by the provisions of the Charter of the United Nations, which encourages the adoption of measures to improve standards of living, full employment and conditions of economic and social progress and development,

Recalling its resolution 75/266 of 3 March 2021 on cooperation between the United Nations and the International Fund for Saving the Aral Sea, and convinced that the activities of the International Fund for Saving the Aral Sea and its bodies should take into account the interests and needs of all the countries of Central Asia,

Recalling its resolution 74/229 of 19 December 2019 on science, technology and innovation for sustainable development,

Recalling also its resolution 72/283 of 22 June 2018 on strengthening regional and international cooperation to ensure peace, stability and sustainable development in the Central Asian region, in which it noted the importance of developing and strengthening bilateral and regional cooperation in the sphere of the rational and integrated use of water and energy resources in Central Asia, taking into account the interests of all States of the region,

Recalling further its resolution 74/214 of 19 December 2019 on sustainable tourism and sustainable development in Central Asia, in which it recognized the important role of sustainable tourism as a positive instrument towards the improvement of the quality of life for all people and its contribution to sustainable development and to the eradication of poverty and the protection of the environment,

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 the report of the Secretary-General,[1] which provides information on trends in new and emerging technologies and their impact on sustainable development, showcases lessons learned and good practices from developing countries in strengthening capacities for science, technology and innovation, and highlights findings from high-level policy discussions and research on science, technology and innovation as an enabler of sustainable development at the national, regional and global levels,

Recalling also the report of the High-level Panel on Digital Cooperation, entitled "The age of digital interdependence", submitted to the Secretary-General on 10 June 2019, and recalling further the report of the Secretary-General entitled "Road map for digital cooperation", presented on 11 June 2020,

Recognizing the vital role that science, technology and innovation, including environmentally sound technologies, can play in development and in facilitating efforts to address global challenges, such as efforts to protect the environment, accelerate the pace of economic diversification and transformation, improve productivity and competitiveness and ultimately support sustainable development,

Recognizing also that science, technology and innovation cooperation and collaboration with, as well as foreign direct investment in and trade with and among, developing countries is fundamental to enhancing their ability to produce, access, comprehend, select, adapt and use science, technology and innovation knowledge,

Acknowledging that the negative humanitarian, environmental and socioeconomic consequences of the Aral Sea basin tragedy go well beyond the region and represent a global concern,

Recalling the creation of the multi-partner human security trust fund for the Aral Sea region under the auspices of the United Nations, which aims to overcome the negative circumstances of the ecological catastrophe in the Aral Sea region and implement projects to improve the socioeconomic situation in the region,

Noting the creation of the International Innovation Center for the Aral Sea Basin under the President of the Republic of Uzbekistan, whose activities at the national level are aimed at improving the ecosystem and sustainable life in saline lands, as well as partnership cooperation with international organizations for the development and implementation of innovations and solutions to various problems of saline environments of the drained bottom of the Aral Sea,

1. *Supports* the initiative to transform the Aral Sea region from a zone of ecological crisis into a zone of ecological innovations and technologies;

2. *Expresses its support* for the ongoing regional efforts and initiatives to strengthen the environmental, social, economic and demographic situation of the Aral Sea region;

[1] A/74/230.

3. *Encourages* research and scientific advisory activities to further recover and improve the environment, preserve natural resources and enhance the quality of life of the population of the Aral Sea region;

4. *Reaffirms* that the International Fund for Saving the Aral Sea remains the main international agency that aims to solve international problems of an economic, social or humanitarian nature in the Aral Sea region, and the whole Aral Sea basin, taking into account the interests of all countries of the region;

5. *Invites* Member States, the funds, programmes and agencies of the United Nations system, international financial institutions and other relevant stakeholders to conduct joint collaborative interdisciplinary research and scientific and innovative cooperation in the Aral Sea region with the International Fund for Saving the Aral Sea, as well as with national initiatives such as the International Innovation Center for the Aral Sea Basin under the President of the Republic of Uzbekistan, and to establish protective forest plantations on the drained bottom of the Aral Sea;

6. *Emphasizes* the importance of strengthening regional cooperation in the implementation of joint actions to overcome the consequences of the Aral Sea crisis and stabilize the ecological situation in the Aral Sea region, prevent further desertification and mitigate the negative environmental and socioeconomic consequences by stabilizing the methods of forest amelioration of sand formations on the drained bottom of the Aral Sea, which is subject to ash, salt and dust transfer, and promoting socioeconomic development and adaptation to climate change, the development of ecotourism and the implementation of other measures;

7. *Declares* the Aral Sea region a zone of ecological innovations and technologies, and in this context calls upon Member States, the funds, programmes and agencies of the United Nations system, international financial institutions and other relevant stakeholders to develop and implement in the Aral Sea region environmentally sound technologies, sustained, inclusive and sustainable economic growth, and energy- and water-saving technologies, in line with goal 17.7 of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.[2]

66th plenary meeting
18 May 2021

[2] Resolution 70/1.