Mr. President,

1. I have the honor to speak on behalf of the 33 Member States of the Community of Latin American and Caribbean States.

2. We recognize that each country faces specific challenges and needs in its search for sustainable development, including the Least Developed Countries, Landlocked Developing Countries, and Small Island Developing States, Countries in conflict and post-conflict situations, and many middle-income countries, and countries in development in transition, that have recently exceeded the median income threshold, but still have structural gaps and vulnerabilities.

3. In this regard, we reaffirm that national averages based on criteria such as per capita income do not always fully reflect the particularities and development needs and real challenges of developing countries. We recall that the Addis Ababa Action Agenda calls upon the United Nations system, in consultation with the international financial institutions, to develop transparent measures of progress in sustainable development that go beyond per capita income, taking advantage of the initiatives existing, as appropriate. They should recognize
poverty in all its forms and dimensions, as well as the social, economic and environmental dimensions of domestic production and structural gaps at all levels.

4. We also recognize the need to devise methodologies to better account for the complex and diverse realities of middle-income countries. We note with concern that access to concessional finance is reduced as countries’ incomes grow and that countries may not be able to access sufficient affordable financing from other sources to meet their needs.

5. CELAC recognizes the importance of addressing the diverse needs and specific development challenges faced by middle-income countries, including combating poverty in all of its forms. In this regard, CELAC looks forward to the High-level meeting of the General Assembly to discuss the gaps and challenges of middle-income countries in the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, to be held in New York the 4th of December 2018.

6. CELAC supports the efforts towards the mid-term review of the Istanbul Programme of Action for the Least Developed Countries in 2016 and the monitoring results of the Fourth United Nations Conference on Least Developed Countries will be positive.

7. CELAC welcomes the operationalization of the Technology Bank for the Least Developed Countries in Turkey, by which the first Sustainable Development Goal target, target 17.8, has been achieved, and the progress made towards operationalization of the Technology Facilitation Mechanism, and encourage all development partners to provide financial and technical assistance to ensure their full and effective implementation.
8. We also welcome with appreciation the adoption of the Vienna Declaration and the Vienna Programme of Action for Landlocked Developing Countries for the Decade 2014 – 2024 by General Assembly Resolution 69/137, as well as its implementation mandated by Resolution 69/232.

9. CELAC further welcomes the UN General Assembly resolution 72/232 that calls for convening of a Comprehensive High-level Midterm Review of the Vienna Programme of Action no later than December 2019. In that regard, CELAC encourages the active participation at a high level of all States Members of the United Nations, in particular landlocked and transit developing countries and donor countries, as well as of the United Nations system and international and regional organizations and other relevant stakeholders, including civil society and the private sector in the Midterm Review.

10. CELAC reaffirms in the same way its commitment to promote the appropriate consideration of the special needs and particular challenges of Landlocked Developing Countries, in accordance to the provisions of the Vienna Programme of Action, and of Least Developed Countries, in accordance with the provisions of the Istanbul Programme of Action.

Thank you.