UK Intervention

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• Welcome opportunity to provide UK perspective and thank the Secretariat for the preparatory documents.

• The UK [Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office] is committed to helping protect the poorest and most vulnerable individuals during the COVID-19 crisis and beyond, and we recognise social protection as a crucial tool in the response and recovery.

• We agree that the crisis has reinforced the need for countries to expand and strengthen their social protection systems, including a greater emphasis on protecting informal workers, on domestic financing, and on making social protection systems more gender-sensitive. The OECD Development Centre has a role to play in advancing these agendas.

• Whilst we remain committed to tackling COVID’s immediate impacts, we must also seize this opportunity to create greener, healthier, more inclusive and resilient economies and societies, and to accelerate progress towards the Sustainable Development Goals and Paris Agreement. The UK has been very pleased to co-lead with the EU, Rwanda and Fiji the UN Financing For Development Recovering Better for Sustainability discussion group. Propelling thinking on this vitally important issue, working collaborative with a wide range of stakeholders. We are all responsible and must work together in the spirit of global solidarity, to drive the changes we want to see. The OECD Development Centre’s focus on sustainable recovery is positive but the ambition for a New Deal for Development must place the existing globally agreed Agenda 2030 for Sustainable Development and Paris Agreement at its heart.

• As part of this sustainable recovery, it is it essential that climate is central to discussions. This includes addressing the critical role that social protection can play in helping vulnerable people (including women and girls) to adapt to climate shocks and mitigate the risks they face from changing climate and weather patterns. We would encourage a greater focus here, as climate considerations are absent from the key issues paper.

• Finally, we suggest join-up with the wider OECD Development Cluster to consider the needs and opportunities in fragile and conflict affected contexts, and on further strengthening linkages between humanitarian assistance and social protection, given the scale of needs in the COVID-19 recovery, financing challenges and that the expansion of social protection systems will take time.

• Thank you for the opportunity to speak today and I look forward to our continued collaboration to accelerate progress to deliver on the need for a Decade of Action to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals by 2030.