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Statement by:

**H.E. Dr. Mohammad Javad Zarif  
Minster for Foreign Affairs  
of the Islamic Republic of Iran**

**on the High-Level Political Forum on Sustainable Development**

**(New York, 18 July 2017)**

In the name of Allah, the Compassionate, the Merciful

**Mr. President,**

At the outset, I would like to thank the President of the ECOSOC and his team for organizing this high-level meeting. We have come a long way in combating poverty. Nonetheless, poverty continues to be the greatest challenge of our time, a real threat to humanity and a major obstacle towards sustainable development.

Since the victory of the Islamic Revolution in Iran, a strong legal and legislative framework has been created, providing a solid platform for planning, implementation and follow-up of national development strategies and policies, particularly for poverty eradication. Significant achievements have been made despite external challenges ranging from Saddam's aggression to US sanctions.

**Mr. President,**

Voluntary National Reports provide an opportunity to share our best practices, experiences and achievements in the fields of building a resilient economy, as well as poverty eradication, social justice, food security, expansion of basic services including healthcare, education and sanitation for all, empowerment of women and girls, technology and innovation, and protection of the environment, natural resources and biological diversity. One noteworthy example is Iran's attempts to successfully restore Urumie Lake in northwest of the country.

Our experience, similar to others, signifies the importance of an external conducive environment. Provision of means of implementation is a vital factor, and developed countries are expected to fulfill their commitments on provision of financial resources, transfer of technology, and capacity building, without politicizing this process. The United Nations has a pivotal role in enhancing cooperation and partnership at the international and regional levels.

**Mr. President,**

West Asia continues to be affected by major wars and domestic conflicts, dragging millions of people into abject poverty. Addressing poverty, as one of the consequences as well as causes of insecurity, is thus a vital requirement for regional stability and prosperity.

Foreign occupation, wars, conflicts and interventionist policies of external powers have stripped the citizens of the region of not only their wealth and natural resources but also their dignity and freedom. Exploiting the existing despair, extremist terrorists with their Takfiri ideology, and supported by outside and regional players, have infested our region and the world with unspeakable atrocities. Situations in Syria, Iraq, Afghanistan, Libya and Yemen are the worst examples of unfolding humanitarian catastrophes. How are we going to leave no one behind under such miserable conditions?

**Mr. President,**

In conclusion, I would like to underscore that common development challenges also present us with opportunities for cooperation. We are eager to engage with partners who are willing to cooperate in addressing our common and immediate challenges, including poverty eradication and the protection of the environment. President Rouhani's policy of constructive engagement has already led to the defusing of an unnecessary global crisis through the conclusion of the historic nuclear deal. Such an outstanding success for diplomacy and multilateralism promises new horizons for dialogue, understanding, mutual respect and cooperation in other fields including at the regional level.

**Thank You Mr. President.**