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**Statement**

**by**

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**The High Representative for LDCs, LLDCs and SIDS**

**Special Meeting of the Group of Friends of LDCs on LDCs and Climate  
Change**

**Conference Room 5**

**United Nations Headquarters**

**New York**

**30<sup>th</sup> April 2015**

H.E. Ms. Benedicte Frankinet, Permanent Representative of Belgium to the United Nations

H.E. Mr. Halit Chevik, Permanent Representative of Turkey to the United Nations

H.E. Gustavo Meza Cuadra, Permanent Representative of Peru to the United Nations

H.E. Francois Delattre, Permanent Representative of France to the United Nations,

Prof Jean Pascal Van Ypersele, Vice Chair of IPCC

Excellencies,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

I welcome Switzerland for joining this group of friends of LDCs.

It is a pleasure for me to be here with you today at this important meeting.

Let me express my gratitude to the Governments of Belgium and Turkey for jointly convening this very timely meeting. Let me also thank Peru and France for their briefing and unprecedented cooperation between the two presidencies. I also appreciate the IPCC Vice Chair for his presentation of AR5 summary. I express my appreciation to the Group of the Friends of LDCs for their continuous support.

The LDCs remain on the frontline of human-induced climate change. Despite their negligible levels of current CO<sub>2</sub> emissions and their historically inconsequential contribution to climate change, they endure the most of the adverse impacts of climate disruptions. Increased frequency of extreme weather events, such as storm surges, droughts, tornadoes, cyclones, floods, landslides and drying up of water wells, diseases and livelihood challenges severely undermine already a tenuous situation in LDCs. This surge in adverse weather events has led to the global rise of air and ocean temperatures and resulting in acidification, higher sea levels and the melting of glaciers. Some of the LDCs, which are also SIDS, like Tuvalu and Kiribati, face existential threats. The reality is that the LDCs are countries with islands, long coastlines, deserts and

mountains. Their population disproportionately suffers from the impacts of climate change. Disasters have taken away their hard-won development gains. For them climate change impacts are already there. They are not in future. Urgency is critical given the capacity constraints in building resilience. Business as usual or limited progress will hardly take care of the impending large-scale calamities, and LDCs and other vulnerable countries would be on the forefront. We have therefore a moral responsibility to be ambitious enough to bring a decisive change so that we deal with climate change in a holistic manner.

As the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change points out, many of the risks associated to climate change “constitute particular challenges for the least developed countries and vulnerable communities, given their limited ability to cope”. The Fifth Assessment Report describes many of the challenges faced by most LDCs. In the way forward, it is critical that the IPCC thoroughly analyses the situation of LDCs within various regions and geographic features.

Scientists have also stressed that the window is open but just barely, and below 2 degree is the absolute upper limit.

How are LDCs looking towards COP21? During the last summit level meeting on climate change organized by the UN SG last year, many LDCS participated in it at the highest level and expressed a very high importance of the climate agreement in Paris. They also called for a climate agreement that is ambitious, forward looking, legally binding and comprehensive, but also that takes into account their specific vulnerabilities and impacts. Mitigation, adaptation, loss and damage, climate change fund, technology and capacity building and multistakeholder partnerships are intricately related with each other, and LDCs have a larger stake in all of that.

Despite limited financing, several LDCs have already embarked on low-carbon, climate-resilient development paths, with some plans and strategies. They have taken some specific initiatives at local sub-regional and national levels. But, they need to be scaled up, and replicated across the sectors. They are committed to show leadership in these areas. The structural handicap and capacity as well as resource constraints of LDCs present adaptation challenges in such a way that LDCs cannot overcome these challenges and constraints on their own. Climate Change impacts have already acutely undermined their poverty eradication efforts, resilience and sustainable development prospects. It is

fundamental that a well-funded targeted mechanism that addresses the special needs of the LDCs is included in all the relevant global processes. While the effect of climate change is a global phenomenon, LDCs will need an enhanced level of support of their development partners because of their disproportionate impacts.

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The Istanbul Programme of Action (IPoA) for LDCs recognizes the challenges posed by climate change and the loss of biodiversity, as well as their implication for increased vulnerabilities, inequalities, and thus adversely affecting development gains in LDCs.

The IPoA also acknowledges that securing equitable, inclusive, and sustainable economic growth and development in LDCs requires building their resilience to withstand crises and emerging challenges, including the adverse impacts of climate change.

LDCs will not be able to ensure rapid and irreversible progress without strong sustainable development policies that integrate strong adaptation programs. Especially the poorest among the poor such as the rural population, marginalized groups, and women will bear disproportionate burden in these countries. And they form more than a majority in these countries. We should not lose sight of that reflection. Not dealing with the challenges decisively and comprehensively will lead towards more deprivation, migration and even conflict as well.

The Post-2015 development agenda is of critical importance to LDCs. And while the intergovernmental process is still in progress, it should be noted that the LDCs were active in promoting the need for a standalone goal on climate change in the Post-2015 Development Agenda. Besides the overall goal and objective, Paragraph 13.b of the document from the Open Working Group process speaks of the need to “[p]romote mechanisms for raising capacity for effective climate change-related planning and management in LDCs, including focusing on women, youth and local and marginalized communities”.

The LDCs have also strongly advocated for including specific goal on sustainable energy, as LDCs are also the most energy poor countries. Access to sustainable energy triggers a multiplier effect for sustainable development and poverty alleviation in the LDCs. LDCs have the potential to access vast sources

of renewable energy, such as solar, wind, geothermal and tidal. Hence, LDCs have the prospects of effectively utilizing renewable energy, which should be encouraged and accelerated by adopting national energy strategies, building enabling environment, scaling up existing initiatives, establishing new partnerships, adopting new technologies and having better access to financing.

Increased access to sustainable and renewable energy in LDCs has also a direct impact on mitigating climate change at the global level through alleviating deforestation and soil erosion, protecting water resources and curbing black carbon emissions. Indeed, with the support of their development partners and the facilitation of enabling environments at the global, regional and national levels, LDCs can leap-frog into a new renewable energy future, as they are still in the infancy of the traditional form of industrialization process. The funding, technology and capacity building support in this area will be critical to LDCs.

Excellencies,

The LDCs have also been proactive in attempting to address increased vulnerability associated with climate change. Forty-seven LDCs have formulated national adaptation plans. They have told us that adaptation is not a choice but a survival strategy for them. These plans have successfully identified medium- and long-term adaptation needs and they have helped to articulate strategies and programmes to address them. Unfortunately, limited delivery of climate finance has severely constrained the ability of the LDCs to address the adaptation needs of their societies in a more comprehensive and effective manner.

In recent years, there have been changes in the funding landscape as well. The creation of the LDC Fund has supported the work leading to the development of NAPAs in LDCs. But there is a huge funding gap. The LDCF has disbursed about 900 million US dollars so far, but the requirement seems to be around 5 billion. The Green Climate Fund is perhaps the most prominent of these funding sources. I see the need for again building strong coherence with the Green Climate Fund and ensuring that the preparedness and responsiveness are strengthened in LDCs, a definite share of the fund goes to LDCs commensurate with extreme lack of resources and their disproportionate needs, and the modality of funding access would work better for LDCs.

LDCs' advocacy efforts have led to representatives of LDCs in the Board of the Green Climate Fund. We should appreciate that and I am sure that the ongoing

consultations between the representatives will ensure that LDCs benefit to the fullest extent possible from the resources made available to them. In fact, greater voice and representation of LDCs across all relevant fora is important as to ensure greater ownership as well as better understanding of the challenges faced by the LDCs.

The rise of the Green Climate Fund, however, should not result in reduction in ODA to LDCs. The commitments made by international community with regard to ODA flows to LDCs must be met, and further enhanced, given the expanded agenda of sustainable development goals, such as poverty eradication, rapid and inclusive growth and building resilience.

Last year, the LDC Ministerial Meeting on New Partnerships for Productive Capacity Building held in Benin as well as the Ministerial meeting of Asia Pacific LDCs held in Kathmandu also called on donor countries to allocate at least 50% of ODA and the Aid for Trade to LDCs. This is natural in view of the unique structural handicaps and multiple constraints and higher incidence of poverty that LDCs face. These and similar provisions under the climate change fund would greatly complement each other, given our strong focus on an integrated approach to sustainable development.

Lastly, I would like to conclude by stressing that the stars have aligned. The Financing for Development in Addis Ababa, Post-2015 Development Agenda in New York, as well as the COP-21 meeting in Paris are all taking place this year and they should take into account sustainable development needs of the LDCs more effectively and in a more coherent manner. A development agenda that rests on the core UN values of human rights, equality and sustainability must ensure that we all decisively address the needs of the most vulnerable countries. We count on your strong support to ensure integration of LDC's concerns and expectation into all the global processes, ensure coherence, and put in place targeted support mechanisms. We have to ensure greater opportunities for and resilience of those that are far behind. We should not leave them behind. We should work together to eradicate poverty everywhere, build up productive sectors and promote resilience in all LDCs in an integrated manner.

I thank you for your attention.