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**United Nations Office of the High Representative for the Least
Developed Countries, Landlocked Developing Countries and
Small Island Developing States
(UN-OHRLLS)**

Statement by

**Ms. Fekitamoeloa Katoa ‘Utoikamanu, High Representative and
Under Secretary General for the Least Developed Countries,
Landlocked Developing Countries and Small Island Developing
States**

**at the Ambassadorial level meeting of LDCs, LLDCs and SIDS on
on WTO trade negotiations**

**Friday 10 November 2017
10:00am-1:00pm, Conference room#2
New York**

Distinguished Chairs of LDCs, LLDCs and SIDS
Deputy Director-General of the WTO
Excellencies
Ladies and gentlemen,

I first would like to warmly welcome you all to our meeting.

I would like to thank Mr. Yonov Frederick Agah, Deputy Director-General of the World Trade Organization for being with us today to brief us on the WTO trade negotiations.

Mr. Agah, I know how busy and in demand you are and especially at this time when the negotiations of the outcome of the upcoming WTO Ministerial meeting are at a new height. So, Thank You.

It is not this audience that I have to tell about the critical and may be even unprecedented opportunities trade affords the LDCs, LLDCs and SIDS in their efforts to build inclusive economic growth, eradicate poverty and ultimately achieve sustainable development leaving no one behind.

The programmes of Action for LDCs, LLDCs and SIDS; the Addis Ababa Action Agenda and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development ALL emphasize the enabling role of international trade in promoting sustainable development. These internationally agreed on programmes also ALL articulate the priorities of the three groups of countries in the area of international trade.

So, we are not short of road maps, now we need to focus on traveling on the roads we have designed!

A key driver here is

the special and differential treatment,
the enhanced market access for goods and services,
trade facilitation
sustainably financed technical assistance and
capacity-building programmes

that are vitally important to achieve the goals set for international trade.

It also will take what is called the right mix of appropriate national and international policies.

These are truly the two sides to a same coin.

We also live at a moment where it is the development of connectivity, transport infrastructure, access to the latest in knowledge and research and product diversification determining to a great extent the successful export promotion.

The challenges are complex but must be addressed and overcome. We know the critical contribution trade makes to productive employment and decent work, women's empowerment and food security, as well as a reduction in inequality, - all aspects for the achievement of the SDGs.

We are two years into the SDGs already.

The 2030 Agenda sets an ambitious target of doubling the least developed countries' share of global exports by 2020.

It must be a matter of grave concern to all of us that since the adoption of the 2030 Agenda, the share of LDCs merchandise export is moving downwards and represented in 2016 just only

0.94 per cent of the total global share.

I can not stress enough how we see stagnation in the realization of the Bali and Nairobi packages for LDCs .

This pertains to

preferential rules of origin;
implementation of preferential treatment in favour of services and service suppliers of LDCs;
and preferential market access under the Duty Free Quota Free (DFQF) market access to the developed and developing countries' markets.

The situation is even slightly worse for The LLDCs' share of merchandise trade as percentage of the world total ! There we have 0.88% in 2016.

What may be reasons for this bleak picture ?

This group of countries remains marginalized largely as a result of their remoteness from seaports coupled with a lack of critical transport infrastructure, productive capacity constraints, and additional border crossings entailing complex procedures and high cost of trading.

These high costs reduce competitiveness, diminish export profits, inflate the prices of imported inputs for manufacturing and discourage investment and undermine the efforts of LLDCs to fully gain benefits from global flows of knowledge, technology, capital and innovation.

The accelerated implementation of the WTO trade facilitation agreement and enhanced support for trade capacity building would greatly contribute to addressing these challenges.

Allow me to now speak about Small Island Developing States.

They face unique challenges to participate in the international trading system. As you know, the challenges range from small size, fragmented internal geographies and population distributions to remoteness from markets with attendant high transport costs where the transport infrastructure exists and is reliable, narrow export base and limited negotiating capacity.

Further and accelerated efforts are needed to support their integration into regional and global trading systems.

The WTO work programme on small economies is especially relevant for this group of countries.

Sadly though I must say, we don't see any progress in this area. This group of countries also need increased international support to promote their trade in services, which constitute a considerable share of their GDP.

Potential is there!

But, we are yet to fully seize on the potentials of trade to achieve the 2030 Agenda and the programmes earlier agreed on.

We agreed to these programmes and if we are not to leave them in words alone, we now must ACT.

Therefore, the eleventh WTO Ministerial Meeting assumes special significance.

Delivery on the development dimension of the Doha round, including special and differential treatment, enhanced market access for goods and services, trade facilitation and sustainably financed technical assistance and capacity-building programmes are vitally important for LDCs, LLDCs and SIDS. Further progress and full realization of the Bali and Nairobi Package for LDCs remains equally important.

The WTO Trade Facilitation Agreement (TFA) is expected to provide a much-needed boost to stressed global and regional trade growth by easing the cross-border movement of goods, reducing costs and simplifying trade procedures.

The groups of LDCs, LLDCs and SIDS need increased financial and technical assistance to connect and compete in international markets. Aid for trade (Aft) is vitally important for them to build their capacity to trade in goods and services and achieve inclusive economic growth.

For the small island yet large ocean countries, it is the ongoing discussions on the fisheries subsidies that are especially important. We urge that their needs and priorities will be fully taken on board.

This is also very important in the context of the first World Ocean Conference the United Nations held in 2016 towards the achievement of SDG 14.

Without any doubt, critical and important tasks remain ahead of the 164 WTO Members as they meet in Buenos Aires at MC11. the very same 164 countries that signed up for Agenda 2030!

The world's people no longer expect words - they will judge us by action.

The most vulnerable countries of the world are keenly looking forward to a successful and development oriented outcome of the MC11. This will make the multilateral trading system stronger, more balanced and more inclusive, and facilitate the achievement of the 2030 Agenda with its important promise to leave no one behind.

I thank you .