



Message from the High Representative

As 2017 comes to a close, I take this opportunity to extend my warm wishes and sincere thanks for what has been a very successful year in our collective efforts to support the most vulnerable countries. We achieved major milestones through the spirit of partnership and a common vision to leave no one behind. Indeed, 2018 will bring about its challenges but importantly new opportunities to further our shared action for the cause of the Least Developed Countries, Landlocked Developing Countries and Small Island Developing States.

I wish you all the very best for the new year ahead and I look forward to our continued collaboration,

Fekitamoeloa Katoa 'Utoikamanu.

The year 2017 has seen UN-OHRLLS achieve significant milestones in its efforts to advocate, coordinate and support implementation of the respective programmes of action for the LDCs, LLDCs and SIDS.

It has also been an important transition as the first half of the year UN-OHRLLS bid farewell to Mr. Gyan Chandra Acharya and welcomed Ms. Fekitamoeloa Katoa 'Utoikamanu as

the new Under-Secretary-General and High Representative for the Least Developed Countries, Landlocked Developing Countries and Small Island Developing States.

At this juncture, we also take the opportunity to extend our thanks to all our partners from: Member States, the UN system, civil society and the private sector for the strong collaboration on joint events,

UN-OHRLLS 2017 In Review



UN-OHRLLS

UN-OHRLLS CALENDAR OF EVENTS
2017

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STATEMENTS BY THE HIGH
REPRESENTATIVE 2017

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publications and other support for the LDCs, LLDCs and SIDS. We look forward to continued partnership in 2018 for the cause of the most vulnerable countries.

Looking back over the past year, UN-OHRLLS has been involved in various activities, much too numerous to list here. The following nonetheless is a broad snapshot of a successful 2017 for UN-OHRLLS.

2017 HIGHLIGHTS

In May, Ms. Fekitamoeloa Katoa 'Utoikamanu, a national of Tonga, took up the position of Under-Secretary-General and High Representative for the Least Developed Countries, Landlocked Developing Countries and Small Island Developing States.



Immediately following her arrival in New York, High Representative 'Utoikamanu attended the fifth session of the **Global Platform for Disaster Risk Reduction** in Cancun, Mexico where she advocated for increased support to LDCs, LLDCs and SIDS towards building resilient societies and economies in light of growing risks.

Following last year's Midterm Review of the Istanbul Programme of Action for LDCs, the Office has focused this year on accelerating the implementation of the IPoA. This has included a special focus on broadband connectivity. In February and again in October, the Office organised LDC regional meetings for Africa and Asia-Pacific hosted by **Senegal** and **Vanuatu** respectively. Two reports focusing on case studies from Rwanda, Senegal, Vanuatu and Cambodia were also commissioned during this time.



The Office has also led the establishment of a new UN institution, the **Technology Bank for the LDCs**, which was officially created in September following the signing of the host country agreement between the UN and the Government of Turkey on the margins of the 72nd session of the General Assembly. The creation of the Technology Bank is a major step in achieving SDG 17.8 and also saw UN-OHRLLS as a finalist in the SG's Awards. The Technology Bank is due to begin operations in 2018 at its headquarters in Gebse, Turkey.

This year, sustainable energy has also been a focus with a regional meeting of the **Asia-Pacific Least Developed Countries** held in March in Nepal and a publication on Promoting Investment for Energy Access in LDCs which highlights the primary challenges and solutions for advancing a sustainable energy transition to achieve national and international targets.



The Ocean Conference in June (5-9) was a major event on the UN calendar. Over 1,400 commitments were made by all stakeholders to support achievement of SDG 14. UN-OHRLLS co-organised with the Alliance of Small Island States (AOSIS), and SIDS DOCK a **High Level Dialogue on Oceans and Small Island States** as well as an event co-organized with Zambia focusing on **enhancing the participation of LLDCs in the implementation of SDG 14**. The Office also took the opportunity to put on an exhibition focusing on the

importance of oceans to small islands.



Message from UN-OHRLLS Director Heidi Schroderus-Fox

I know I speak for all UN-OHRLLS staff when I say what a great privilege and pleasure it has been to continue our support of the vulnerable countries through 2017. We have established stronger partnerships and brought together communities and stakeholders with a common purpose of forging a brighter future for the least developed countries, landlocked developing countries and small island developing states. With a new year ahead of us I look forward to building on our successes and working together with all partners as we support our country groups in their efforts towards achieving a better future for their peoples.

Best regards,

Heidi.

The role of the private sector in supporting sustainable development of LLDCs in transport and transit issues was also high on the agenda this year. On the margins of the ECOSOC Forum on Financing for Development in May, the Office worked with Zambia, IRU, IFC and ITC to organize a side event on **enhancing the role of the private sector in the implementation of the VPoA and the 2030 Agenda**. A report of the findings from the side event were also published – see section on Publications. Furthermore, in July, the role of the private sector, among other stakeholders, was articulated



at the high-level side event on the held on the margins of the WCO Global Transit Conference, Brussels.

Continuing the focus on infrastructure for the LLDCs, the Office organized an **Expert Group Meeting on Financing Infrastructure Development for Enhanced Integration of the LLDCs into Global Trade** that was held on 4 and 5 October 2017 in New York. The meeting stressed the urgent need to develop financing instruments for small scale energy projects below an investment volume of US\$10 to 20 million in partnership with local banks. The meeting also recommended the importance of capacity building for LLDCs for the development of bankable projects and the need to provide LLDCs with information on available funding resources.

Recognising that aviation is an important life line for vulnerable countries, UN-OHRLLS together with partners ICAO, DESA, World Bank and the Air Transport Action Group organized a **High-Level Briefing On Aviation Contributions To Sustainable Development In Countries In Special Situations**. The event took place on the margins of the High Level Political Forum encouraging dialogue and action to sensitize decision-makers about raising sustainable air transport as a priority for sustainable development and investment.

The annual meeting of LDCs National Focal Points has been a successful

model by UN-OHRLLS to ensure linkages between global developments in the support for LDCs with national priorities. This year, **the national focal points met in New York in July (13-14)** to focus on strategies for financing the implementation of the IPoA and the SDGs.

UN-OHRLLS' annual **flagship report on the state of the LDCs** was launched on 19 July. The fourth edition of the report focuses on the financing of the Istanbul Programme of Action and the SDGs for the LDCs.



The General Assembly's 72nd session is a particularly important time for the Office with the High Representative taking the opportunity to dialogue with leaders from the LDCs, LLDCs, SIDS as well as development partners. The annual Ministerial meetings for the **LDCs** and **LLDCs** organized by the office on the margins of the General Assembly are also a critical opportunity to assess the state of sustainable development in these groups of countries. In addition, the Secretary-General's meeting with SIDS leaders provided an opportunity for the High Representative to brief leaders on the work of UN-OHRLLS as well as the wider UN system in supporting small islands.

The theme of the 72nd session is "Focusing on People – Striving for Peace and a Decent Life for All on a Sustainable Planet." It was the first General Debate since the 61st session where all Member States and all Observers took the floor. A total of

196 statements were delivered. There were 77 Heads of State, 37 Heads of Government, 60 Ministers and other senior leaders in attendance. The most talked about issues included: sustainable development, climate change, terrorism and nuclear weapons. The issue of UN reform was also mentioned by many speakers as well as the issue of migration.

Another major milestone was reached in October with the operationalization of the **International Think Tank for LLDCs** following the entry into force of the Multilateral Agreement to establish the intergovernmental organisation. Based in Ulaanbaatar, Mongolia the Think Tank will be a centre of excellence for high quality research and policy advice on strengthening analytical capacities of LLDCs in the key areas of economic growth and poverty reduction.

At the November UN Climate Change Conference COP23 in Bonn, Germany, countries took important steps to rapidly implement the Paris Agreement and the High Representative was in attendance to advocate for the world's poorest and most challenged countries. To coincide with the conference, the High Representative's **opinion piece** laid out the disproportionate challenges climate change is posing for vulnerable countries.



Also in November, UN-OHRLLS and the Government of Bangladesh organized a high-level Meeting on **Achieving Sustainable Graduation for the LDCs** in Dhaka. The meeting assessed the potential impacts of graduation and the necessary preparations to maintain the development trajectory of countries

to achieve the SDGs by 2030. Participants including senior government representatives and experts called on the international community to agree on a package of benefits that graduated countries can continue to receive in critical areas of their economy after leaving the Least Developed Country category.



At the eleventh World Trade Organisation Ministerial Meeting which took place in December (10-12) in Buenos Aires, High Representative 'Utoikamanu spoke about the importance of strong commitments for a fair multilateral trading system that addresses the special needs of LDCs, LLDCs and SIDS. An **opinion piece** by the High Representative summed up the challenges but also areas where significant progress can be made in targeted capacity support for LDCs, LLDCs and SIDS.

In December (14) the Office organized an **Expert Group Meeting on UN support for Graduation and Smooth Transition for the LDCs** in New York. The meeting discussed the needs of LDCs and UN support for graduation and smooth transition. It was also an opportunity to exchange best practices and lessons learned by the UN system, LDCs and former LDCs.

While various activities have populated the Office's calendar, 2017 has also been a time to reflect on staffing particularly on achieving gender goals. The office has shown strong commitments towards gender equality and equal opportunities to women and men. This translates into the office consistently displaying

gender parity for most levels. Of the 25 posts in the office that are currently filled, 14 (56%) are occupied by women and 11 (44 %) by men.

UN-OHRLLS STAFF COMPOSITION

WOMEN

56%

MEN

44%

PUBLICATIONS

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