



UN-OHRLLS

**Statement
by**

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

MEETING OF FRIENDS OF LDC

Venue: Turkey Mission, New York
2 October 2017
1:15- 2:45 p.m

Your Excellency Ambassador Feridun H. SINIRLIOGLU,
Permanent Representative of Turkey to the United Nations

Your Excellency Ambassador Marc PECSTEEN de BUYTSWERVE,
Permanent Representative of Belgium to the United Nations

Excellencies, Distinguished Delegates, Ladies and Gentlemen, Friends

First, I wish to thank His Excellency Ambassador Sinirlioglu for hosting us today, and to thank you for taking the time to attend this important meeting today.

The creation of a Technology Bank, a long standing top priority of the LDC community, is finally coming into reality. The Bank is created as an entity of the United Nations system and in that sense SDG target 17.8 is met.

This is not only highly symbolic progress but of great strategic importance to the LDCs.

Why is it strategic? In our globalised and highly competitive settings and at a time where technology is a key means in ensuring efficiencies in service deliveries, growth and being able to fully participate in the world economy, the LDCs must have this access to be able to implement SDGs and the Istanbul Programme of Action.

The General Assembly resolution 71/251 of the 23rd December 2016, you voted had that clear vision.

We now must expeditiously and without delays move forward to put this important new initiative of the Member States on a solid and financially sustainable footing for it to deliver on its promise. This is a must if we share the goal for the Bank to deliver on its promise.

The new entity has a key goal: to improve the utilization of scientific and technological solutions in the world's poorest countries and promote the integration of least developed countries into the global knowledge-based economy.

This is a very tall order. So, today I report to you that Turkey, the host country of this new entity, has provided generous financial and in kind support as follows:

- An annual contribution of US\$ 2 million for 5 years starting 2017. The Government may review its annual contribution for an increase;
- Premises free of charge for 5 years and the establishment costs;

- Two Experts (P5 and P4) on non-reimbursable loan agreement basis for the TB;
- Additional project-based funding starting 2018, including through the Turkish International Cooperation Development Agency.

Pledges have been received, and I wish to inform that from the least developed countries: Bangladesh (USD 50,000) and Sudan (USD 100,000). Other LDC countries have also indicated that they will also make a token contribution to the Technology Bank. Norway has pledged USD 300,000 and Philippines has contributed USD 5000.

I believe the current pledges allow for the setting up and commencement of the operations of the Technology Bank, and at the same time provides the opportunity for other Member States and stakeholders to contribute additional support to the Bank.

But to realize the objective of having an impact driven Technology Bank serving in LDCs, we estimate that the Technology Bank would require an annual operating budget of USD 35-40 million.

The minimum annual operating budget for the Technology Bank to start activities was USD 10 million which will enable the TB to begin substantive activities on the ground in LDCs. With this in mind we are continuing our fund-raising efforts.

The Secretary General is fully committed to mobilize the capacities of the entire UN system to support the Bank and will also continue to support the mobilization of voluntary contributions.

Today, I call on the Friends of LDCs, and on all stakeholders from your countries, namely the private sector and foundations for voluntary contributions.

I believe that in light of General Assembly Resolution 71/251, it is our collective duty to ensure a solid and sustainable financial footing for the Technology Bank.

What has been done operationally to date?

The 13 Members of the Council have been appointed (*information on the names of the Directors has been made available to all*). As purely an interim measure and to ensure progress on work relating to the establishment of the Technology Bank, the Director of OHRLLS, has been appointed as the Acting Managing Director.

The Managing Director of the Technology Bank and essential staff will be recruited following UN rules and procedures in the next several months.

The Council of the Technology Bank has been scheduled to meet in New York from 20-21 November 2017. The meeting has a straightforward agenda. Based on the overall already endorsed strategic plan, consider the first annual work plan and the budget on the basis of the resources available in its Trust Fund by then, and prepare the Council's report to the Secretary General for submission to the UNGA.

Also, tomorrow at the Inter Agency Consultative Group Meeting of the UN System and International Organisation on the implementation of Istanbul Programme of Action, we will focus on ways we can leverage the existing and future work of IACG members on Science, Technology and Innovation to support the Technology Bank.

Following the Council meeting, it is then key that we start activities on the ground, and bring on board all stakeholders.

We vision that the Technology Bank begins its activities in LDC during 2018 on the basis of the priorities identified in the Three Year Strategic Plan, approved by the interim Council of the Bank in July 2016.

As mentioned earlier, the new Council will deliberate on the issue at its November meeting and we expect the work plan for 2018 will focus on prioritized projects and activities identified in the existing Strategic Plan.

These activities will be guided by the needs and priorities of LDCs, geared to support key national and regional stakeholders, and promote LDCs ownership and strengthen domestic institutional capacity on Science Technology and Innovation. They will be designed to complement, rather than compete with or duplicate activities and projects already undertaken by other UN agencies or donors. The Bank will leverage the existing initiative within the UN system, including the Technology Facilitation Mechanism, to implement its programme of work.

In 2018 we expect the TB to focus on activities in two areas:

- Technology Needs Assessments; and
- Digital Research Access.

The geographical coverage of the activities will be limited by available resources at hand.

As part of the Technology Needs Assessment, the Technology Bank will carry out baseline Science Technology and Innovation reviews for an initial group of LDCs in collaboration with UNCTAD and UNESCO. These will be modelled after their Science Technology and Innovation reviews, and expanded to cover technology needs assessments to identify technological gaps and priority needs for LDCs, as a first step

towards developing coherent and integrated strategies that are tailored to their specific needs. The reviews will focus on strengthening policies and measures to improve national and regional technological capabilities and encourage innovation.

The reviews will provide a blueprint for the Science Technology and Innovation capacity building programs and priorities that will provide a valuable guide to bilateral donors, multilateral and regional development banks, foundations, NGOs and the private sector.

Under the Digital Research Access, the Technology Bank will build on existing initiatives, including the Research4Life public private partnership to enable, facilitate and increase online access to costly scientific journals, books, and databases at no direct charge. It will work to put in place the necessary hard and soft infrastructure to create and/or scale up access to scientific and technical knowledge, and provide capacity building. It is anticipated that this will provide improved access for scientists and researchers based in LDCs to research data, research publications, Science Technology and Innovation initiatives and activities of the Technology Bank. This is expected also to enhance intra-LDC and international communication and collaboration between research centres and universities.

Excellencies, Friends

Great minds with great ideas, are not an issue of geography, but an issue of access. Many great and young minds in the LDCs wait to make their contribution and we have to give that helping hand to unleash greatly underutilized potential. The Technology Bank is to function as that enabler and move potential that exists into a reality where the often young great minds can increase home grown innovation and research.

OHRLLS will remain dedicated to mobilising all of the UN system capacities.

But we need additional voluntary contributions if this new UN entity the General Assembly established in its vote 71/251 is to take off on a solid and sustainable financial footing.

Once more, I reiterate our call on all friends of LDCs including their private sector, foundations, and academia, to extend their support to this key strategic initiative.

I thank you for your attention and look forward to our dialogue.
