



**Closing Remarks
by**

Ms. Fekitamoeloa Katoa ‘Utoikamanu

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

Consultative Meeting of LDCs and Friends of LDCs

Venue: Glen Cove, Long Island

28 June 2017

4.45 p.m.

Excellencies
Distinguished Delegates,
Colleagues, Ladies and Gentlemen

At the end of this day of interesting presentations and intensive discussions, I would like to thank all of you for attending this Consultative Meeting on the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals and Istanbul Programme of Action for the Least Developed Countries.

I would like to take this opportunity to highlight a few key points from our discussions today:

With respect to the implementation of the SDGs, I am encouraged that many LDCs have integrated them in their national plans. In all the LDCs that mainstreamed and localized SDGs political will and participation of stakeholders was crucial.

It was mentioned that efforts need to be strengthened to integrate youth in development and empower women as they represent large, vibrant and productive labor force. Likewise, the fine-tuning of development indicators to adapt to national context is important to increase their relevance and clarity, which helps ensure effective monitoring and follow-up.

The importance of support by the UN system to LDCs was also flagged, and room for improvement was discussed. This does not only apply to resource allocation for activities in LDCs but also to providing analysis relevant to LDCs. In addition, support by the UN system – and beyond - for graduation and smooth transition needs to be increased.

The UN system should also ensure that policy decisions are evidence based and interventions support and contribute to achieving the SDGs. Furthermore, the Resident Coordinators need to ensure effective coordination and build synergies, and avoid duplication of activities at the national level.

While financing is only one of the factors needed to implement the IPoA and reach the SDGs, it is nevertheless an important part as was highlighted in our discussions this afternoon. LDCs are facing significant challenges to further increase taxes without faster growth. It is also crucial to increase finance at the local level for example through domestic pension funds.

From the deliberations today it was clear that further discussions on the issue of Financing for Development are needed, including on the relationship between the different sources of funding. Equally important is the implementation of what has been agreed in Addis and Paris in 2015 and in Antalya during the Mid-term review of the IPoA last year. More support and capacity for project development was mentioned multiple times as well as investment promotion by home countries. Especially for climate change finance, not only more resources but also better information about and better access to existing resources is needed.

We heard a briefing on the Investment Support Programme that aims to provide legal and professional assistance to governments of the LDCs and under-resourced LDC firms to help them in investment-related negotiations and dispute settlement. We trust development partners will look at it favorably in light of the needs LDCs have to get the most favorable results from FDI for their economies and people.

The issue of resilience building is also crucial for all LDCs, as we have just heard - after all, economic vulnerability is one of the criteria to define the group and many LDCs were hit by natural disasters. I am grateful to Nepal and Solomon Islands for sharing their experiences with us.

There is widespread agreement that more needs to be done to increase resilience in LDCs to avoid any deterioration of the development progress achieved so far. Structural reforms need to be implemented and capacity to handle shocks needs to be enhanced. Furthermore the support architecture needs to be harmonized as different agency uses different standards and categorization of countries.

Excellencies, ladies and gentlemen,

I am looking forward to work with all of you to ensure that the IPoA will be implemented and the SDGs achieved. There are a lot of meetings still happening in the next few weeks, including the ECOSOC session on 6 July, where the report of the Secretary-General on the implementation of the Programme of Action for the Least Developed Countries for the Decade 2011-2020 and the report of the 19th session of the Committee for Development Policy will be considered. Then of course during the High-level Political Forum, many issues relevant to LDCs including on SDG 17 will be further discussed and I am especially looking forward to the national voluntary presentations of 6 LDCs.

With this let me thank again all the presenters for very useful inputs and all of you for active participation. I would also like to thank the interpreters for their excellent service, the staff here at Glen Cove and especially my team, who made this meeting happen.

I wish you a safe trip back to NY and beyond, especially for our speakers from Nepal and Senegal.