



**UN-OHRLLS**

**Remarks**

**by**

**Ms. Fekitamoeloa Katoa ‘Utoikamanu**

**Under-Secretary-General**

**High Representative**

**for the Least Developed Countries, Landlocked Developing Countries**

**and Small Island Developing States**

Closing Remarks

Conference Room 11

United Nations Headquarters, New York

14 December 2017

10 to 10:30 a.m.

Excellencies,  
Distinguished Colleagues,  
Ladies and Gentlemen

After a hard day of work, we have arrived to the closing of this Expert Group Meeting on UN Support for Graduation and Smooth Transition.

We have had an impressive day with excellent presentations and an engaged discussion among member States, United Nations and other international organizations. Our discussions today are an example of the potential partnership and collaboration can bring to support the LDCs on their way to graduation and during the smooth transition from the category. A first lesson that we can extract from today's discussions is that we have to all work together, under the leadership of the LDCs, to advance their agenda and ensure that graduation constitutes a stepping stone in the way to sustainable development and prosperity. For us at the United Nations, advancing sustainable development in the most vulnerable countries is an obligation that is rooted in the UN Charter itself. We are also pleased to see the level of commitment and leadership among the countries that we serve.

With your active participation and constructive contributions, this Expert Group Meeting has come up with good ideas and recommendations, which are timely, bold and absolutely built upon your abundant goodwill and commitment.

These recommendations will help set LDCs on the course of sustainable graduation. They will also help guide the work of the United Nations, the Least Developed Countries and their development partners in reaching the targets of Sustainable Development Goals and in implementing the 2030 Agenda.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Before we part, I want to thank all of you for your engagement and commitment. That said, we are also aware of the important work that lies ahead of us. We have the responsibility to use all the ideas, conclusions and recommendations that we have gather across the various sessions today and start working together for making them a reality. My office stands ready to work with the United Nations and all stakeholders to ensure that the results of this Expert Group Meeting will be materialized in a productive way for the LDCs.

Building on our mandate, we will continue working together with our UN partners and other stakeholders to facilitate better coordination and a strong response from the United Nations system and other international organizations that corresponds to the efforts and leadership shown by the LDCs in their path towards graduation.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Allow me also at this juncture to convey my gratitude to the representative of the countries that have graduated from the category of the Least Developed Countries for coming here and share their valuable experience with us.

I also want to thank all of you, experts, UN colleagues and all delegations for the substantive contributions and high level of engagement, all of which have enabled us to make this Expert Group Meeting a successful one.

I would also like to thank the people who worked behind the scenes, from the technicians, interpreters, and other staff members, who have assisted us so ably during the preparations and in the course of this Expert Group Meeting.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Let me conclude by saying again that we worked hard, but in fact, the real work only starts now—with new determination and vision.

I thank you for your kind attention.