



**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**

Opening Ceremony

Fourth World Forum for Local Economic Development

Praia, Cabo Verde

17 October 2017

15:30-17:00

Your Excellency, Jorge Carlos Fonseca, President of the Republic of Cabo Verde,  
The Hon. Speaker of the National Assembly,  
Your Excellency, the Prime Minister of Cabo Verde,  
Mr. Oscar Humberto Evora Santos, Mayor of Praia, Cabo Verde,  
Excellencies,  
dear colleagues from the United Nations  
Distinguished guests, ladies and gentlemen,

On behalf of the United Nations Secretary General, His Excellency Mr. A. Guterres who I have the deep honour to represent here, I express my gratitude to you Excellency President Fonseca, to the government of Cabo Verde and its people for your invitation.

I bring warm greetings and best wishes of the Secretary General, for a productive and successful meeting.

Being with you in your beautiful country, I am reminded of the words in the song “Esperanca Di Mar Azul “of your country’s daughter so beloved by many around the world, Cesaria Evora

I liberally quote

“In life there are storms, the winds from the north, the winds from the south  
But the hope in the blue seas is for those who believe in the love the seas give us “end of quote

And I thank the organisers for their sterling efforts to ensure the success of this important Forum.

This Forum is not only very important but it also is very timely. Local initiative and our collective commitment to promoting local economic development are the conduit for broader sustainable development.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

We are already two years into the implementation of the sustainable development goals (SDGs) and other internationally frameworks we agreed on. In adopting the SDGs we set out on a necessary but also highly ambitious course to eradicate poverty, promote inclusive and sustainable growth and development, and protect the planet, while ensuring that no one is left behind.

We have no time and effort to spare if we want to make our noble goals reality for all people by 2030.

As the saying goes: think global and act local.

If we truly aim for “Leaving no one behind”, we also must ensure that “No place is left behind”.

If we truly aim for “Leaving no one behind,” we also must ensure that everyone is given a voice and participates in making our shared goals happen.

Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen,

This Forum convenes major stakeholders with one overall interest: promoting local economic development.

Allow me to briefly share some salient points from a personal experience in this regard.

In my own country, decades ago we engaged in processes of participation of local communities to plan for their futures inscribed into a balanced and shared development undertaking for all of our island nations people and territory.

We then called it bottom-up planning, integrated development programs and these efforts in many other countries around the globe also relied on and fostered community- to- community exchanges.

This deliberate effort to involve local communities, support their capacity building, support their taking charge led to territorial cohesion by mitigating imbalances and it has shown over time to be sustainable.

We now live in a world where access to information, knowledge is much more fluid, much more rapid and with a word of caution, also can spread discontent more rapidly as recent events have shown.

There is extraordinarily vast wealth of experience and knowledge assembled in this room. Let us think together, act together and find ways to move forward and accelerate local participation and local development. These two issues go hand in hand to ensure harmonious territorial development for all and ultimately the realisation of our shared 2030 Agenda.

So, I urge you all to participate fully, participate with the passion Cesaria Evora expressed so beautifully in her songs and show that passion that sparks involvement in local economic development.

I look forward to your recommendations, to the set of policy and institutional actions you will propose.

I wish you fruitful deliberations and again

Thank you.