



**United Nations Office of the High Representative for the Least
Developed Countries, Landlocked Developing Countries and Small
Island Developing States
(UN-OHRLLS)**

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

at the reception to mark LDC graduation by Bangladesh

Thank you so much - Bangladesh - for bringing us together tonight. What a milestone to celebrate!

It gives me great pleasure to share a few words with you and, again, thank you for having me with you.

Tonight, you can proudly say you not only Bangladesh met the three criteria for graduation but you met them by a considerable margin ! This augurs well for the next steps now to take.

Not only have you made rapid progress in a variety of sectors covering the economic, social and environmental fields but this also is testimony to your and your peoples resilience against a host of economic and environmental shocks.

My heartfelt congratulations go to all of you people women and men, girls and boys.

Great foundations have been built to reduce poverty and advance development. The poverty level has come down to under 14 per cent.

Economic growth has been robust for many years in a row.

Vision 2021 consistently guides Bangladesh's development priorities including the many steps and building blocks needed for its steady journey to become a middle-income country.

What does this tell us though?

Your experience demonstrates that strong national ownership and leadership, forward looking national plans, programmes and institutions can bring about transformative changes and defy many and complex internal as well external adverse conditions.

Graduation is a major step but not an end in itself. It is like a book - you have finished one chapter and now open a new chapter in writing the story. You have not written the end of the story.

Graduation brings new opportunities and potential as well as challenges.

It is vitally important for graduating countries to enter into smooth transition processes and strategies. This requires to map out the potential impact of the loss of benefits previously held and the need to adjust institutional and legal frameworks to comply with additional international obligations.

We are heartened to see a growing number of LDCs now meeting the criteria for graduation. I though must caution that it is vitally important for the international community to pay careful attention to ensuring the sustainability of graduations and thus to smooth transition strategies.

Graduation should be an encouraging moment and not one of disruption of momentum and potential built over time and often under demanding circumstances.

As I said, graduation is not an end point and so graduating countries continue to need adequate support from development partners consistent with their sustainable development needs.

Graduating countries require to build value-adding productive capacities for sustainability and the inclusion of all into countries economic fabric.

Indeed, let us all come together for that further support to facilitate a “virtuous” cycle of development, grounded in the development of productive capacities and structural transformation. A “ virtuous “ that ensures sustained and sustainable growth as we must ensure that no one is left behind in achieving the goals of Agenda 2030.

Once more, my sincere and heartfelt congratulations.

I thank you all.