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UN-OHRLLS

Opening Statement for

Ms. Fekitamoeloa Katoa ‘Utoikamanu

**High Representative
and
Under-Secretary-General**

**Least Developed Countries, Landlocked Developing Countries and Small
Island Developing States**

**2018 HLPF Side Event on
Accelerating the energy transition in LLDCs**

**Organized by The Chair of the Group of the LLDCs; Austria; UN-OHRLLS,
UNIDO and Sustainable Energy for All**

12 July 2018; 13:15 – 14:30

Conference Room B, UN Conference Building

Excellencies,

Ladies and gentlemen

Thank you for having me with you !

Agenda 2030 is built on a promise the global community made to people: LEAVING NO ONE BEHIND.

The roadmap to get this done is meeting the SDGs.

Our focus today is on a key building block to make the promise we gave people a REALITY - ENERGY.

The Vienna Programme of Action for the LLDCs already stressed the importance of energy for improving trade facilitation, reducing the high trade costs that the LLDCs face and for enhancing industrialization and structural economic transformation.

Access to sustainable energy is crucial for the achievement of ALL the SDGs and a condition if we are to leave no one behind.

I posit before you that the 2030 Agenda cannot be realized if we do not realize SDG7 that calls for universal access, diversification and reduction in intensity of energy use. The nexus between energy and poverty eradication, food security, education, health, climate change, and its role in enhancement of productivity is an indisputable fact.

The 32 LLDCs have made some progress towards achieving SDG7.

Like on so many fronts, progress is highly uneven between and within countries.

More and faster action is needed to accelerate the transition to a sustainable energy future for all.

The LLDCs ' story is one of a coin with two sides.

On one side we have net-fuel exporting LLDCs that rely on an energy mix that is dominated by fossil-fuel-based power generation. The other side is that of the net fuel-importing LLDCs that is diverse, with some depending on fossil fuel and others not.

What though is common to all LLDCs is that the pursuit of sustainable access to affordable energy must go hand in hand with increasing the access to renewables in the energy mix.

Progress in increasing access to electricity is taking place.

The average proportion of population having access to electricity services in the LLDCs increased from 35.7% in 2005 to 51.8% in 2016. In other words, one in two persons has access.

This figure lags behind the global average of 87%.

The challenge will be to get electricity to the remaining 47.2% of the LLDCs' population.

In other words, how fast can we connect the remaining 230 million people.

Within this macro-picture, we also must address the rural-urban gaps that exist.

The gap is significant in that typically 84% of the population in urban areas have access compared to 41% in rural areas.

Then, about two thirds of the LLDCs' population relies on traditional use of biomass for cooking. That means, and especially for women ! - exposure to high levels of household air pollution, with the attendant consequences on health, the environment and ultimately livelihoods.

We can be somewhat encouraged by the fact that total renewable energy production has been on the increase in some LLDCs.

The LLDCs' renewable energy share in total energy consumption increased to 43.8% in 2015, up from 43.3% in 2010. This is clearly not enough and certainly not fast enough.

Challenges include: lack of adequate financial resources, technology access and capacity constraints in policy formulation and of regulatory institutions.

Reducing energy intensity as we all know will be crucial for offsetting carbon dioxide emissions. We also must make clean energy access more affordable.

Excellencies

Ladies and gentlemen,

Yes, there are challenges. But there also are opportunities for accelerating the achievement of SDG7.

LLDCs do hold after all great potential for the production of renewable energy ranging from hydropower, to wind, bio-energy, solar and geothermal sources.

For example, Paraguay, Tajikistan, Ethiopia, Kyrgyzstan, Kazakhstan, Zambia, Nepal and Bhutan have vast hydropower resources. Some of these LLDCs have been able to harness hydropower and generate an energy export surplus.

Similarly, the fall in prices for renewable energy, especially solar energy, and the emergence of new business models, coupled with new technology and storage should provide great opportunity to scale up renewable energy in LLDCs.

There is also potential for the LLDCs to reduce energy costs by enhancing efficiency in the generation, transmission, distribution and use of energy. This ought to be complemented by making a shift towards energy efficient products and processes.

In turn, this would contribute to improving industrial productivity and energy security.

Domestic efforts ought to be complemented by regional cooperation. This could be used to develop regional energy markets and induce economies of scale; expand finance for cross-border energy projects; ensure technology and capacity transfer; and to share successful policy and regulatory frameworks.

Excellencies
Ladies and gentlemen,

The SDG targets are achievable.

But we must work more closely together to address the existing gaps I just mentioned.

It will take strong domestic leadership, sustained regional and global political will, tailored policies, finance and technology support, together with smart business models.

It is my hope that our discussions will identify action-oriented ways to foster energy transition in the LLDCs.

The outcome of our substantive discussions today will contribute to the midterm review.

Excellencies
Ladies and gentlemen,

This brings me indeed to an update on the preparations for the High-Level Comprehensive Mid-term Review of the Vienna Programme of Action scheduled for next year and as called for in the United Nations General Assembly resolution that was adopted last December.

Why have such review?

The purpose of the review is:

1. take stock of the progress made in implementing the Vienna Programme of Action
2. identify achievements, obstacles and constraints and
3. make action recommendations to accelerate implementation and the achievement of the SDGs by the LLDCs.

OHRLLS is actively engaged in the preparatory process.

I mention a few activities.

The Ministerial Meeting of LLDCs on Trade and Transport that we held in Astana, Kazakhstan in May marked the beginning of the preparatory process for the review.

The International Think Tank for LLDCs, the first intergovernmental body of the LLDCs, was inaugurated during a Ministerial meeting that was held in Mongolia in June 2018 which adopted a declaration. The outcome of the inaugural meeting also feeds into the preparatory process of the Midterm review.

Yesterday we convened a thematic event on Aviation, whose outcome also feeds into the preparatory process.

It is also vital that all LLDCs prepare national reports on the implementation of the Vienna Programme of Action and remain fully and constructively engaged in the preparatory process.

Consultations are going on with the UN Regional Commissions and member states in the organization of the regional meetings to be held in the Euro-Asia , Africa and Latin America regions.

Rest assured, OHRLLS is very committed to closely working with the LLDCs and all partners to support acceleration of energy transition, effective implementation of the Vienna Programme of Action and achievement of the SDGs. Time is of the essence and our combined credibility hinges on making the words of Agenda 2030 a reality for people by leaving no one behind.

I thank you.