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**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**

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

**Consultative Meeting of LDCs and Friends of LDCs
Accelerating Progress Towards Graduation
from the LDC Category**

Venue: Glen Cove Mansion

Glen Cove, NY
28 June 2018, 7:30 p.m.

Excellencies,
Distinguished Delegates,
Colleagues and friends
Ladies and Gentleman

First, a warm welcome to all of you and thank you for having taken time out of your very busy schedules to be here to reflect on what it will and must take to accelerate Progress towards Graduation from the Least Developed Country Category.

My sincere thanks go to you your Excellency, Mr. Tareq Md Ariful Islam, Deputy Permanent Representative of Bangladesh.

I must express appreciation to Bangladesh for the chairmanship of the LDC Group.

But I also really must thank the government of Denmark for your steadfast support to the LDCs and sponsoring this event.

Thank you so much your Excellency Mr. Ib Petersen, for joining us tonight.

I would also like to acknowledge the presence here of the representatives of our development partners and Friends of LDCs, thank you HE Feridan H Sinirlioglu, and HE Tore Hattrem for being with us tonight.

I cannot overstate how critical our meeting is. It is a critical working meeting for the countries eligible for graduation and for those farther behind on this journey.

No, this is not just yet another meeting.

We are here for a clear purpose.

We must take a look at the progress that countries are making towards graduation.

We must take a hard look at both the importance of providing graduation support and the kind of support needed to make graduations sustainable.

This implies that we must look at key accelerators for structural transformation and how countries who have not yet met the criteria for graduation can fast track progress.

We are discussing this against a backdrop of very rapidly changing dynamics in the international landscape. We also discuss this knowing that none of us can go this alone.

We are, allow me to say, in this boat together and only by rowing together can we advance.

To me, it is thus critical that this meeting brings us together as PARTNERS.

PARTNERSHIPS is needed more than ever if the words and pledges of the IPoA are to become reality on the ground.

Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen,

We stand at a critical juncture.

In the latest CDP triennial review in March, an historic number of 12 countries met the criteria for graduation. That is great progress and above all it is ENCOURAGING.

So it shows there is a way forward. Yes, it can be done.

But we now must make a concerted effort to ensure that we do not lose momentum.

On the one hand we are now in an almost radically changed environment compared to that when IPoA was signed off on and we also are still far off from turning the ambitious goals of the Istanbul Programme of Action to reality for half of the LDCs.

Let us all be reminded that we agreed through the IPoA to meet the criteria for graduation for all by 2020! That cut-off date is truly just around the corner.

Also, to achieve the stated goals of Agenda 2030 a lot more work is needed!

We must deliver - trust in us, our credibility is at stake.

I hope as partners we can in our meeting re-evaluate where we stand and find a partnering way forward to action.

We must re-double efforts.

Therefore, the structure of our meeting has placed special emphasis on discussing what are and where can push the key accelerators for the implementation of the IPoA.

Key areas lie in energy access, ICT, and science, technology, and innovation.

These are drivers that are critical. These are the drivers for action if the LDCs are to improve productive capacities for more sustainable and inclusive growth and development.

One such critical dimension namely science, technology and innovation is already being pushed with the inauguration of the Technology Bank that took place earlier this month. We will hear more about recent developments regarding the Technology Bank later tonight.

Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen,

I also do hope that our discussions prepare us and feed into the upcoming High-level Political Forum.

This is YOUR moment to ensure that the challenges of the LDCs are brought to attention loud and clearly and with concrete suggestions on ways forward.

We need partnership and we need to strengthen the multi-stakeholder engagement for LDCs. Without intensified focus and support for LDCs in the implementation of IPoA and the SDGs the outcome is clear -

we risk failing what we promised. We risk trust and credibility at a time where more than ever people want to see RESULTS.

There is a final dimension I briefly wish to mention. This concerns operationalization of the reforms of the UN development system. As the Secretary-General has stressed over and over again, we cannot address the present and future with the tools of the past. We must be fit for purpose - we must be fit to give you the support you need in your efforts. I very much look forward to listening to all of you on how the UN could support graduation efforts.

In closing,

for me this is not yet another meeting and I really thank the LDC delegates, Friends of LDCs, experts, and UN colleagues for being here today in a spirit of partnership and care. Our shared caring that no one is left behind.

Let us engage with each other, participate in the discussions today and tomorrow in a true partnership spirit.

In the words of Henry Ford, and I quote:

“Coming together is a beginning; keeping together is progress; working together is success.”

Again, a very warm welcome and thank you.