

**Check against delivery**



**Remarks**

**by**

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**High Representative**

**and**

**Under-Secretary-General**

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

**at**

**Closing of the Meeting of National Focal Points of Least Developed  
Countries**

**Friday, 13 July 2018, 12:45 pm  
Conference Room 6**

Esteemed National Focal Points,  
Ladies and Gentlemen,  
colleagues and friends

A day and a half of highly intensive and frank discussions are behind you!

Thank you all for your active participation.

As I said at the opening of our meeting, yours is a critical role of bridge-building, bringing issues that need to be addressed to the forefront and being the subtle drivers for what matters most:

## ACTION

Indeed, my big hope here is that ACTION will now stem from our meeting's focus on the inter-linked issues that are so critical for the implementation of the Istanbul Programme of Action.

My take-away here is:

through your sharing of best practices and reviewing a range of effective policy options we have a good deck of cards to help policy and decision-makers dynamically transform economies and expand the productive capacity

you stressed the need for strengthening national statistical systems. I could not agree more. We must ensure fact-based, evidence-based action and bridge the capacity gaps in data collection, including for gender data, to meet the demand of the 2030 Agenda

you called for strengthened partnerships including focused and adequate support from the UN system

you draw our attention - once more - to the need for all development partners to step up effort in supporting graduation and smooth transition.

These all are critical action points.

Today we conclude a meeting. Your work and our work now has begun. As I said at the opening, we have no time to waste.

As National Focal Points, yours is indeed a strategic role.

You are the bridge-builders, facilitators, mediators to accelerate a critical WE TOGETHER MUST DO:

coordinating national planning and action processes and connecting all stakeholders and global, regional development frameworks with national agendas.

I really would like to see a strengthened, pro-active role of National Focal Points.

One key factor in making the SDGs work is to LOCALIZE the SDGs.

You have a key function, particularly in the context of the localization of the SDGs.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

The Istanbul Programme of Action is clear in its objectives and unequivocal in calling for strengthening LDCs' productive capacities.

We must support LDC's in overcoming their marginalization in international trade to achieve sustained, equitable and inclusive economic growth.

We are right now far from having reached the finishing line.

Reaching the finishing line requires that LDCs with the support of all stakeholders pursue strategic, comprehensive and sustained approaches facilitating structural transformation.

Next week, 10 LDCs will present their voluntary national reviews of the implementation of the sustainable development goals. The VNR is a unique platform for LDCs to showcase their success, highlight challenges, peer-learn and exchange best practices.

I call upon LDCs to seize the opportunity to underscore the synergies and coherence between the IPoA and the 2030 Agenda, and to mobilize multi-stakeholder support and build partnerships for the implementation of the SDGs and the IPoA.

During this meeting, we also launched the report of the working group on broadband for the most vulnerable countries.

I can only repeat it again: connectivity is KEY.

I trust most of you by now have seen the exhibit- it makes a strong point. If you have not yet seen it, please take a look at this showcase exhibit how sustainable energy has transformed the livelihoods of local communities in LDCs.

And what you see are the words collected by journalists under our OHRLLS initiative "*Voices of a Brighter Future*".

Let us listen to people, local people to amplify the LDC's aspiration for sustainable development.

I certainly will make every effort that we continue if not strengthen our own OHRLLS analysis and advocacy capacities on such issues of high priority.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

LDCs are most at risk of being left behind and they must be at the heart of global progress towards the 2030 Agenda.

The challenges may appear daunting - but challenges exist to be taken up!

Let us all commit to re-double our efforts to turn aspirations into actions, leverage development gains, and come through on promises we made to people.

To be successful, we must make this a collective journey and OHRLLS will be with you every step of the way.

We must all work together in the preparations for the next LDC Conference, which we expect to take place in 2021.

Some of you will join the HLPF discussions after this meeting.

So, without further ado

I wish you every success in the many meetings and events you are involved in. Keep the resolve and energy you have shown here, we are with you and have a safe journey home to begin ACTION.

Thank you.