



UN-OHRLLS

**United Nations Office of the High Representative for the Least
Developed Countries, Landlocked Developing Countries and
Small Island Developing States**

Closing Remarks by

Ms. Fekitamoeloa Katoa 'Utoikamanu, Under-Secretary-General and
High-Representative for the Least Developed Countries,
Landlocked Developing Countries and
Small Island Developing States

for

Luncheon for LDC Ambassadorial Group

Mission on 10 September 2018 at 1:00-3:00 pm

Excellency Ambassadors
Distinguished colleagues,

Let me begin by thanking Ambassador Masud Bin Momen for hosting this lunch. I would also like to recognize the presence of HE Ms Fatima Mohammed, Ambassador and Permanent Representative of the African Union to the UN. I look forward to working with her, as we have countries from the African region in our LDC as earlier alluded to by Ambassador Momen, but also in the LLDC and SIDs groups.

Ambassador Momen and his able team has been doing an excellent job in leading the Group of LDCs in various forums in the United Nations. Their strong voice and consistent engagements in various processes have resulted in tangible outcomes. We see that many of the concerns and priorities of LDCs have been reflected in the outcomes of the conferences and processes held in recent months.

The year 2018 has been an extremely busy one. A number of important events have already taken place since January 2018, such as the 2018 ECOSOC Forum on Financing for Development follow-up (FfD) and the High-level Political Forum on Sustainable Development. An agreement on the repositioning of the United Nations development system is indeed another landmark document adopted in May 2018. We are happy to note that the Group of LDCs was active in all these processes and many of your concerns are reflected in the final documents.

My Office organized dedicated events for LDCs on the sidelines of all major processes to provide platforms for focused discussions on the issues of interest to LDCs. We organized a number of meetings at the Ambassadorial level with the DSG on the repositioning of the UNDS, the last one of which was held on the day after the adoption of the UNDS resolution by the Assembly. As you are aware, the Secretary-General has already started implementing the mandate of the UNDS resolution. He has constituted a transition team. I have already met with the head of the Team Mr. Robert Piper. I urged him to ensure that the UN should further strengthen its priority and tailor-made support to LDCs and other vulnerable countries. I would request you all to remain engaged and vigilant as the repositioning mandates are translated into actions at the global and national levels.

As you are aware, the headquarters of the Technology Bank in Gebze was inaugurated on 4 June 2018. The bank is already starting its work, including STI and technology needs assessments and the promotion of digital access to research, in collaboration with other UN agencies, in several LDCs. On the operational front, we anticipate the Managing Director, 2 programme officers, and 2 support staff will to be on the ground in few weeks time. The recruitment of the Managing Director is in SG's Office and the announcement would be made in few days. In addition to the support we received from Turkey and Norway, we are grateful for the support of Bangladesh and Sudan. I hope, the group of LDCs will continue its strong to the smooth functioning of the Technology Bank.

My Office has also designed the Investment Support Programme to provide "pro bono" legal assistance to requesting LDCs in investment-related negotiations and dispute settlement. The EU has pledged 1 million Euro, which is expected to be disbursed in the Fall. The Programme is being implemented through IDLO. I invite you to send your request directly to IDLO, in case you wish to avail this opportunity.

We are also focusing our analytical work on building resilience of LDCs. Last year, we published a report on this topic. This year, the theme of our annual flagship report will be reducing vulnerabilities and strengthening resilience in LDCs, which will be published in the Fall of 2018. We are also actively engaged in promoting access to renewable energy and broadband connectivity in LDCs.

There has been considerable progress in the area of graduation. Vanuatu and Angola are scheduled to graduate in 2020 and 2021 respectively. Additionally, 12 LDCs are at different phases of graduation. The ECOSOC resolution of this year endorses the recommendation on the graduation of **Solomon Islands and Bhutan**. The Council also decided to defer the consideration of the graduation of **Tuvalu and Kiribati** to no later than 2021. Further, the Council decided that **Sao Tome and Principe** be graduated and approves to postpone its effective graduation date to 2024. We are trying to draw the attention of the international community to support the countries in their graduation and post-graduation phases. Series of meetings are being held on this topic. Secretary-General's report on smooth transition measures and graduation support has already been issued.

We continue to be concerned that while LDCs are in need of scaled up international support, external assistance going to LDCs, continues to decline since the adoption of the 2030 Agenda. My Office is undertaking rigorous advocacy works with the donor countries and the countries of the emerging South to insist them to reverse the decline trend in their support to LDCs and to fulfil their commitments in the IPoA. We are also engaged with the regional commissions, the OECD-DAC and the WB Groups to promote the issues of LDCs in those forums.

Excellencies,

The days ahead are going to be vitally important for LDCs to further strengthen the global support in their favour. The UN Secretary-General High-level Meeting on Financing the 2030 Agenda, which will take place on 24 September 2018, is an important opportunity for LDCs.

Before I conclude, let me draw your kind attention to the fact that the Istanbul Programme of Action is coming to an end. Thus, time has come to start the preparations for the Fifth UN Conference on LDCs. We would be seeking your guidance in undertaking effective preparations for the LDC-V.

As Ambassador Momen has mentioned, Bangladesh is going to conclude its successful term of Chairmanship in September and we look forward to the next Chair of the Group. My Office will continue to support the Group and the Chair. I would also urge all members to bolster the hands of the Chair of LDCs.

I thank you all.