Mr. Chairman,

As we approach 2020, we are reaching a critical juncture in the path towards sustainable development for LDCs. The road to achieving the SDGs is particularly arduous for the LDCs. They deserve the special attention of the international community.

We commend LDCs for their efforts in developing their productive capacities and improving governance, as well as their achievements on macro-economic performance, structural reforms, trade liberalization and privatization.

We applaud the 12 LDCs for their fulfillment of the graduation criteria. Increasing number of countries are meeting the criteria for graduation. These countries' progress is a sign that things are moving forward. At the same time, vulnerabilities persist. The fact that some countries who were recommended for graduation by CDP, requested for deferral is a testimony to that. Recent natural disasters hit the LDCs the hardest. Climate change affects the LDCs disproportionately. Challenges posed by climate change are closely linked with livelihoods of LDCs and their ability to maintain economic stability. Premature graduation in the face of external shocks could jeopardize hard-earned gains of LDCs. We must ensure that transition processes are smooth and sustainable.

Strengthened global partnerships are crucial, and development partners have a critical role to play in supporting sustainable graduation and smooth transition. Right now we are still far off from obtaining the ambitious goal of the Istanbul Programme of Action (IPoA) for half of the LDCs to meet the criteria for graduation by 2020. We need more progress on SDG targets geared towards LDCs, such as the implementation of the investment promotion regime.

In addition to ODA and partnerships, Turkey’s support to LDCs also focus on key accelerators for the implementation of the IPoA and the SDGs. Together with the UNDP, Turkey designed the SDG Impact Accelerator to support entrepreneurs that would collaborate with the LDCs within the framework of the Technology Bank. A feasibility study is currently being carried out by UNDP and the results will be shared early 2019.

I would like to take this opportunity to reaffirm Turkey’s commitment to support the economic growth and sustainable development of LDCs. For a more equal, prosperous and peaceful world and to leave no one behind, we are committed to continuing and deepening our cooperation with the LDCs. Thank you.