UN-OHRLLS

Statement
by Ms. Fekitamoeloa Utoikamanu
Under Secretary-General and High Representative

Office of the
High Representative
and
Under-Secretary General
for the Least Developed Countries, Landlocked Developing Countries and Small Island Developing States (OHRLLS)

at the Friends of LDCs meeting

4 February 2019
from 1:00pm-2:45pm
885 Second Avenue, 45th floor (between 47 and 48 St)
New York
Ambassador Feridun H. SİNİRLİOĞLU of Turkey  
Deputy Permanent Representative of Belgium,  
Ambassador Perks Ligoya of Malawi  
Your Excellencies Permanent Representatives  
Ladies and Gentlemen,

First, I want to express my warm appreciation to the Permanent Representative of Turkey for hosting this meeting and inviting me and my colleagues.

This is our first meeting in 2019, may be being already in February is a little late but I extend to you all my sincerest wishes for a happy New Year!

A thank you and congratulations also to the Government of Ireland, a key development partner of LDCs, for joining the Friends of LDCs.

Ambassador Ligoya, I am grateful for your presentation on the strategic priorities of LDCs. This will no doubt serve as an important guideline for the group and for my Office in carrying out our activities in the next three years.

OHRLLS stands ready to extend all necessary support in implementing the priorities, as requested by the Chair and the group.

Allow me to mention a few key aspects regarding the Fifth UN Conference on LDCs.

The Second Committee resolution about the Fifth UN Conference on LDCs contains key features to be mindful of:

(i) The Conference will be held for a duration of not more than five days in 2021; 
(ii) There will be two Preparatory Committee Meetings for a duration of no more than five days each in 2020/2021; 
(iii) Two regional review meetings will be held for a duration of no longer than 3 days each; 
(iv) There will be country level preparations and the UN System is encouraged to provide necessary support and to contribute actively to the preparatory process and the Conference itself;  
(v) OHRLLS has been designated as the focal point for the preparations of the Conference;

OHRLLS has developed a brief overview outlining the preparatory process which has already been shared with you.

The immediate task ahead of us is to organize the national level reviews of the implementation of the IPoA in each LDC.

It is vital that we get evidence-based assessments on the lessons learned, share best practices, challenges encountered in terms of the implementation of the IPoA, and come up with actionable recommendations.

These reviews are not yet another paper - they will inform and guide the inter-governmental negotiated document of the Fifth United Nations Conference on LDCs.
The way we prepare, I believe is very important! You do not hear me say this the first time, national ownership, dialogue and partnership are key ingredients,

So let me turn to the practicalities of the process ahead of us.

OHRLLS will shortly prepare guidelines/template for the national reports - I have asked for concise guidelines as I am mindful of the many reporting requirements you experience!

OHRLLS will request resident coordinators and UN country teams to support LDCs in the preparation and validation of their national reviews. Based on the findings and recommendations of the national reports, OHRLLS will then prepare a synthesis report to inform the substantive preparations for the Conference.

The key preparatory activities to put on your agendas include two regional review meetings, one for Asia and the Pacific LDCs and another for Africa plus Haiti.

Based on the national and regional review outcomes, based on inputs from the UN agencies, and our own facts-based analysis, OHRLLS will then prepare a 10-year appraisal of the implementation of the IPoA focusing on the scope of the LDC-V.

While we need strong national ownership we also need strong partnerships and we hope for ECOSOC, GA and other UNDS entities, World Bank Group and other relevant international and regional organizations to contribute to the LDC-V and its preparatory processes.

We also must identify two Co-Chairs to conduct the negotiations on the next programme of action for LDCs and relevant modalities of the Conference. This is a priority!

The first Preparatory Committee (PrepCom) meeting is scheduled to take place towards the end of next year. By end the preparations for the draft outcome document must commence.

We intend to convene a retreat of LDCs and the Friends of LDCs to brainstorm on the possible elements of the programme of action for LDCs in the next decade.

We have already organized an inter-agency consultative group (IACG) meeting to discuss the preparation for the LDC-V. The agencies agreed to undertake coordinated preparations for successful organization of the conference, including pre-conference thematic events and substantive publications to inform the preparations of the next LDC programme. I hope our next IACG meeting can have concrete, action- oriented discussions on the preparatory process of the LDC-V.

We will also invite the private sector, CSO, academia and parliamentarians, as well as young people and women to contribute to the Conference and its preparatory process.

Identifying a host country of the LDC-V is vitally important for the smooth organization of the Conference. My Office will send a letter to all member States inviting member states to express their interest in hosting LDC-V. i invite you the Friends of LDCs to assist in identifying a host country. As you are aware, the Host Country will have to provide logistical support for the Conference and cover the cost of participation of the supporting staff members and some representatives from each LDC.
Excellencies,

The LDC-V is taking place at a critical time. You all have heard the Secretary-General’s words in his address from the New Year and no need to add to this. The message is clear.

The duration of the next Programme of Action coincides with the last miles of the implementation of the 2030 Agenda.

As I have said during previous meetings with you, Agenda 2030 and the programme are complementary and the next Programme must help accelerate the implementation of the SDGs in LDCs.

While national ownership is key, allow me to alert you to a further practical matter.

The regular budget of the UN can only cover the organizational expenses of the 2 PrepComs and the LDC-V Conference itself. Many of the activities, especially supporting the participation of the LDCs in all relevant events, including the PrepComs and the Conference, would require extra-budgetary resources.

During LDC-IV in 2011 and the MTR in 2016, we received generous contributions of donor countries, especially from the Friends of LDCs to the Trust Fund. Your contributions supported the meaningful organization of various events with active participation of LDCs. We hope that, in the same spirit, the Friends of LDCs could now extend again support to the Trust Fund for LDC-V.

In closing what I consider my practical remarks, I wish to share that OHRLLS has also prepared a project proposal covering the various activities for this critical process including meetings of national focal points of LDCs, in preparation of the LDC-V.

We will send you a copy of the project document and we count on your contributions to the Trust Fund so that a truly comprehensive and participatory process for results can happen.

I stop here.

I very much look forward to listening to you, hearing your comments, questions and suggestions.

Thank you.

**********