Statement

by

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High Representative
and
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for the Least Developed Countries, Landlocked Developing Countries
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Breakfast meeting of the Friends of LDCs

Thursday, 11 July 2019, 8.30 – 9.45 am
Permanent Mission of Belgium to the UN, One Dag Hammarskjöld Plaza, 885 2nd Avenue, 41st floor
Distinguished co-chairs,
Excellencies,

Thank you Ambassador Pecsteen de Buytswerve for hosting us and for inviting me and my team.

It is good to be among and with friends!

Allow me to start my remarks by briefing you on recent and immediately upcoming activities of OHRLLS.

End May 2019, Geidco and OHRLLS jointly organized The Global Conference on Scaling-up Energy Access and Finance in Least Developed Countries. The meeting brought together some 200 participants ranging from senior officials and energy experts from the least developed countries, UN system, regional organisations, development banks and development partners.

You have heard me say over and over how making the SDGs reality for the LDCs we must invest in enlarging and deepening partnerships. Thus, private sector partners from both the energy and investment sectors also participated together with academic and civil society representatives.

Not surprisingly, participants stressed that access to financing for energy projects in LDCs must increase, must accelerate and that financing frameworks must address the unique challenges that LDCs face.

Therefore, we must all and especially funders must take into account the individual, the context specific challenges countries themselves identify. The outcome document from the meeting is being circulated.

Prior to that, in April 2019, OHRLLS together with the World Bank Group held a breakfast meeting on the margins of the World Bank/IMF Spring Meetings.

The focus was on strengthening resilience to debt vulnerability in the LDCs. The key outcome was that the debt sustainability framework for LDCs must systematically take into account structural constraints and longer-term investment requirements. This is key for the implementation of the SDGs.

In line with the Secretary-General's drive for efficiencies and result, OHRLLS established an ad-hoc Inter-Agency Task Force on graduation and smooth transition. This was seen as necessary to improve coordinated action in support of graduating countries.

The first two Joint UN Workshops on graduation support are scheduled for September in São Tomé and Príncipe and in October in the Solomon Islands. Both countries are scheduled to graduate in 2024.

I just returned from the Aid for Trade Global Review in Geneva. During a plenary session on LDC graduation support our discussions centered on how the United Nations and other
development partners can best support countries that are on their way out of the LDC category. I must say this again, we must much more focus on how to support graduating and recently graduated countries in transitioning, in preserving and building on hard won gains.

It was recommended that stronger, more focused technical support and financial measures are needed to achieve this!

Let me now turn to forthcoming events of critical importance.

I invite you to a side event we are hosting together with Sweden, Fiji and SIPRI, entitled: The 2030 Agenda at a crossroads – How do we ensure an integrated approach in tackling climate-related security risks, conflict and inequality?

In short, and as I have said before, the LDCs are our true test, our battlefield whether or not “no one will be left behind” in achieving the promises we made in Agenda 2030!

The programme and invitation is available at the back of the room. The event will focus on LDCs, LLDCs and SIDS and will take place on 16 July at 6.30 pm in Conference Room 1.

There also will be a side event I will attend on the technology bank, co-organised by Turkey and Malawi among others, that was mentioned earlier.

Turning to the preparations for our key strategic event - the Fifth Conference on the LDCs to be held in 2021, to which Ambassador Ligoa has already alluded, I wish to share the following.

The State of Qatar was selected to host LDC-V.

I thank other countries for considering to host the Conference and I hope that all of the friends of LDCs gathered here will fully support preparations leading us to a meaningful and successful Conference.

We have developed a template for the national level review of the implementation of the IPoA in each LDC.

The results of these reviews will be presented at a National Focal Points meeting in November this year.

We will then prepare a synthesis report of the national reviews highlighting lessons learned. We hope for this to be an important input to the draft outcome of LDC-V.

We work also with the Regional Commissions of Africa (ECA) and Asia (ESCAP) to organize regional review meetings in preparation of LDC-V in the first half of 2020, which are expected to result in negotiated outcome documents.

We indeed have been mobilizing the entire United Nations System in support of LDC-V. Agencies have shown keen interest in organizing preconference events, side events and thematic studies in their respective areas of competence.
During the last Interagency meeting and various bilateral talks with the heads of different organisations I recently met, we have already received a great deal of interest.

We will work closely with the IPU on the organization of a Parliamentary Forum in Doha prior to the conference.

We will collaborate with WHO to bring LDC ministers and government officials from the health sector to Doha to discuss actions and policies needed to advance primary health and especially where progress has been the slowest.

The WTO, EIF, UNCTAD are all very committed to work with us on issues of trade and productive capacity.

ILO is planning a new study on employment and the future of work and ITC will engage the private sector, just to name a few.

Yes, intensive months are ahead but again, time is not on our side, we already are four years into Agenda 2030! and by now climate related disasters and emergencies hitting especially hard the LDCs occur almost weekly!

It goes without saying that member states have to be in the driver's seat and own the process and Conference outcome.

We will work with member States to host preconference events on various themes that are vitally important for LDCs.

We will ensure that the private sector, CSO, academia and parliamentarians, as well as young people and women are able to contribute to the Conference and its preparatory process.

All of this preparatory work does require resources.

Allow me to ask you to favourably consider to contribute to this endeavour, based on the project document circulated at the last meeting of the friends. Some donors have already provided positive indications, but we are still waiting to receive their final commitments.

I thank you for your attention.