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Statement

by

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High Representative
and
Under-Secretary-General
for the Least Developed Countries, Landlocked Developing Countries
and Small Island Developing States
The VNR LAB 1: Achieving Policy Integration

9th July 2019, 1:15pm–2:45pm
CR 11,
UN Headquarters, New York
Under Secretary-General LIU Zhenmin
Ambassador Ligoya
Distinguished representatives coming from various capitals
Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen, colleagues and friends

Thank you to DESA for organizing this Voluntary National Review (VNR) LAB. I am glad we could partner with you in preparing for this event.

Today marks the start of the High-level Political Forum 2019.

This year, the HLPF assumes special significance.

We already mark the fourth year in the implementation of the 2030 Agenda.

This year, the General Assembly will hold the SDG Summit to review comprehensively progress - or should I say lack of progress? - in the implementation of the 2030 Agenda.

Most critically, we look to the recommendations on the way forward. Time is against us and we must accelerate implementation.

It is a great innovative approach to introduce the VNR Lab.

I hope this innovative platform facilitates the exchange of views in an informal and interactive setting. I hope this will be rich in sharing the best practices, lessons learned, failures and challenges encountered.

It is only through fact-based, frank and creative dialogue that we can forge consensus on policy recommendations how best to mobilize multi-stakeholder support and partnerships.

The special focus of this session is on achieving policy coherence and integration among fiscal, monetary, trade and development policy objectives.

There must be coherence because we are not in an either - or situation. I know you have heard this many times but I say it again - all this is interlinked.
Coherence between policy initiatives, in my view, will be the critical factor in accelerating the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

The SDGs, with great foresight, do indeed include a target on enhancing policy coherence for sustainable development under goal 17.

The target implies building synergies and complementarities and filling gaps among different policy streams.

When formulating domestic policies, governments should maximize the potentials for positive spillovers in such a way that a single work stream serves multiple purposes.

I know, having been myself in this situation, it is easier said than done but it must be done. Yes, often data lack, interest are competing, emergencies must be catered to and yet sustainability rests on achieving this, on looking behind satisfying the short-term by investing in the long-term.

It requires different policy makers, partners, stakeholders of all walks working together.

This is the basis for enhancing synergy and coherence and addresses overlaps and duplication.

This is especially critical to ensuring strong sustainable growth, price and financial stability and creating decent work in the economy.

Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen,

Now, in our globally connected and interdependent world, we also must acknowledge that no domestic policy can be detached from the regional and global settings within which it operates.

Recent studies suggest that LDCs, LLDCs and SIDS are the most vulnerable countries to the rapidly shifting global conditions and they also do - and this is no surprise - lag behind other developing countries in achieving the sustainable development goals.

One very critical factor in this concerns their disproportionately high vulnerability to climate.
Given the set of factors these countries are confronted with, it should be clear to all of us that these countries truly are the battle ground where SDGs will be won or lost.

The three groups of countries attach special importance to the HLPF and its Voluntary National Reviews.

There are growing numbers of countries coming forward to conduct VNRs.

This year, out of 47 countries, 11 are LDCs, 9 are LLDCs and 8 from SIDS with some overlaps among them.

They have already highlighted their stories and challenges in the implementation of the 2030 Agenda.

The key messages submitted by LDCs, LLDCs and SIDS all stress the challenges that I have just highlighted.

All are determined to deepen and accelerate their national efforts.

All stress that much more must happen, and must happen faster to strengthen global partnerships and in creating more favourable a global environment.

We are very happy that a considerable number of VNR presenting countries are present here today.

My hope is for an open and interactive discussion. My hope is for an exchange whose goal is to reach agreement on select policy issues we must address and act on to further acceleration of the implementation of the 2030 Agenda.

We have no time to waste!

I thank you.