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

(UN-OHRLLS)

Closing remarks
Ms. Fekitamoeloa Katoa ‘Utoikamanu
High Representative and Under-Secretary-General
Least Developed Countries, Landlocked Developing Countries and Small Island Developing States

Expert Group Meeting on improving access to finance for graduating LDCs
UNHQ, New York,
17:45-18:00, 12 November 2019
Conference Room E
Excellencies,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

We are now closing two days of exchanging experiences, dialogue and a very engaged discussion among partners. Indeed, it is so encouraging to see member States, the United Nations family, sister international organizations as well as think tanks and academia working together to find solutions in the interest of people!

Our discussions indeed show in tangible ways how it is partnering, collaborating that moves us forward, brings creativity for workable solutions as we are all united by one goal: support the peoples of the LDCs on their way towards sustainable graduation and beyond.

The magnitude of the task ahead demands that we all work together to ensure that graduation is and remains the critical stepping stone on the way to sustainable development for all.

Advancing sustainable development in the most vulnerable countries is a must, is out litmus test of showing that we “leave no one behind”, which is at the core of the 2030 Agenda.

It is an obligation at the core of the UN Charter and the Universal Declaration on Human Rights.

It is so encouraging to now have a dynamic where graduations have accelerated. Twelve LDCs find themselves at various stages on their path towards graduation. It is our shared responsibility to enhance support and incentives for graduation and this is not the moment to rest!

Also, we must engage over the long-haul, it is not as they say "a one shot deal". Transformations, and history gives us so many examples in this regard, are often generational if not multi-generational undertakings.

The Secretary-General identifies the issue of improved access to finance for graduating LDCs as a priority in his roadmap for financing the implementation of Agenda 2030.

We have analyzed how traditional development finance can be enhanced and scaled up. We have looked at contributions other major stakeholders, including those from South, can make.

We explored the potential of new sources of finance that can be made available to graduating LDCs.

We also concluded that LDCs have shown that they are able to make significant progress on the sustainable development ladder.

Since I took up office, you have heard me say this many times and I will say it again: we must tackle the issue of capacity building with urgency.

This is key in equipping graduated countries with what it takes to access finance and manage the related policy and operational environment.

Your experience, your active participation and your constructive contributions, made for a meeting generating the good ideas and recommendations we need.
This will now be taken forward by all of us, and hopefully feed into the Fifth UN Conference on LDCs in 2021.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

These recommendations will provide the LDCs with a very rich food for thought and action on their roads to sustainable graduations.

They indeed will help guide the work of the United Nations, the Least Developed Countries and their development partners.

OHRLLS is your partner and my office stands ready to work with all of you to ensure that the results of this Expert Group Meeting turn into action in a productive way for the LDCs.

Once more, I thank all of you for your commitment, your energy and your time invested in this meeting.

My special thanks go to Dr. Bhattacharya who has prepared a solid report as a basis for our discussions.

I also extend special thanks to Mr. Taffere Tesfachew, who is also a CDP member, as well as the representatives from international and multilateral organisations.

Foremost, a big thank you goes to the representatives of member states. Thank you for sharing your valuable experiences with us. Many of you have travelled from overseas. I hope you found your time well spent and of value added for your often challenging tasks in making graduations happen. We are here to support you!

Last, but not least, I thank my colleagues from the Office of the Secretary-General, from DESA and my staff for putting together this important and timely Expert Group.

We worked hard - but in fact, the real work starts now! I hope we will do so with renewed determination and vision.

Thank you.