

## Summary Report: LDCs Ministerial Meeting

*“Accelerated implementation of the Doha Programme of Action to overcome the impacts of the ongoing crises and regain momentum in achieving the SDGs in LDCs.”*

**23 September 2022**

**3 :30 to 6 :30 PM**

**Trusteeship Council Chamber**

**H.E. Ms. Nancy Tembo, Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Malawi**, opened the Annual Ministerial Meeting of the LDCs and expressed appreciation to the high level of participation of Ministers of LDCs and their partners. She thanked the co-facilitators, Canada and Bangladesh and stressed that the DPoA, if timely implemented, has the potential to bring transformational change to the LDCs. She also expressed her appreciation to Qatar for hosting LDC5. She noted in March 2023, the international community will have an opportunity to bolster political will to implement the DPOA, to establish numerous partnerships on a global scale, and for LDCs to make the desired progress.

She noted that LDCs exports sectors experienced a major setback, with a reduction of 25% in 2020. LDCs share of global exports fell to 0.9% in 2020. The export performance of LDCs has remained stagnant or gone downwards. She called for renewed international commitment support to the participation of LDCs in the international trading system. She requested development partners to fulfill ODA commitments to LDCs. She expressed appreciation for their partners in support of LDCs and indicated that recent EU Council Conclusions in support of LDCs were encouraging.

The Chair expressed appreciation for the support of OHRLLS. She highlighted that the Office is small given its mandate and requested all Member States to strengthen the Office and provide adequate resources. She also expressed her appreciation to the SG and Heads of State and Governments to attend the Conference in Doha.

**H.E. Mr. Csaba Kőrösi, President of the 77<sup>th</sup> Session of the General Assembly**, expressed his commitment to work closely with the Office on the LDC Agenda which will remain a priority for the PGA during this session. He expressed appreciation to Qatar for agreeing to host LDC5. He intends to participate. He encourages high level participation and stressed that solidarity has never been more important than now. He will host various consultations to prepare the SDG Summit in September 2023 and the Summit of the future in 2024 and also the UNGA will address the SDG6, key for LDCs and the rest of the world.

Even before the pandemic, many LDCs were off track in achieving the SDGs. LDCs have limited capacity. The consequences of the COVID-19 Pandemic and the war in Ukraine have severely impacted LDCs. The DPoA provides an important blueprint for LDCs and development partners to overcome this crisis and promote sustainable development.

The PGA will reconvene the advisory board for LDCs, LLDCs and SIDS to take advice on the key issues and move forward their agendas. The 77th Session will have to focus on the future we want. It requires us to concentrate our efforts better on the most burning issues, the most relevant ones for our societies, including the most vulnerable societies in the LDCs. These are crisis management and transformation to survive in the near future and be successful in the longer term.

**Mr. Antonio Guterres, Secretary-General of the United Nations** (video message) stressed that developing countries are bearing the brunt from conflicts and climate catastrophe, the immense pain inflicted by the COVID 19 pandemic to unchecked poverty and widening inequalities, the ripple effects of the war in Ukraine, including on food and energy prices, and a global financial system that is stacked against LDCs.

The DPoA reminds us that global recovery depends on these countries getting the support they need. This means bold investments in health, education and social protection systems and resources to fully implement the agenda 2030 and the sustainable development goals. We will need a reformed financial architecture that delivers financing and debt relief so LDCs can make those investments. LDCs need support to promote gender equality for girls and women across every walk of life and they need support to jumpstart their transition towards renewable energy and adapt to the changes around them. The Annual Ministerial Meeting of LDCs is a critical opportunity to put the needs of the LDCs first in our plans. The Secretary-General indicated that he was looking forward to measuring the progress already made on the implementation of the DPoA next March and delivering real action and real results for the LDCs in the years ahead.

**H.E. Mr. Soltan bin Saad Al-Muraikhi, State Minister for Foreign Affairs, Qatar** expressed appreciation to the efforts of the High Representative and for the great progress made by the 5th Conference through the DPoA. The DPoA is without a doubt of crucial importance and is the result of numerous efforts by partners. The adoption of the DPoA is a message from the international community to LDCs with regard to the support to their development and addressing the pandemic and other crises. There are just a few months before the Second part of LDC5. The Government of Qatar is honored to host the Conference from 5- 9 March 2023. This is an opportunity to reiterate the fact that in Doha we will have a meeting that occurs only every decade to bolster a political way to implement the Programme of Action for the LDCs and the numerous promises contained in it so they can be translated into changes on the ground.

Qatar has been a true strategic partner in meeting a number of challenges in the context of partnership and cooperation. Qatar is greatly attached to the success of the Second Part of the LDC5. He reiterated Qatar's efforts to guarantee the success of the Conference and are working extremely hard along the LDC Chair and OHRLLS to achieve this goal.

**H.E. Ms. Lachezara Stoeva, President of ECOSOC and Permanent Representative of Bulgaria to the United Nations** noted the food crisis, energy crisis and financial crisis triggered by the war in Ukraine and stressed that the world is in turmoil and that the pandemic is clearly not over and that the LDCs are most negatively impacted. She noted that persistent vulnerabilities of LDCs remain unchecked, will be the battle ground the SDGs will be won or lost.

As President of ECOSOC, she expressed ECOSOC's commitment to prioritize solid evidence base for the LDCs. The theme for the ECOSOC, and the HLPF in 2023 will be accelerating the recovery from the Coronavirus disease and the full implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development at all levels. Ms. Stoeva urged ministers from a range of sectors and portfolios from the LDCs to participate actively.

In September, the SDG summit will mark the midterm point in the implementation of the 2030 agenda, and noted LDCs should be prominently featured in the outcome of the Summit. She called Ministers of LDCs to ensure that Heads of State and Government come to participate at the Summit next year.

**H.E. Ms. Rabab Fatima, Under Secretary-General and High Representative, UN-OHRLS** expressed her thanks to Malawi for their outstanding leadership of the Group of LDCs. She thanked Qatar for hosting the high-level luncheon and for his government's continued generous support for the LDC5 process. She noted that the high-level participation from LDCs and Friends of LDCs, and their strong commitment of support are truly encouraging. She shared that far from recording the expected progress, we must now report that the number of people in extreme poverty has increased for the first time in a generation. The share of working poor has also increased for the first time in two decades. Over the first two years of the pandemic, over 100 million more people have been pushed into extreme poverty. LDCs, as so often, have been the hardest hit. A business-as-usual approach will leave more than 350 million people in LDCs languishing in extreme poverty by 2030.

She stressed that the DPOA gives a clear blueprint for the international community about what needs to be done by all stakeholders. Successful implementation of the programme will address the ongoing challenges and structural vulnerabilities of LDCs. It will build resilience against future shocks. She highlighted the potential of the LDCs, which although vulnerable, are also vibrant with youthful populations and for the international community to work together to develop new strategies to unleash the enormous opportunities that LDCs offer. She called for strengthened international cooperation to support LDCs in improving science, technology and innovation can help unleash a huge digital dividend. She added that significant additional domestic public resources, supplemented by international assistance are critical. Predictable finance, including ODA, domestic resource mobilization, trade and private sector financing, are critical means to provide universal sustainable social protection systems.

She reminded the audience of the importance of the 5<sup>th</sup> United Nations Conference on the Least Developed Countries. With the Programme of Action already adopted, the Doha Conference offers a unique opportunity to focus on implementation. That included the focus on key deliverables such as: an online university, an investment support center, food stockholding, a new resilience building mechanism and graduation support facilities.

She welcomed the extraordinary support that we have received from the Government of Qatar in preparation of Conference, and the implementation of the DPoA. She expressed her gratitude for the commitment of HH the Emir, Honourable Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister, as well as the Minister of State of Qatar. She also reiterated the strong leadership and support of Ambassador Al-Thani to make the LDC5 an historical event, and recognized the extraordinary role played by the bureau of LDCs under the leadership of Malawi.

**H.E. Dr. Francis M. Kai Kai, Minister of Planning and Economic Development of Sierra Leone**, noted the fragility of the LDCs and in the face of global crises that could derail our ambitions reflected in the DPoA. The Minister commended OHRLLS and recalled the meeting of the national focal point in Rwanda. He highlighted the main priorities of the Medium Term National Development Plan of Sierra Leone, which focuses on human capital development with strong emphasis on education, health, and food security as well as economic diversification, sustainable energy, transport, and ICT infrastructure and disaster management. He expressed his hope for stronger continuous commitment from Global Development stakeholders, including countries providing ODA, multilateral development bank, the IMF, commercial and private creditors to address the challenges that confront LDCs including the unbearable and crippling debt burden, the looming climate crisis and its vulnerabilities and disasters and the digital divide among others. The Minister looked forward to the second part of the fifth un LDC conference in Doha in March 2023 for very practical recommendations on how to accelerate delivery of the Doha programme of action.

**H.E. Ms. Linda Thomas-Greenfield, Permanent Representative of the United States to the United Nations** referred to President's Truman words that the responsibility of the great states is to serve and not dominate the people of the world. On hunger, she recalled President Biden's statement at the replenishment Conference of the Global Fund. She stated that global health is one of US's main focuses and invested in health systems, delivered vaccines and prevented and treated HIV AIDS, tuberculosis and Malaria. She stressed that the United States led the global response to COVID 19 and provided in partnership with Covax more than 620m doses and added that other countries have an obligation to step up as well. Secretary Blinken co-chaired the food security summit along with leaders of European Union, African Union and Spain. She informed that President Biden is working with Congress to quadruple US public international climate finance by 2024 to over \$11 billion. She expressed the commitment of the United States to working together through

the United Nations for more representative Security Council and their support to permanent seats for countries in both Africa and Latin America and the Caribbean.

**H.E. Saleumxay KOMMASITH, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs of Lao PDR** noted that for the last two decades, the LAO government has underscored LDC graduation as an overarching goal. Considerable progress has been made to be recommended for LDC graduation during 2021 triennial review by the Committee for Development Policy. Severe impact caused by COVID 19 pandemic, Laos continues to encounter uncertainty and challenges. Another thorough review process is needed in the coming few years to assess whether Laos will be able to tackle the ongoing difficulties and meet the set graduation threshold in a sustainable manner and make sure that the graduation must be irreversible. Laos government has started developing the National Transition strategy through the whole government approach and in consultations with all relevant stakeholders aiming to formulate Smooth Transition Strategy that responds to the national development needs and priority in the coming years. The LAO government considers the extension of international support measures for graduating LDCs as reflected in the DPoA particularly crucial for the implementation of this strategy. The continued support from developing and trading partners as well as the UN system remain essential to avoid any disruption, especially from the current declining ODA.

**H.E. Mr. Flemming Møller Mortensen, Minister for Development Cooperation of Denmark** stressed that Denmark stands ready to engage in on all levels and to do its part to contribute to its implementation of the DPOA and is aiming to lead by example when it comes to contributing to the global fight against poverty and inequality. For more than 40 years, Denmark has been part of the sole group of countries which has lived up to the UN goal of allocating at least 0.7% of GNI to development assistance. The government remained committed to continue to do so in spirit of the current crisis. Denmark is also committed to lead by example, in the fight against climate change, and in particular focus on area of importance of LDCs. Therefore, at least 60% of Denmark's grant-based climate finance is dedicated to climate adaptation actions as well as to efforts which aims to build resilience, especially in the LDCs and SIDS. The Danish Prime Minister is personally engaged in advocating for solutions to the current crisis, together with five other world leaders. She serves as champion for the UN Secretary-General global crisis response group on food, energy and finance. As such, she aims to advocate and facilitate global consensus on actions to prevent, mitigate and respond to crisis. Denmark is ready to understand the particular challenges faced by LDCs. The Mission of Denmark is keen to learn how we can work together to address these. And stressed that the LDCs can count on Denmark as a key partner and friend in these efforts.

**H.E. Ms. Johanna Sumuvuori, State Secretary to the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Finland** noted that one-third of its development funding is channeled to the LDCs would be happy to see the Future Forum evolving into an annual event for the LDCs. Finland noted it is committed to be Climate Neutral by 2035 and is scaling up climate finance. In April, Finland hosted a ministerial meeting with key finance providers and the

participation of several of the LDCs and SIDS. Supporting peace and democratic societies is one of the four pillars of Finland's development cooperation strategy. To this end, the Minister for Foreign Affairs together with the University of Helsinki, Rule of Law Center, is supporting developing countries to build their institutions for the rule of law as the foundation of a peaceful and just society. Finland welcomed the focus on the DPOA on STI and noted they allocated 70 million euros to the intersection of technology, innovation and gender equality to support the digital safety of women and women, human rights defenders and to enhance the digital literacy of women and girls.

**H.E. Dr. Tandi Dorji, Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Royal Government of Bhutan** welcomed the work of the IAFT on graduation and particularly on the establishment of the Sustainable graduation Support Facility. Bhutan called for strengthening the resources of OHRLLS. Bhutan noted that this may be one of the last times we will participate in this group as we are set to graduate in 2023. However, the pandemic has revealed the high vulnerabilities that Bhutan and other LDCs face to external shocks. The situation is further exacerbated by the geopolitical tension and climate induced disasters, leading to disruptions of food supply, increasing fuel price impacting the LDCs the most. While Bhutan wants to graduate sustainably, there is a need to institute long term transformative and green solutions for the economy and to better prepare for future pandemics and disasters through renewed focus on expanding the productive capacity of our economies to achieve meaningful structural transformation to spur growth across all spheres of sustainable development. In this regard, the potential of science technology and innovation, particularly digital technologies that could enable us to leapfrog must be harnessed. Climate change remains the biggest single threat to sustainable development.

**H.E. Ms. Marina Sereni, Vice Minister of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation of Italy** underscored that all international crises are interconnected and related to each other. Italy expressed appreciation for the holistic and multi-stakeholder approach of the DPoA, involving the civil society, the youth and the private sector. This is a crucial period for LDCs. All the international crises are producing their worst effects of these countries. Italy noted that international cooperation is of the utmost importance and the one size fits all approach is not the most adequate course of action. Italy underscored the need for partnerships between the LDCs and development partners and international organizations. In order to address these challenges in spite of the pandemic, the Italian development cooperation has increased its budget. Italy is committed to the multilateral response to the pandemic and is actively engaged in searching solutions to the food crisis. Achieving zero hunger is one central aspect. During its G20 presidency, Italy prioritizes the localization of SDGs. Italy also mentioned its candidature for hosting Expo 2030 in Rome, with the main theme, people and territories urban regeneration inclusion and innovation.

**Hon Ms. Matsepo Molise- Ramakoae, Lesotho's Minister of Foreign Affairs and International Relations** expressed concern that the least developed countries are severely impacted by three major crises: namely COVID, climate change and conflict. This calls for the timely implementation of the DPoA not only by the LDCs,

but also our development partners, the United Nations, European partners, and the Bretton Woods institutions in an effort to address all these challenges. Lesotho emphasized that resolute action is greatly needed to strengthen partnerships and strong commitments for the implementation of the DPOA on uplifting members countries from the category. The Minister requested development partners to fulfill their ODA commitments to LDCs. He urged to advocate budget support to development agencies to avoid drifting resources from development to humanitarian issues. Lesotho highlighted that most of LDCs are in debt distress, or at least at a higher risk of debt distress and therefore called for debt relief measures for LDCs from the multilateral bilateral and public, private, commercial creditors.

**H.E. Ms. Kitty van der Heijden, Vice Minister for International Cooperation of the Kingdom of the Netherlands** noted the Netherland's new policy will continue to focus on poverty eradication, human rights, women's right, climate change and countries most impacted by COVID. She informed that the climate portfolio of the Netherlands is 1.3 billion each year and will increase its funding by half a billion by 2025 for climate action to deliver on climate finance. She highlighted the role of innovative finance, and that 50 percent of their climate portfolio is private sector investments, including in the LDCs leveraged with public resources. She emphasized the importance of the localization of aid noting that DPOA has a dedicated agenda for capacity building for local organizations and local institutions to ensure local organizations are in the driver's seat. The Netherlands indicated that UNCDF is one of its key partners to implement the DPOA. We have been a very long-standing and proud partner of UNCDF through programmatic funding, and would like to become a core partner of UNCDF with a five-year multi-year unearmarked predictable funding. The Netherlands called on all development partners to provide unearmarked predictable funding.

**H.E. Osman Saleh, Foreign Minister of the State of Eritrea** noted that it is a good time to take stock of what is being prioritized in our respective countries. Business as usual is not an option. Having only a few countries graduating from the LDCs as in the past five decades is not an option. Lessons learned from the COVID 19 pandemic is that multilateralism as it stands today has failed. He emphasized that the successful implementation of agenda 2030 demands rethinking our economic models working together and demonstrating earnest solidarity and that it is imperative to advocate for a global economic order that strives for equality and improves the quality of life of those at the lowest development ladder. He added that the LDCs should be afforded the policy space to set out their own priorities and plan and decide on their development and economic models without any preconditions. He added that the DPoA gives us the opportunity to learn from our past together in a collaborative manner and called for improved cooperation and reiterated that the 2030 agenda is at the center of all our work. The Minister looked forward to meeting you all for the second half of the conference in Doha, Qatar in 2023.

**H.E. Olivia Ragnagnewende ROUAMBA, Minister of Foreign Affairs, Regional Cooperation and Burkinabe from Abroad of Burkina Faso** welcomed the adoption of the DPOA and welcomed USG Fatima on her appointment as high representative. She stressed that the serious crises, such as the COVID 19 pandemic have had serious consequences on the economies of the LDCs. She called for a strengthened Global

Partnership that is more robust and can catalyze development, and recognized the role of the UN system as a key partner in achieving this. The Government of Burkina Faso adopted a new development plan which is in line with its various other frameworks and actions. It is estimated that the National Development Plan will require eight 11.8 billion CFA francs, which is not fully financed from the national budget, thus support from partners will be critical. External support is estimated to represent 25% of the budget for the National Development Plan. Given the importance of this plan in a context characterized by a security humanitarian and food crises, Burkina Faso called for solidarity from Member States in the context of south-south and north south cooperation.

**H.E. Mr. Samuel Žbogar, Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs and Minister for Development Cooperation of the Republic of Slovenia** underscored that the DPOA provides a blueprint on how to help the LDCs to achieve the SDGs noting that LDCs belong to the group of countries most affected by the crises. Slovenia is supporting the LDCs through our bilateral and multilateral and EU cooperation frameworks and is looking into strengthening their partnerships with several of the LDCs and finding opportunities to address and overcome persistent challenges to ensure delivery of the DPOA. Slovenia increased humanitarian assistance by 36% and since 2019, tripled its contribution to food security. Throughout development cooperation, we aim to address the root causes of the fragile food systems, especially those deriving from environmental degradation and climate change, including water stress. He informed that Slovenia has substantially increased their ODA contributions and stay committed to continuing this trend.

**Hon. General Jeje Abubakhar Odongo, Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Uganda (delivered by Minister of State for Foreign Affairs of Uganda)** highlighted that the LDCs continue to be disproportionately impacted by the impact of multiple challenges, which undermine their efforts to accelerate the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. Uganda has commenced mainstreaming of the Doha programme of action, international development programs and priorities to ensure its full implementation. Uganda called for more enhanced, renewed and strengthened global partnership to provide the targeted support capacity building needed to achieve the timely implementation of the DPOA. He noted that Uganda will participate at the highest level in Doha in March 2023.

**H.E Rexon Ramufaifa, Minister of National Planning and Development Coordination of Solomon Islands** thanked the international community and development partners for supporting their national priorities. He welcomed the adoption of the DPOA and further noted that for the Solomon Islands, a gap still exists in crucial development enablers, such as infrastructure and connectivity, telecommunications, limited institutional capacity and effectiveness to manage a rapidly changing development contexts influenced by rapid population growth, socio cultural and environmental changes and the fluid global economic environment. He noted that existing and emerging challenges undermine the ability of the Solomon Islands to accelerate the smooth transition and graduate from LDC in December 2024. The Minister called on partners to be responsive and support the delay of the graduation. Additionally, the development of a smooth transition strategy must be guided by evidence of the current socio-economic context of the Solomon Islands, taking into account the new realities and dynamic imposed by COVID-19 and the recent civil unrest. He called



for strengthened and inclusive global partnerships that are genuine remain essential Financing for Development remains a crucial means of implementation for all areas of development. He welcomed the work on the multi-dimensional vulnerability index and look forward to its finalization to allow for vulnerability to be taken into consideration in assessment for accessing development financing. He noted the need for investment and support of the international community for the implementation of the DPoA to be more effective and targeted, moving away from soft technical assistance to concrete and tangible investment that can foster transformative change and help build resilience.

**H.E. Mr. Olof Skoog Permanent Representative of the European Union to the UN** welcomed the adoption of the DPOA and stressed that they need to work very hard to ensure the Conference in Doha becomes concrete regarding its implementation. As a strong sign of the commitment of the European Union, the Council of Minister of the EU adopted a conclusion in support of the EU's relationship with the LDCs. The Council stressed (1) the need to strengthen effective multilateralism and to collectively promote sustainable international partnerships; (2) the European development banks and financial institutions commitments to the implementation of the DPOA; (3) reaffirmed their commitment to collectively meeting the target of 0.2% of gross national income to LDCs by 2030 and (4) effectively addressing the root causes and key drivers of conflict and fragility that affects so many LDCs from climate change to lack of good governance. The "Everything but Arms" scheme grants duty free and quota free access to the EU single market and includes simplified preferential rules and systems as well as robust provisions to support smooth transition of graduated LDCs. As the largest provider of aid for trade, the EU helps LDCs develop their productive capacity and make the best possible use of existing export opportunities and preferential market access through investment assistance and dedicated tools. The EU stressed its support to development of sustainable value change, structural transformation, diversification of economies and mechanisms to meaningfully benefit from regional and global trade. The EU reiterated their unwavering solidarity and support, continued partnership with the LDCs in these challenging times looked forward to further nurturing and developing that partnership in the implementation of the DPoA.

**H.E. Mr. Sanjay Verma, Vice Minister, Ministry of External Affairs, Government of India** emphasized that the priority areas of the DPoA mirrored India's own priorities and the success of this program of action will depend heavily on LDCs ownership and leadership to develop and implement policies according to their national priorities. He further noted that financial responsibility, transparency and viability must be at the forefront when looking at financing options, including financing of infrastructure projects, to avoid imposing further unsustainable debt burdens on already vulnerable communities. He added that it is equally important for project sustainability to be accompanied by skill and technology transfers and that these principles have long been at the heart of India's consultative and demand driven approach to development cooperation at the bilateral and multilateral level. He highlighted the International Solar Alliance and the Coalition for Disaster Resilient Infrastructure as examples of innovative solutions that tackle the challenges of clean and renewable energy and disaster resilience, both pertinent issues for LDCs in order to mitigate the adverse effects of the

disruptions in food and commodity supply chains. India has also been providing financial and food assistance to countries in need.

**H.E. Esen Altug, Ambassador, Director General of Multilateral Economic Affairs, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Republic of Türkiye** expressed concern that world today faces its highest number of conflicts since 1942, with around 2 billion people, mostly from LDCs, living in fragile and conflict zones. She noted that food security in LDCs is a particular concern, due to climate change, COVID-19 and other challenges. She mentioned that Turkey facilitated the Istanbul Deal to ship grain out of Ukraine. She emphasized that LDCs should be able to access low-cost financing and have more liquidity to help their development, pointing out that 60 per cent of LICs are in debt distress or at high risk. On behalf of Turkey, she invited partners to support the Technology Bank for the Least Developed Countries, in order to leverage the power of science, technology and innovation to create structural transformation in LDCs. The ambassador expressed Turkey's support for Qatar and other partners in their efforts to put the recovery of LDCs at the heart of the global agenda.

**H.E Ali Al-Sadiq Ali, Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Sudan** highlighted the importance of this meeting for coordinating views at a very difficult time, as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic. They emphasized that progress on the Sustainable Development Goals has been slow for the LDCs. They explained that nationally, Sudan has set up a process to monitor implementation of the SDGs. The representative noted that Sudan is facing many problems, including political complications and environmental and climate challenges. They called upon the UN and partners to provide necessary assistance at this critical time. They are pleased that Qatar will host the LDC5 Conference and trust it will be important moment for support to the LDCs.

**H.E. Ms. Adaljıza Albertina Xavier Reis Magno, Minister for Foreign Affairs and Cooperation of Timor-Leste** noted that the DPoA priority action areas remain critical as they seek to accelerate economic and social transformation and generate momentum for the decade of action to achieve the SDGs and leaving no one behind. She emphasized that investing in people and fostering productive capacity through science, technology, and innovation will help LDCs overcome economic transformation barriers and transition to more sustainable growth, which will lift people out of extreme poverty. She mentioned that Timor Leste's strategic development plan will help youth gain access to education, reduce poverty and lead to a healthier society. Infrastructure investment for economic growth, private sector growth to support economic diversification and create jobs in agriculture, fisheries, tourism and manufacturing, are all priorities for Timor Leste. The financial and economic reforms involve strengthening the SME sector and removing some constraints to promote private sector growth. She mentioned that international assistance to increase investment in key productive sectors and to deploy financial flows in LDCs is critical. Timor Leste aims to attract foreign direct investment and to support private sector development. The Minister emphasized the importance of regional integration as well as South-South and triangular cooperation in advancing

development in LDCs. She explained that Timor Leste recently co-organized a workshop with UN ESCAP on strengthening the capacity of Asia-Pacific LDCs to achieve the sustainable development goals through structural transformation and regional cooperation.

**Mr. Bharat Raj Paudyal, Foreign Secretary of Nepal** explained that although the international community has implemented programmes of action for decades since 1981, LDCs are still trapped in a vicious cycle of underdevelopment. The challenges of building productive capacities, boosting investment and trade, reducing poverty, and strengthening institutions remain as daunting as they were in the 1980s. He said there is only one way this can change - It is when the international community comes together with more resolve and solidarity, more commitments and actions to address the problems facing the LDCs. He noted this is exactly the vision of the Doha Programme of Action, with a new generation of commitments by the LDCs and the development partners, set to achieving rapid, inclusive and sustainable economic development in the LDCs. The Foreign Secretary emphasized the need to prioritize structural transformation of our economies by building productive capacity based on green recovery through investments in areas of competitive advantage, and that greater international support is more needed than ever before. FDI, Aid for Trade and climate financing need to complement the LDCs' national development efforts. There is a need for renewed and strengthened global partnership to develop resilient and sustainable infrastructure in transportation, communications, energy, information and communications technology, public health, food systems, among others. He reminded the audience that the DPoA recognizes the power of science, technology and innovation to fight against multi-dimensional vulnerabilities. In line with this, the Foreign Secretary underscored that transfer of scientific knowledge and technology to the LDCs must be a top priority. He affirmed that the LDC technology bank should be made an effective conduit for technology transfer to the LDCs'. He also pointed out that the global financial architecture needs to be made just inclusive and equitable. All possible international financial instruments must be used to make the resources and fiscal space available to the LDCs. The Foreign Secretary explained that Nepal is currently undertaking preparations for LDC graduation by 2026, and that they are in a unique situation as they have been recommended for graduation without meeting the income criterion.

**H.E. Mr. Francisco André, Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs and Cooperation of Portugal** reminded the audience that Portugal has always been a strong supporter of LDCs, with many of their priority partner countries being members of the group. He explained they work on bilateral and multilateral fronts through effective partnerships between and among government, public and private sector, alongside civil society and other stakeholders to make sure we find appropriate ways to tackle structural vulnerabilities. During the COVID-19 pandemic, Portugal donated seven million doses of vaccine through COVAX and bilaterally to 17 developing countries, and last year Portugal increased ODA by 4%, with a continued focus on LDCs. The Secretary emphasized that Portugal maintains its cooperation policy focused on the 2030 agenda; the five P's: people; planet; prosperity; peace; and partnership; and aligning its international cooperation with partners in their National Sustainable Development and development strategies, noting that development is a multi-dimensional, nonlinear process. He said that Portugal appreciates the work of the MVI High Level Panel, the

work of OHRLLS in supporting the LDCs, LLDCs and SIDS, and supports their partner LDCs in their graduation process through technical assistance to develop a well-rounded smooth transition strategy. The Secretary concluded that we must focus our attention on innovative financing solutions that go beyond ODA, by combining private capital with public funding and directing them in cooperation with the beneficiary countries to essential sectors in the promotion of sustainable development.

**Permanent Secretary at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, International Cooperation and Gambians Abroad, Ambassador Lang Yabou of the Gambia.**

The Permanent Secretary thanked Malawi for its leadership in LDC affairs, and acknowledged the tireless efforts of the High Representative, her team, and all the experts who continue to engage in the work of the LDCs' joint and collective issues. He emphasized the need to achieve the 2030 agenda and the sustainable development goals, while recognizing the devastating impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic, especially on the most marginalized in the LDCs. He stressed that focus moving forward should be on reducing inequality, promoting inclusive, just societies, and that the nexus between education and development must be realized, with the aim to provide quality education to uplift every member of society, until it is collectively understood by all that quality education is the most important investment towards LDCs' development. Finally, the Permanent Secretary welcomed the adoption of the Doha Programme of Action with renewed hope and a call for adequate funding to ensure its full implementation and that of agenda 2030 Sustainable Development Goals. LDCs need the continued solidarity and support of partners as well as increasing ODA, climate finance and debt cancellation.

**H.E. Stanley K. Kakubo, Minister of Foreign Affairs of Zambia** spoke of his country's commitment to working with the UN to address the challenges of the LDCs, emphasizing the need for a strong partnership between LDCs in mobilizing resources, enhancing productive capacities and structural transformation, as well as enhancing international trade. He reminded the audience that with the backdrop of COVID-19, global challenges around food and fuel security and the impact of climate change, the concrete action plans contained in the Doha Programme of Action are welcome. He called upon development partners and international community to enhance support to the implementation of the DPoA's ambitious agenda in critical areas, particularly supporting LDCs addressed the technology gaps from farming methods, digital connectivity, financial inclusion, as well as technological support in STEM education. The Minister highlighted and expressed desire to build on the development gains achieved so far in Zambia based on the measures taken to restore economic growth in the face of the current macroeconomic economic challenges, including a high debt burden, climate induced droughts, flash floods, and addressing myths and misinformation associated with the COVID 19 pandemic. To do this, Zambia reiterates its call for increased support to least developed countries in areas that are critical to catalyzing development, identifying three particular areas: structural transformation through economic diversification and industrialization to reduce economic vulnerability; enhancing education and skills development, as well as human health for a strong human capital base to drive economic transformation; and enhancing capacities for resource mobilization, to address

the debt burdens and fiscal challenges many LDCs are facing, as well as harnessing alternative financial resources, such as private capital.

**H.E. Dr. Ahmed Bin Mubarak, Foreign Minister of Yemen** congratulated the Under-Secretary General for her appointment and assured her of support from Yemen. He welcomed the adoption of the Doha Programme of Action, a significant accomplishment and a great step towards progress on the Sustainable Development Goals and leaving no one behind, despite the difficult context caused by the pandemic. The Foreign Minister emphasized that the common thread between the LDCs that are still struggling to make progress on the SDGs – conflicts and environmental disasters. He said that the international community should seek innovative solutions for countries facing conflict, to bolster their resilience to man-made or natural disasters. He reminded the audience that poverty rates in Yemen have increased significantly since 2014, and most people need one form or another of humanitarian aid or protection. Their means of resistance has been worn down and people are trying to leave the country. The Foreign Minister spoke of climate change and that it is regrettable that the LDCs are paying the highest price, not only because of their modest resources, but also because they are the least responsible. He insisted on following the principle of common but differentiated responsibility.

**Mr. Phillippe Lacoste, Sustainable Development Director at the French Ministry of Foreign Affairs** agreed with previous speakers who said the current tense time must encourage us to act collectively and address crises as they arise. He highlighted that the pandemic and other crises highlight the multi-dimensional vulnerability of LDCs to external shocks. Mr. Lacoste welcomed the Doha programme of Action as the common roadmap to addressing the current crises and challenges. He expressed France's support for the LDC graduation process and the work of the Office and the Committee on Development Policy to support it. He emphasized the need for solidarity and effectiveness of assistance to LDC, particularly as concessional resources are less available. Mr. Lacoste explained that France's development policy focusing and combating global inequalities is directed towards 19 priority countries, most of which are LDCs, and France continues to allocate 0.2% of their GDP to LDCs. He reiterated France's unwavering support to working with all stakeholders on the ground, in line with SDG 17. Collective work with and for the LDCs will determine our ability to attain the 2030 agenda.

**Ms. Birgit STEVENS, Director of the United Nations Department at the Belgian Federal Public Service Foreign Affairs** emphasized that LDCs bear the brunt of the consequences of climate change, the food crisis, resource scarcity, and inequality, to name a few, despite the fact that they have done little to cause these interconnected crises. She said that for Belgium, it is clear that LDCs will be where the 2030 agenda will succeed or fail, and that Belgium's commitment to LDCs continues both in NY as co-chair of the Group of Friends of LDCs and on the ground where 12 out of their 14 bilateral development cooperation are African LDCs. Ms. Stevens reconfirmed that Belgium's ODA to LDCs has not decreased following the Ukraine crisis.

Belgium's priorities for development cooperation with LDCs include investing in people to eradicate poverty and inequality, setting up and strengthening social protection systems, addressing climate change and environmental degradation, disaster preparedness, scale and quality of climate finance, and supporting LDCs in their smooth graduation from the category. Ms. Stevens closed by expressing Belgium's determination to work in support of the LDCs governments to achieve the objectives set out in the Doha Programme of Action, whether in the multilateral framework in the context of the renewed Africa/EU partnership, or bilaterally with Belgium's partner countries.

**H.E. Maria de Jesus Ferreira, Permanent Representative of the Republic of Angola** told the audience that Angola is in the process of preparing for its graduation, which is scheduled for February 2024. They noted, however, that Angola's graduation will be based only on the income per capita, and the country must continue investing in the other two dimensions. Like many other countries, COVID-19 affected Angola's economy, which had already been fluctuating due to oil prices. The PR emphasized that despite the economic obstacles, the government of Angola continues to make efforts towards the implementation of the smooth transition strategy that will lead to a successful and effective graduation, in line with the national development plan and the sustainable development goals as well. Graduation should be seen as a milestone in the country's social economic development progress and the result of an ongoing effort to address its development gaps and challenges.

The PR laid out Angola's development priorities: the fight against streaming poverty and the achievement of a comprehensive wellbeing for all. To this end, Angola is committed to diversifying its economy, improving health services, education, housing development and intrapreneurship. In addition, Angola has sought to align its financial sector with the guidelines of the many international financial institutions to ensure sustainability, resilience and inclusion of national development policies. The PR of Angola thanked their development partners, in particular the United Nations system and the office of the Resident Coordinator in Angola.

**H. E. Mr. Tom Woodroffe, ECOSOC Ambassador, United Kingdom** spoke of intertwined economic, environmental, education, health and humanitarian crises which are on the rise, and the impact of these challenges are not equally felt, and that LDCs feel them the most acutely. Thus, action and partnership are critical. The implementation of the Doha programme of action and the upcoming LDC5 Conference are both essential opportunities as we all work together to build resilience for LDCs. Decisions made by leaders of LDC5 could transform the lives of 1 billion people and really help us collectively ensure that no one is left behind by 2030.

Mr. Woodroffe assured the audience that the UK remains very much committed to supporting LDCs to achieve the SDGs as set out in the UK's new international development strategy. That strategy makes clear that the UK remains committed to protecting ODA for low-income countries and Africa. The UK continue to very much support the global goal of providing at least 2% of GNI to the LDCs and is also committed to continuing to address the causes and impacts of climate change and implementing the Glasgow climate pact, across

mitigation, adaptation and resilience and financing. The UK will continue to press all partners to deliver the Glasgow climate finance commitments and use disaster risk financing instruments to transfer more risk from vulnerable individuals and countries to capital markets.

The UK trading scheme will enhance opportunities for LDCs looking to trade with the UK. The UK will also mobilize \$40 billion investments over the next five years with British Investment Partnerships and work with the international financial institutions and the multilateral development banks to increase access to concessional financing. The UK will also support countries in implementing international tax rules and strengthening their domestic tax policies.

**Mr. Ayele Lire, Director General for International Organization Affairs, Ethiopia** outlined the multiple and unprecedented challenges LDCs are facing, due to the pandemic, climate change, and the food, energy, and fuel crises. Ensuring the full recovery of LDCs demands a paradigm shift and reinvigorated international partnership. The representative said that Ethiopia is committed to integrating the Doha Programme of Action into its national development plans. They emphasized that despite the current challenges, Ethiopia has shown political commitment and resilience to continue to implement its 10-year development plan which prioritizes poverty reduction, job creation, structural transformation, and peace and governance issues, among others. Additionally, Ethiopia continues to make innovative and integrated initiatives to tackle the impacts of climate change, including by successfully planting 25 million trees in its landmark green legacy initiative by intensifying its political and economic reforms.

The representative highlighted that Ethiopia has launched a National Dialogue and introduced concrete peacemaking proposals, beginning with rehabilitation and restoration programs. It also opened its financial market to foreign investment. As a result, Ethiopia has seen robust economic growth, high export earnings, created 3 million jobs in a year, and mobilized significant domestic resources to finance its programs. The representative called on the international community to: fulfill ODA commitments with a special priority for LDCs; deliver on climate finance to support mitigation and adaptation programs; cancel and restructure debt burdens; and give preferential market access to LDCs. In closing, the representative emphasized the huge development potential of LDCs to contribute to global development, therefore a reinvigorated global partnership that respects sovereignty and national ownership, as well as a multilateral system that works effectively for the most vulnerable countries is required.

**H.E. Dr. Dipu Moni, MP, Honourable Minister of Education of Bangladesh** welcomed the adoption of the Doha Programme of Action and the recent EU Council Conclusions in support of the DPoA. The LDC5 Conference in March is a great opportunity to galvanize the political momentum and global solidarity to implement the DPoA. She mentioned the risk of graduating LDCs slipping downwards on their development track and urged the continuation of LDC specific support measures before and after graduation. She called upon WTO members to deliver on concrete measure recognizing the challenges of graduated LDCs, as

expressed in the 12<sup>th</sup> LDC Ministerial Declaration of the WTO. The Minister called upon UN Agencies to create more opportunities in STEM for youth in LDCs, through the establishment of an online university, as discussed in the DPoA. She emphasized that LDCs need enhanced global support by means of ODA, FDI and enhanced trade opportunities. The targets of ODA providers, in particular to provide at least 0.2% ODA or DNI to least developed countries, must be met. She added that the UN system, the World Bank Group and other MDBs need to allocate additional grants and concessional lending to LDCs to meet the SDG needs. Finally, the private sector also has a pivotal role to play to foster investment and growth in the LDCs.

**H.E. Mr. DAI Bing, Ambassador and Deputy Permanent Representative of the People's Republic of China** expressed congratulations for the convening of the LDC Ministerial meeting as well as the successful meeting in March at which the Doha Programme of Action was adopted. In order to implement the DPoA, the international community should adhere to multilateralism, form synergies by strengthening partnerships to support LDCs in addressing the multi-dimensional challenges and achieving the SDGs. He said development partners should fulfill their ODA commitments and increase technical and financial support to the LDCs, and UN development agencies should further enhance their fundraising capabilities, expand funding channels and strengthen cooperation with international financial institutions to ensure the stability of development resources. The DPR also emphasized that South-South Cooperation, as a complement to North-South Cooperation, has a role to play.

He spoke of how China proposed the Global Development Initiative and created the group of friends of the initiative, which has been joined by 63 countries 19 of which are LDCs. In June this year, President Xi Jinping announced a high-level dialogue on global development that China would invest an additional 1 billion US dollars to integrate and upgrade the South-South cooperation Assistance Fund into the global development and South-South Cooperation Fund. At the ministerial meeting of the group of friends of the GDI held in mid-September, China announced the first batch of projects in the GDI project portfolio whose beneficiaries are mostly LDCs. The DPR finished by assuring the audience that China is ready to work with the international community to take the preparations for LDC5 part two as an opportunity to build consensus, bridge differences, adopt a forward-looking approach, uphold the leadership of the LDCs for their own development, and meet the goal of leaving no country or no one behind.

**H.E. Mr. Tithiarun Mao, Ambassador and Deputy Permanent Representative of the Kingdom of Cambodia** emphasized that despite the ongoing crisis, Cambodia is committed to working toward graduation at the the appropriate time. Cambodia believes that there must be an adequate transition period after meeting graduation criteria, that trade and economic measures should not be imposed against LDCs, and that developed countries should continue to provide LDCs with trade preferences, concessional loans and technical and financial assistance to ensure they will firmly make further progress without falling back into LDC status. He said Cambodia is committed to implementing the DPoA in line with their national strategic development vision and with the 2030 agenda in order to build a robust, resilient economy and to fulfill their vision to become an upper middle-income country by 2030 and high-income nation by 2050. The DPR



concluded by saying Cambodia is looking forward to working with all stakeholders to contribute to the LDCs collective ambition.

**Mr. Magnus Lennartsson, Deputy Permanent Representative, Permanent Mission of Sweden to the United Nations** emphasized that Sweden stands in solidarity with the LDCs. As has already been stated, LDCs are particularly strongly affected by the state of the world today. The effects of the climate and planetary crisis is already playing out to see an already growing food crisis as dramatic dramatically worsened as a result of Russia's aggression against Ukraine. He reminded the room that the 2030 agenda is the blueprint towards the future, and we need to get back on track. He said that as donors, we need to do our part - Fulfill the funding compact in place for more than 15 years. Sweden provides 1% of GNI to ODA, and 1/3 of that is devoted to support LDCs. Some 35% of these contributions go via the UN and the DPR would like to echo the Netherlands to say that core and flexible funding is the best way to help the UN. In country, bilaterally, Sweden's support is delivered by SIDA. He explained that Sweden engages in many areas, but they have seen particular success in strengthening gender equality and women's rights and empowerment, something that has been important in their own development journey. Sweden looks forward to continuing its engagement with LDCs and partners in this process.

**Mr. Shu NAKAGAWA, Minister, Permanent Mission of Japan to the United Nations** emphasized that the implementation of the Doha Programme of Action must not be delayed, if we are to achieve the SDGs and build back better from COVID-19. Mr. Nakagawa said that Japan would like to stress the importance of Human Security, given the increasing interdependence of people. He reminded the audience that Japan's Prime Minister said earlier the same week that people deserve to enjoy a high quality of life, free from anxiety and fear. The concept of human security hasn't changed but we face new challenges. Mr Nakagawa said that Japan is going to actively contribute to the DPoA and reiterated Japan's commitment to LDC5 and continued support for LDCs.

### **Malawi as LDC Chair**

**H.E. Ms. Nancy Tembo, Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Malawi**, as Chair of the LDC Group, led the adoption of the LDC Ministerial Declaration. She thanked all members of the group for extending the tenure of the current LDC Group Bureau until the conclusion of LDC5. She also congratulated Nepal for their election as the next chair of the group and Bangladesh, Burkina Faso, Malawi, Zambia, Solomon Islands and Tuvalu for their elections as the vice chairs of the coordination Bureau of the LDCs. She closed by saying Malawi and the LDC Group are truly inspired by the strong commitment of support, especially by our development partners.