



**Statement by Mr. Eric Willemaers, Minister Counsellor,  
Permanent Representation of Belgium to the United Nations,  
LDC5 – part 1, March 17, 2022**

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Chair,  
Excellencies,  
Ladies and gentlemen,

Belgium align itself with the statement made by the EU.

Belgium welcomes the adoption of this new Programme of Action for the least developed countries, the Doha Programme of Action. LDCs remain a strong political priority for the Belgian development cooperation policy. This is true both in multilateral forums, where we currently also co-chair the Group of Friends of LDCs, together with Turkey; and bilaterally, since twelve of the fourteen partner countries of our bilateral cooperation are LDCs. Let me also remind you our capital Brussels hosted the 3<sup>rd</sup> United Nations Conference on the Least Developed Countries in 2001, where the Brussels Programme of Action was adopted.

This new Doha Programme of Action comes at a crucial time for the international community and the 2030 Agenda. Just as we were beginning to see the end of the Covid pandemic, we are once again confronted with a global disruptive event, threatening and further impeding the achievement of the SDGs.

Apart from the horrible images and heart-breaking stories we see and hear from civilians dying and people fleeing from bombs and missiles, the Russian military aggression against Ukraine has a dramatic impact on the commodities markets and we already see the supply of raw materials to the most vulnerable countries going down and prices going up. We know that in times of crisis, the most disadvantaged countries always pay the highest price.

Bearing in mind this new realities, our common structural challenges and the principle of leaving no one behind, Belgium will support the full implementation of the Doha Program of Action. We will pay particular attention to the first chapter: "Investing in people in LDCs: Eradicating poverty and building capacity to leave no one behind".

The gender, youth and social protection dimensions entailed in this chapter are crucial to build an inclusive and sustainable development. We will also pay particular attention to measures aimed at vaccine equity and the development of local capacities for the production of vaccines and medicines, in accordance with our own political commitments.

Our country is looking forward to the second part of the LDC5 conference to be organized next year in Doha by Qatar, while we can already start with the implementation of the Programme of Action.

I thank you.