



***5<sup>th</sup> United Nations Conference on the Least Developed Countries***

**EU Statement**

**delivered by**

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**Head of the EU Delegation to the UN**

***(check against delivery)***

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## **Chair, Excellencies, ladies and gentlemen**

I have the honour to speak on behalf of the European Union and its Member States, as we gather here in these dire times, marked by global conflict and dramatic repercussions that will be felt around the globe.

The Candidate Countries Turkey, North Macedonia<sup>\*</sup>, Montenegro<sup>\*</sup> and Albania<sup>\*</sup>, the country of the Stabilisation and Association Process and potential candidate Bosnia and Herzegovina, as well as Iceland, Ukraine, the Republic of Moldova, and Georgia align themselves with this statement.

At the outset, let me emphasize the European Union's and its Member States' unwavering support to and solidarity with the Least Developed Countries.

As we have consistently stressed, the European Union and its Member States have a longstanding tradition of prioritising our partnerships with the LDCs. The LDCs represent the litmus test for the international community in making good on its promise of 'leaving no one behind'.

Today should mark a celebration, a positive milestone to express our solidarity and support. It should be a time for renewed determination - of the multilateral community - to counter the struggles and

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<sup>\*</sup> *The Republic of North Macedonia, Montenegro, Serbia and Albania continue to be part of the Stabilisation and Association Process.*

inequalities that LDCs continue to face, and that have been exacerbated by the pandemic. And to double down, in partnership, to allow the LDCs to recover from these setbacks and achieve the SDGs.

However, the events of the last weeks have cast a dark and threatening cloud over us all. The EU and its Member States condemn in the strongest possible terms Russia's unprovoked and unjustified military invasion of Ukraine, with the involvement of Belarus. Not only do these actions grossly violate international law and the UN Charter and undermine international security and global stability. These actions will carry far-reaching, dire and dramatic consequences not only for Ukraine and its neighbouring countries.

The repercussions of Russia's aggression against Ukraine will be felt – and are already being felt – all across the world. The price shocks on fuel, food and other critical necessities have already emerged. What in some parts of the world is being experienced as price shocks, risks in LDCs translating into acute shortages of food and other necessities. In today's interconnected world the global impacts of this war cannot be overstated.

Unfortunately, unavoidably, impacts will be acute also - if not especially - for the LDCs. Here is yet another reason for Russia to abide by Resolution ES 11/1 [*Aggression against Ukraine*] and immediately

cease its use of force across Ukraine and withdraw its military forces from Ukraine.

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In this very sombre context, the EU and its Member States welcome the adoption today of the Doha Programme of Action for the LDCs and reiterate their commitment to its implementation together with partners.

More than ever we need to keep our focus on those who need it the most, those left furthest behind.

More than ever we stress the importance of promotion and protection of the **universal values of democracy, good governance, the rule of law and human rights** as preconditions for sustainable development and stability.

In implementing the programme we will call for greater efforts to promote access to **social protection, universal health coverage**, as well as timely and equitable access to safe, effective, quality and affordable **COVID-19 vaccines, diagnostics, therapeutics and health technologies** in LDCs.

**Quality education, gender equality and youth participation** will be at the very core of our ambitions.

We will continue our efforts for **resource mobilisation**, as well as boost sustainable **public and private investment**, and support LDCs in **debt relief and debt treatment**.

We need to step up and prioritise building of **long-term resilience, state- and peacebuilding**.

And while we must ensure that we support graduating LDCs to ensure their smooth transition and sustainable graduation, the numerous LDC in situations **of fragility or affected by conflict** will require particular and sustained international engagement.

**Chair, Excellencies, let me conclude** on the poignant observation that while responsibility for their own development and implementation of the Doha Programme of Action lies primarily with the LDCs, **stronger partnerships, international collaboration and dialogue will be at the heart of implementation of this Programme of Action.**

And let me assure you once more here today: the EU will continue to stand with the LDCs, extend its support and solidarity and actively work to strengthen its partnerships with – and in the interest of - the LDCs.

**We call on all members to do the same.**

Thank you