



REPUBLIC OF MALAWI

SPEECH

BY

HIS EXCELLENCY

DR LAZARUS MCCARTHY CHAKWERA

PRESIDENT OF THE REPUBLIC OF MALAWI

AND CHAIRPERSON OF LEAST DEVELOPED COUNTRIES

DURING

THE ADOPTION OF THE DOHA PROGRAMME OF ACTION

FOR LDCs

AT

THE UNITED NATIONS HEADQUARTERS

NEW YORK, USA

17TH MARCH 2022

Your Excellency, Sheikh Mohammed bin Abdulrahman Al-Thani, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs of the State of Qatar and President of the Fifth United Nations Conference on Least Developed Countries (UN LDC 5);

Mr. Antonio Guterres, Secretary-General of the United Nations;

Ms. Heidi Schroderus-Fox, Secretary-General of the UN LDC 5 Conference;

Excellencies;

Distinguished Delegates;

Ladies and Gentlemen.

As a global community, we are living at a time of great consequence that demands great courage. A confluence of global forces is marching against humanity at a frightening speed and pushing us towards calamity.

For starters, our societies and economies have been under attack from climate change events happening in quicker succession than ever before. My own country of Malawi is a case in point, for it suffered deep wounds in 2019 at the hands of Cyclones Idai and Kenneth, and while those wounds are still fresh, we have just been attacked again by Tropical Storms Ana and Gombe in the last seven weeks, leaving a trail of destruction and death. And if climate change is doing this to Least Developed Countries that are inland, imagine what it is doing to those that are coastal, like Mozambique, Madagascar, Bangladesh, Comoros, Haiti, and Myanmar.

This suffocating onslaught is happening while we as LDCs are already choking from the unsustainable debt burden we bear, which is racing towards the 1 trillion-dollar mark. It is happening while we as LDCs are already choking from the socioeconomic devastation caused by

Covid-19 pandemic, which has increased poverty levels in our countries by 35% in the past two years. It is happening while we as LDCs are already choking from countries in the global north adopting Covid-19 containment measures that disproportionately disadvantage LDCs, including inequalities in vaccine distribution, travel restrictions, and access to global markets and supply chains. And now, it is happening while we as LDCs are also choking from the rising cost of goods triggered by the war in Eastern Europe.

As you can see, the current global context could not be more pressing. It demands a collaborative, collective, and courageous response. It demands the adoption of the Doha Programme of Action, for it is our best opportunity for charting a recovery path for the world's most vulnerable countries. Action is our only hope.

Granted, the Doha Programme of Action is ambitious, but it has to be. Surely it is not too much to ask that we have a Programme whose ambition is to show solidarity with the world's poorest people. Surely it is not too much to ask that we have a Programme whose ambition

is to accelerate sustainable development in countries where poverty levels have become an unsustainable burden for the global economy. Surely it is not too much to ask that we have a Programme whose ambition is to achieve the 2030 Agenda for sustainable development in this Decade of Action.

We therefore insist that the adoption of the Doha Programme of Action is a must. It is a must because it contains measures for eradicating our people's poverty. It is a must because it contains measures for ending our people's hunger and malnutrition. It is a must because it contains measures for making internet access universal, for diversifying our economies, for increasing our exports and trade, and for setting a benchmark for ODA. It is a must because it includes the establishment of an online university, an international investment support center, and food stockholding for enabling LDCs to build back better.

In fact, the very reason our nations are brought together under the banner of LDCs is to move together towards the kind of shared prosperity that will one day make the

term LDCs obsolete. So the Doha Programme of Action is a must because it contains measures for enabling LDCs meet the criteria for graduation.

But for the Doha Programme of Action to succeed in achieving this goal, it needs implementation, implementation, implementation. The implementing actions that we take over the next ten years, along with strong monitoring mechanisms at global and regional levels, are foundational and critical. I therefore stand here on behalf of all LDCs to pledge our total commitment to the full implementation of the Programme of Action, as well as to call on our development partners to respond in kind.

Specifically, I call on the entire UN system for support, which must be rendered coherently and consistently, including the support of UN Resident Coordinators and Country Teams in the countries where the target populations are domiciled. I call upon the UN leadership to strengthen the Office of the High Representative for the LDC, LLDC, and SIDS, for not only has this office been instrumental in driving the progress we have made,

but its workload as we move towards implementation has increased. And I call upon the United Nations Development System to support efforts to implement the Programme at all levels. Crucially, I call upon our development partners to go beyond fulfilling their commitments and also be responsive to the pressing needs that are created within LDCs by unforeseen events.

But as much as we need support going forward, I must hasten to add that we are grateful for the support we have had thus far. Even the support that Malawi has received in chairing the LDCs has been immense. So, on behalf of all 46 LDCs, I say thank you to our partners, to the President of the Conference, to the people and Government of Qatar, to the Representatives of Bangladesh and Canada, and to the Secretary General of the Conference and the entire UN Secretariat. Your support gives us confidence that the best is yet to come, especially as we look forward to the adoption of the Political Declaration in Doha next year.

THANK YOU FOR YOUR ATTENTION.