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Statement at the 20th Session of the Committee for Development Policy

New York, 12 March 2018

Mr. Chairman
Distinguished Members of the Committee for Development Policy,
Madame President of ECOSOC
Colleagues,

It is a great pleasure for me to join you here today. On behalf of DESA, let me extend my high appreciation to Members of the CDP for your valuable contribution over the past year and my high expectation to you for your continued support to DESA and to the 2030 Agenda.

As the Secretariat of the United Nations supporting the implementation of the 2030 Agenda, UNDESA plays a key role in monitoring progress towards the SDGs. By providing a broad range of analytical products, policy advice and technical assistance, UN DESA effectively translates global commitments in the economic, social and environmental spheres into national policies and actions. Over the decades, our policy analysis and recommendations, including those by the Committee for Development Policy, have helped address many of the world's most pressing socio-economic issues.

Over the past year, the general economic backdrop has improved: the global economy is growing by 3 per cent, the highest growth rate since 2011. About two thirds of all countries are seeing stronger growth this year compared to last year; and steady global growth of 3 per cent is forecast to continue beyond 2018.

As encouraging as this is, there remain significant challenges and risks that have wider social and environmental relevance. The costs and benefits of globalization have not been equitably distributed among countries or within countries. Inequality of income within countries has widened in both developed and developing countries. Most importantly for your deliberations on the LDCs, few of the least developed countries (LDCs) are expected to reach the Sustainable Development Goal target for GDP growth of "at least 7 per cent" in the near term. Approaching this target will require higher levels of investment in many LDCs. It will require mobilizing financial resources through various combinations of domestic and international, public and private sources. Progress in many of the LDCs is hindered by institutional deficiencies, inadequate basic infrastructure, high levels of exposure to weather-related shocks and natural disasters, as well as challenges related to security and political

uncertainty. These barriers must be addressed to ensure that available finance is channelled efficiently towards productive investment.

Dear Colleagues,

Despite these major challenges, some LDCs have made tremendous progress. Graduation from the category is a testament to a country's long term socio-economic progress. Graduation marks the achievement of a foundation for sustainable development. This year we welcome the achievements of some LDCs in increasing income, improving human assets and reducing their vulnerabilities. An event to mark the graduation of countries from LDC status will be held on 15 March at UN Headquarters. As the ECOSOC President noted, 2018 has the potential to be a momentous year, possibly doubling the number of LDC graduates.

While graduation is a remarkable accomplishment, LDC graduates still face development constraints and challenges. The relative improvement in their situation does not mean that they are ready to forego international support. The international development community should engage with LDCs to identifying ways to smooth the impact of graduation. In this regard, I am encouraged to see that you will discuss options for the design and implementation of an incentives package for graduated and graduating LDCs.

One of the most significant changes brought about by the 2030 Agenda, is the affirmation that, if anyone is left behind, our development is not sustainable. That is why the 2030 Agenda includes a commitment to leave no one behind. That is why we need to work together to find solutions that are sustainable and durable, and that recognize our interdependence. I am encouraged that this topic is again part of your discussions and of your work programme. I also welcome that one of your sessions on this topic is "open" and will receive valuable inputs also from other DESA divisions and beyond.

Distinguished Members of the Committee,

Half a century after its inception, the CDP remains at the forefront of international development thinking. In the context of the current reform discussions and the ongoing implementation of the 2030 Agenda, I believe the CDP can play an even greater role in deliberations at the United Nations. For example, the policy advice you are providing this year on specific cross-cutting issues within the overall themes being considered by ECOSOC and the HLPF is extremely relevant and useful. You may wish to consider providing similar advice each year based on the themes under discussion. This closer involvement with ECOSOC could make the contribution of the CDP even more valuable, and would justify a greater investment in targeting its research. The CDP could also continue to provide its expert views on other contributions, including those dealing with the voluntary national reviews.

Furthermore, one of the main activities of the CDP refers to advising ECOSOC and the GA on matters pertaining to the LDCs. This could conceivably be extended to other countries with specific challenging situations, such as land-locked developing countries and small-island developing states, and to consider the special situation of those afflicted with extreme and potentially existential vulnerability. In this regard, for countries that are inadequately

supported by existing measures, the Committee could discuss the creation of a package of special support measures to address this vulnerability.

Dear colleagues,

In the process of the implementation of the 2030 Agenda, which only has 13 years left, more attention should be given to LDCs and SIDs, though SDGs are universal goals for all. We shall bear this in mind.

Dear Colleagues,

I look forward to the CDP continuing to play a critical role in our discussions and deliberations at the United Nations, and exploring ways to enhance your role and maximize the benefit the global community gains from your expertise and advise.

I wish you have a successful meeting.

Thank you.