



ECOSOC

United Nations Economic and Social Council

TAKING ACTION TO IMPROVE LIVES

Annual Ministerial Meeting of the Least Developed Countries

Remarks by

H.E. Ms. Mona Juul

Permanent Representative of Norway and President of the Economic and Social Council

New York, 26 September 2019

Ministers,
Excellencies,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

I am grateful to have the opportunity to speak at the Least Developed Countries (LDCs) Annual Ministerial Meeting. Our success in achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) will depend in no small part on progress made in your countries.

The UN realised long ago that some countries are at greater risk of being left behind in the development process. It defined the category of Least Developed Countries in 1971. From the outset it was clear that being an LDC is not a matter of income only. Rather, it always was and still is based on a holistic understanding of development. It reflects social progress as well as economic and environmental vulnerabilities.



SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS
17 GOALS TO TRANSFORM OUR WORLD

[facebook.com/UNECOSOC](https://www.facebook.com/UNECOSOC)

twitter.com/UNECOSOC

[youtube.com/UNECOSOC](https://www.youtube.com/UNECOSOC)



ECOSOC

United Nations Economic and Social Council

TAKING ACTION TO IMPROVE LIVES

The discussions at the SDG Summit this week confirmed this. We recognize that LDCs are confronted by serious challenges that can derail successful implementation of the 2030 Agenda.

LDCs continue to face severe impacts from climate change, even though they are least responsible for greenhouse gas emissions. Access to development finance remains extremely difficult for many LDCs. At the same time, we recognize that the LDCs rely more on external financing than most other countries. Armed conflict rampant in so many parts of the world, also hinders too many LDCs in making progress towards sustainable development.

But over the last two decades, we have seen a great change.

Many LDCs have implemented successful development policies. This was clear from some of the Voluntary National Reviews presented at the High-level Political Forum on Sustainable Development since 2016. Many LDCs have adapted the SDGs' targets to their national policy priorities.

As a result, an increasing number of LDCs have graduated or are approaching graduation from the LDC category. This is a cause for celebration. LDCs can overcome the most severe impediments to



SUSTAINABLE
DEVELOPMENT GOALS
17 GOALS TO TRANSFORM OUR WORLD

facebook.com/UNECOSOC

twitter.com/UNECOSOC

youtube.com/UNECOSOC



ECOSOC

United Nations Economic and Social Council

TAKING ACTION TO IMPROVE LIVES

sustainable development by their own efforts and with the help of the international community.

At the same time, LDC graduation often raises anxiety for falling outside the ODA criteria. Enhancing graduation support should be essential to reduce such concerns. UN entities and development partners are stepping up their efforts. The recently established UN Task Force is a good example of improved support and coordination efforts already taking place. The establishment of the Technology Bank for LDCs is also a milestone and it should be supported.

Next year, ECOSOC will consider concrete proposals from the Committee for Development Policy, our experts on LDC issues. These proposals aim to facilitate the smooth transition from the LDC category, improve the graduation process and deliver more coordinated and dedicated support.

Excellencies, dear friends,

LDCs and your partners have embarked on the preparations for a new programme of action, to be adopted at the 5th LDC conference in Qatar in 2021. This will be an important opportunity to reaffirm the centrality of LDCs in the UN. We need to seize the opportunity to agree on an ambitious



SUSTAINABLE
DEVELOPMENT GOALS
17 GOALS TO TRANSFORM OUR WORLD

facebook.com/UNECOSOC

twitter.com/UNECOSOC

youtube.com/UNECOSOC



ECOSOC

United Nations Economic and Social Council

TAKING ACTION TO IMPROVE LIVES

LDC Action programme that is fully aligned with the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

We must join in collective efforts to further advance the situation of LDCs in order to truly leave no one behind.

I wish you a very successful meeting.