

**Remarks by H.E. Ms. Rabab Fatima, Permanent Representative of Bangladesh to the United Nations at the Ambassadorial Retreat in Preparation for LDC5**

**Working Dinner on Thursday, 21 October 2021(18:30-21:00)**

**Ambassador Alya Al-Thani, Permanent Representative of Qatar, the host of LDC5**

**Ambassador Perks Ligoya, Permanent Representative of Malawi and Chair of the LDCs**

**Ambassador Bob Rae, Permanent Representative of Canada, Co-Chair of LDC5 PrepCom**

**USG and High Representative, Courtenay Rattray**

**UNDP Associate Administrator, Usha Rao-Monari**

**Excellencies, Distinguished Colleagues and Dear Friends**

Good evening to you all.

It's great to be here. I am very happy to see such a large presence of Ambassadors here. This speaks of the high importance that you all attach to the LDC5 Conference and the Doha Programme of Action. [That is very reassuring.]

We are now fast approaching the final leg of our preparations for LDC5. The expectations from this retreat is high. Tonight, and tomorrow are of critical

importance to move our discussions forward. We hope to get clarity on some of the deliverables in the draft Programme of Action to help reach consensus on these issues. I sincerely hope that we can seize this opportunity to agree on some of the concrete deliverables, which have been identified by the LDC group in the draft Doha Programme of Action.

I thank USG Courtenay Rattray and his team for bringing us together and making good arrangements for the retreat.

I thank Ambassador Alya Al-Thani for her personal commitment and engagement in the process. Her country's hospitality is legendary; and therefore, it comes as no surprise to know that the State of Qatar is going to support the participation of 14 representatives from each of our 46 LDCs. This is setting a new record. But thank you [dear Alya]; this would ensure good participation from the LDCs, of all major stakeholders. We also hope to see highest level participation from our development partners, especially from the Friends of LDCs in Doha.

**Excellencies, Dear Colleagues,**

Our preparations for Doha 22 are well underway. We have concluded the second round of consultations on the Draft Doha Programme of Action. There was good participation and engagement by delegations; and we have taken careful note of all positions and proposals put forward. I must thank all delegations for their constructive engagement on the revised draft.

I would like to share that there are important converging points for moving forward with our shared objective of an ambitious Programme of Action. Everyone recognized the extraordinary situations that LDCs are going through due to the pandemic. I have also seen a sense of urgency for taking actions on all fronts to help the LDCs build back better and more resilient from the COVID-19 pandemic.

However, I would also like to highlight that there are significant divergences about how we are going to achieve these broad objectives. There are differences of views on the policies and measures that are required at the national and international levels at this critical time.

We would need to work hard to bridge those gaps, especially now that we are at the last lap of our negotiations. **As USG Courtenay and Ambassador Aliya have also said,** we have very little time to wrap-up our negotiations; we expect to have an agreed text by mid-December. I really hope that we can use the time and opportunity of this retreat, to carry forward our discussions, and find some common grounds.

We are reaching that critical phase of negotiations, where we would need to engage among the key negotiators, informally and constructively, to bridge the gap on the difficult issues.

At our end, the missions of Bangladesh and Canada, our experts are now working on the compilation of the inputs that we received from different delegations. We aim to convene informal expert level meetings beginning from

the first week of November. I would request the Secretariat to support us in making a compilation of the issues and paragraphs where we have difficulties, in each of the thematic areas. I encourage our experts to make every effort to narrow down their gaps on those issues.

I take this opportunity to call upon all my fellow PRs present to provide necessary instructions and guidance to their experts to move the negotiations in a constructive manner. They may need some push and directions from you. The development partners, the donor missions, have the most important role to play in demonstrating their flexibility and offer their best support to LDCs in the spirit of solidarity and partnerships. [Amb. Bob Rae] Bob and I, are here to support you in every respect.

### **Excellencies, Dear Colleagues,**

I once again commend Ambassador Ligoya, his expert (Tamanda) as well as the core drafting team of LDCs for presenting an excellent draft of the Programme of Action. It represents the aspirations of LDCs and lays out a concrete set of action agenda for the international community to bring about transformative development in the lives and livelihoods of the people in the LDCs. And now more than ever, as they grapple with the unprecedented challenges brought on by the pandemic, undoing the gains made over the past decade.

We should try our best to ensure that we maintain the integrity of the original proposals as much as possible, while fully respecting the concerns and proposals made by the partner countries.

## **Excellencies, Dear Colleagues,**

The uncertainties, disruptions caused by the Covid-19 pandemic, remain; even deepening. The LDCs have been disproportionately impacted by the pandemic. Their health and education systems are overwhelmed, productivity is disrupted, food security is threatened. The key sources of their external financing, namely export earnings, tourism, and remittances have been seriously affected. Their recovery efforts remain hugely uncertain. Vaccination situation remains precarious; they are facing major obstacles to get access to vaccine. Only around 2 per cent of their population are vaccinated so far. The vaccine crisis will imperil recovery efforts. It must be addressed with real urgency.

Against this backdrop, LDC5 provides us with a huge opportunity. It is uniquely positioned and aptly timed to agree on a global compact of partnership between LDCs and their development partners to tackle current and future challenges and shocks; build resilience, capacity and self-reliance.

Let me conclude by reminding ourselves that there is a huge responsibility on us to deliver. To deliver a POA that will make a difference. And we are all aware that there is an urgency to deliver. I am confident and optimistic that we will deliver; that we will come up with a document that will be impactful; transformative; and will help the LDCs to turn the corner not only from the current crisis, but for the long term, from their inherent structural deficiencies towards a pathway to sustainable development, resilience and prosperity.

I thank you all.