



BRAZIL

Africa Regional Review Meeting

Preparations for the Fifth UN Conference on the Least Developed Countries

**Statement by Ambassador Ronaldo Costa Filho
Permanent Representative of Brazil to the United Nations**

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Mr. Vice-President of Malawi, Saulos Chilima,

Distinguished Ministers and Heads of Delegation,

Excellencies,

Allow me to express my satisfaction at joining the Africa Regional Review Meeting. This event is an important part of the preparations for the Fifth UN Conference on the Least Developed Countries.

As a member of the Group of Friends of LDCs, Brazil attaches great importance to our relationship with LDC partners. For the past decade, Brazil has contributed to the development of LDCs through the provision of South-South cooperation, with an aim to foster sustainable development through human and institutional capacity-building.

Cooperation projects have flourished in a wide array of areas, including agriculture, education, health, strengthening of local markets and technical cooperation, especially with partners such as Angola, Guinea-Bissau, Haiti, Mozambique, and Sao Tome and Principe. We have also celebrated fruitful projects in the cotton industry with Benin, Burkina Faso, Chade, and Mali.

Such initiatives have always been implemented as a response to the development priorities of our LDC partners. The relevance and importance of South-South cooperation cannot be overstated.

Despite our common efforts in the past decade, we note that many targets in the Istanbul Programme of Action were not achieved. This puts LDCs in a challenging situation to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals by 2030, especially in the current context of global recession, health emergency and growing food insecurity.

The Fifth UN Conference on LDCs comes at a timely moment. A new programme of action will be needed for the 1 billion people that currently live in LDCs — that is, 14% of the world population. Thematic priori-

ties for this document should include (i) science, technology and innovation; (ii) agriculture; and (iii) international trade.

As for the first of these issues, innovation will only thrive if LDCs have proper technological capabilities. In particular, access to digital technologies will be key in enabling LDC firms to participate in the global digital economy. This should go hand-in-hand with business and managerial capabilities, data management and dynamic marketing capabilities.

As regards agriculture, this sector accounts for more than 20% of the GDP in LDCs. The importance of agriculture for employment is especially strong in African LDCs and Haiti, where agriculture generates as much as 62% of jobs. Because of the centrality of agriculture in LDCs, agricultural transformation with enhanced productivity and efficiency can be the quickest path to poverty eradication and inclusive development. This becomes even more important in the current scenario of growing world population and increasing food insecurity and malnutrition.

LDCs have not improved their participation in world trade during the Istanbul Programme of Action, due to unfavourable commodity market conditions, according to the latest UNCTAD report. Efforts to diversify trade and strengthen infrastructure could be key in boosting this area. In addition, we must ensure that supply chains keep functioning. Unfortunately, we have witnessed, since the onset of the pandemic, trade-restrictive measures applied to agricultural products, emergency medical equipment, and now in vaccines.

Finally, the new programme of action could also set graduation strategies that ensure a smooth transition for LDCs. How a country graduates is as important as when it graduates. Support for LDCs' progress towards graduation will be key, in order to overcome the unfortunate fact that so far only six countries have graduated.

Allow me to conclude my remarks by reaffirming the importance that my Government attached to the Fifth UN Conference on LDCs and its preparatory process. I am confident that this Regional Review will provide valuable inputs for the next meetings of the Preparatory Committee, in New York, on our way towards a new programme of action for LDCs.

I thank you.