



Remarks

by

Ms. Heidi Schroderus-Fox

Acting High Representative

**for the Least Developed Countries, Landlocked Developing Countries
and Small Island Developing States**

Closing Remarks

UNHQ, GA Hall

10:00-13:00

17 March 2022

Your Excellency Dr. Lazarus McCarthy Chakwera, President of the Republic of Malawi and Minister for Defense, and Chair of the Least Developed Countries

Your Excellency Sheikh Mohammed bin Abdulrahman bin Jassim Al Thani, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Foreign Affairs of the State of Qatar, and President of the Fifth United Nations Conference on Least Developed Countries

Excellencies,

Distinguished Delegates,

Today is an important day for the Least Developed Countries of the world.

For two years they have suffered more than most during the pandemic. And for decades before that, they have struggled to get their needs fully recognized by the international community.

Now the war in Ukraine adds yet more uncertainty, with growing insecurity, including food insecurity.

At this important moment in history, we need to ensure that the needs of LDCs will not be shuffled down the priority list for global action.

By signing this new promise today, the Doha Programme of Action, we say to the world that solidarity cannot be a zero sum game.

It is now more urgent than ever to work towards a new multilateralism to deliver a more secure, prosperous, equal, and healthy planet.

People in the world's most vulnerable countries deserve the fresh hope that today provides.

And the Doha Programme is an ambitious, forward-looking, and action-oriented document.

We would not have got to this point without the leadership of Malawi, steering the LDC group through the long preparatory process.

And the dedication of the co-chairs of the Intergovernmental Committee, the Permanent Representatives of Bangladesh and Canada.

So many meetings had to be held virtually but now we see the fruits of intense discussions.

But all of us are clear about one thing. The value of this document is not in its political nuances. The value is in its implementation. How it will change and transform the lives and livelihoods of people living in LDCs.

Only by working together, every stakeholder playing their part, can we fully implement the Doha Programme of Action, and achieve its vital goals.

As there is no time to lose, my office will immediately start preparations for a comprehensive roadmap for accelerated implementation of the Programme of Action.

This should ensure that the commitments in favor of LDCs lead to action.

Member states.

Parliamentarians.

The private sector.

And civil society.

Everyone that had a key role to play in shaping the Programme of Action, now has a role to play in delivering its outcomes.

We should also listen to the growing voice of youth in LDCs – it is their future that is at stake.

The whole UN system is committed to implement the Doha Programme. Agencies will bring their expertise in the 6 priority areas for action to the table.

Qatar as the host country has put its full support behind the preparations for this Conference, which started today in New York, but will continue next March in Doha.

We are all grateful for the generous support from Qatar, and count on their continued leadership and support for the decade of the Doha Programme of Action.

We can now look forward with confidence to finally gathering in Doha and enjoying the welcome you have been preparing so patiently.

The Doha Conference will consist of five full-day meetings and thematic roundtables, as well as important multi-stakeholder events.

It will focus on the full implementation of the DPoA and deliverables for the LDCs.

Bringing Heads of State and Government to Doha in 2023 means there can be no lapse nor lull in global efforts on behalf of the LDCs.

Indeed, Doha will represent a crucial litmus test for the progress promised here today, adding even greater significance to that gathering.

We also expect new initiatives to accelerate sustainable development to be announced at LDC5.

My Office, in collaboration with the UN system, has already started work on some key projects identified in the Programme of Action.

The Graduation Support Facility, now called iGRAD, will deliver enhanced support for graduation. It will provide advisory services to help countries prepare for smoothly graduating from the category. And support their efforts into sustainable development.

And yesterday we launched the Action Framework of the Partner2Connect Digital Coalition.

This alliance aims to foster meaningful connectivity and digital transformation globally with a focus on hardest-to-connect communities – especially in LDCs. I was very heartened to hear multiple pledges that will help close the digital divide, delivering for the LDC5 outcome.

These are just some examples where work has already begun.

We need more initiatives – by all stakeholders – to achieve the 117 targets of the DPoA.

I want to thank you all for the commitment and energy that you have brought to the process so far.

And I urge you to start implementation of the DPoA immediately.

So that when we gather in Doha next year, we can talk about the road already travelled, as well as the journey ahead.

Thank you.