

Statement Delivered by African Group Chair of the month H.E. Mr. Nkopane Raseeng Monyane- Permanent Representative of the Kingdom of Lesotho to the United Nations during the First Part of Fifth United Nations Conference on the Least Developed Countries taking place in New York
17 March, 2022

**Mr. President,
Excellencies,
Distinguished delegates.**

I have the honour to deliver these brief remarks on behalf of the African Group.

Mr. President,

The process of the LDC5 has been a long one, one that was abruptly disrupted by the COVID-19 pandemic. We commend the LDC Group for continuing their work with strong determination for the past two years and we congratulate the group and all partners on successfully reaching this point.

Matters of the LDCs are of great importance to the African Group as 33 out of the 46 LDCs are located in our continent. It is in fact our responsibility to shoulder the burdens and help in paving the way for the LDCs and in successfully reaching the point of graduation.

We cannot afford another 50 plus years of lost opportunities; we collectively have to do right by the LDCs. It is absolutely crucial that this Program of Action with the 2030 Agenda at the centre has a successful outcome, not just on paper, in black and white, but on the ground, in, and for the LDCs. Implementation cannot just be an idea, but rather, in 10 years we need to be able to see tangible results. Having 40 countries yet to reach the point of graduation would mean that we have once again failed. Graduation cannot be a term that we use loosely, we have to ensure that the Least Developed Countries can achieve sustainable graduation. We hope that we embark on this journey with this in mind.

The African Group has previously highlighted that we through this Program of Action need to ensure a smooth and sustainable transition strategy to graduation for the LDCs and that this must also be consistent with all the United Nations General Assembly Resolutions on Smooth Transition, coupled with improved coordination of United Nations Systems and the support of the LDCs development and trading partners. It is

critical to support sustained economic growth and continuation of socio-economic progress in all of the LDCs so as to ensure genuine and lasting change.

This Program of Action has been negotiated under unprecedented circumstances caused by the COVID-19 pandemic. We now have the unique opportunity to fulfil the promises and mandates and ensure that the multi-layered drive for recovery from COVID-19 is fulfilled. This is in fact crucial in order to safeguard the successful completion of all the mandates within the DPoA. The new Program of Action promises that the Least Developed countries are not left behind in the global recovery, the African Group calls for unwavering support, solidarity and bold action in support of LDCs in this regard.

Mr. President,

We would be negligent if we don't acknowledge that this is only the first step to this ten-year journey that we are embarking on. A successful conclusion, will only depend on implementation and fulfilment of commitments by both LDCs and development partners. Our joint goal should be to continuously work towards ensuring a better future for all the LDCs.

In conclusion Mr. President,

The African Group would like to thank the State of Qatar for their generous support to the LDCs. The Doha conference have been postponed for the second time, with all the hard work, various preparations and measures put in place to make it a successful conference, our understanding and gratitude cannot go unmentioned and we look forward to resuming the second part of the conference in Doha in early 2023.

I thank you!

