



United Nations Office of the High Representative for the Least Developed
Countries, Landlocked Developing Countries and Small Island Developing States
(UN-OHRLLS)

Statement by
Mr. Courtenay Rattray
High Representative
and
Under-Secretary-General
Least Developed Countries, Landlocked Developing Countries and Small Island
Developing States

At
the Opening session of the Second PrepCom for LDC5

26 July 2021, 1000 - 1300 hrs

GA Hall

Co-chairs,
Member of the PrepCom Bureau,
Excellencies and Distinguished Delegates,

I would like to thank the Co-chairs for their kind words of congratulations and for their leadership and guidance in steering the LDC5 process. Together with the PrepCom Bureau. I would also like to place on record my thanks to my predecessor, USG Utoikamanu, for her leadership in this regard.

Excellencies,
Distinguished Delegates,

The Conference provides an opportunity to recover lost ground on the SDGs and make important strides forward in the Decade for Action. This is the moment to mount an effective and strengthened response to COVID-19 and build back better, with concrete action on the ground.

As you are aware, the essence of the discussions at the First PrepCom has been distilled into key action areas and commitments in the zero draft outcome document. This augurs well for the success of the First PrepCom meeting.

Suggested actions in the outcome document are of great importance for building back better and enhancing resilience to future shocks. Allow me to single out a few.

Social protection systems have been at the core of the response to the socio-economic effects of COVID-19. The capacity to scale up social protection measures in a targeted and timely manner is crucial for any effort to deal with a crisis. This is an area where access to timely and disaggregated data and digitalization are at least as crucial as in other areas like education or productive capacity. The need to focus on the most vulnerable people, including women, migrants and people with disabilities was highlighted at the recent HLPF session on “Restoring the conditions for SDG progress in African countries, LDCs and LLDCs”. It also brought to the

fore that partnerships between governments, communities, civil society and other actors need to be deepened.

Of course, adaptation to climate risks is also crucial for resilience in LDCs and sustainable energy can play a key role in this respect.

As you will have noted, the zero draft is ambitious, forward looking, and focused with a simple structure.

It is a true reflection of the priorities that will ensure LDC achieve the SDGs and beyond. I commend the Chair of LDCs and other members of the Group for their tireless efforts in presenting a comprehensive document. My Office will provide continued support to the deliberations on the new programme of action.

Here, I wish to underscore the critical importance of meeting the timelines proposed by the Co-chairs. I would recommend that intergovernmental negotiations on the outcome be concluded in New York by the end of the year.

Since the First meeting of the PrepCom in May preparations for LDC5 have continued to progress well.

A joint thematic event of the General Assembly and the ECOSOC was held on 18 June 2021 on “Accelerated implementation of the 2030 Agenda in LDCs to leave no one behind in the context of COVID-19”. Participants called for a new global deal for LDCs, built on a new generation of global partnerships that will assist them to recover faster from the pandemic while accelerating sustainable development. Calls were also made for a fair international trade regime, and technology transfer in building research and development capabilities in LDCs.

Participants underscored the need for greater financial support for the LDCs to meet the SDG targets and finance their recovery from the pandemic, including timely access to vaccines and treatment. They called for a comprehensive financing mechanism for LDCs to better manage risk and provide support in times of crisis, and an international financial system to provide better and

targeted support for LDCs. Debt relief beyond the Debt Service Suspension Initiative (DSSI) was also identified as an important step towards creating needed fiscal space to respond to short-term needs and invest in long-term resilience building and structural transformation. Securing sustainable debt levels will also be needed if LDCs are to attract more private investment.

On another note, I would like to also inform you that we are on track with the preparations of the host-country agreement with Qatar. In this regard, my office is holding regular meetings with Ambassador Alya Al-Thani and her colleagues in Doha. In early June, a UN Team of 25 staff members visited the Qatar National Conference Centre, met with various technical counterparts, and made great progress in the preparations for the Conference. I reiterate our gratitude to the Government of Qatar for its overwhelming support to ensure LDC5 is a highly successful and memorable event.

I am also grateful to Canada and Turkey for their generous financial support for the preparations.

The Asia Pacific Regional Review will take place from 30 August - 2 September 2021 in Geneva in a hybrid format. It is organized by the Government of Bangladesh, ESCAP and my office. We expect the meeting to make concrete recommendations on how to make graduation sustainable, irreversible and a steppingstone to achieve the 2030 Agenda.

The multiple global processes from now until January 2022, such as UNCTAD 15 and COP 26, will also provide valuable opportunities to build momentum towards LDC5. We continue to work closely with the UN system on preparations for the Conference.

Let me now provide a brief overview of the involvement of various stakeholders in the preparations for LDC5. We expect their full and active involvement in the implementation of the new Programme of Action.

OHRLLS is organizing an LDC Future Forum, which will take place in Helsinki from 5 to 7 October 2021. The Forum will bring together the academic community, policy makers and

practitioners to solicit new thinking on the challenges and policy recommendations for LDCs, for the next decade.

The Forum is being organized in collaboration with the United Nations University World Institute for Development Economics Research (UNU-WIDER) and the Sustainable Development Solutions Network (SDSN). And here let me thank the Government of Finland for generously supporting this event.

So far, we have received over 40 academic papers, which address the structural challenges and emerging issues that LDCs face in pursuing sustainable development. They also propose policy recommendations, which are designed to significantly impact the extent to which LDCs can meet the SDGs, effectively compete in the global economy and eventually move towards convergence with other more developed economies.

In addition, a Private Sector Forum will take place as part of the LDC5 Conference, the objective of which is to promote private sector participation and partnerships to mobilize long-term private finance and investment in LDCs, and to support their efforts towards sustainable development,

Following the high-level opening of the Forum, which will be chaired by the president of Microsoft, the Private Sector Forum will focus on five thematic sessions, which are: Sustainable agriculture and rural development; Information Communication and Technology (ICT); sustainable energy; Climate change; and sustainable tourism. Exhibition space will be provided for private sector companies from LDCs, Qatar and other development partners. The Forum is being organized by UN-OHRLLS, various other UN agencies and Qatari organizations, such as the Qatar Chamber of Commerce.

The key outcome of the Private Sector Forum will be the announcement of tangible partnerships and initiatives (across the five themes), in tandem with the private sector geared to supporting the LDCs in the implementation of the new 10-year programme of action.

There will be various other stakeholders involved in the preparations and I am happy that we will hear from some of them this morning.

I encourage all member states to ensure participation at the in the LDC5 Conference, from 23-27 January 2022, at the Heads of State or Government level. I also encourage high-level participation in the multiple processes leading to the Conference in Doha. Invitation letters by the Secretary-General and the host country will be dispatched shortly. I would also like to encourage Member States and other stakeholders to announce new and enhanced partnerships and deliverables, which would support the implementation of the new programme of action.

OHRLLS will keep you updated of progress going forward, including on the opportunities to organize side events in Doha.

I thank you for your attention.