



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

**Opening Statement
Ms. Fekitamoeola Katoa ‘Utoikamanu
High Representative
and
Under-Secretary-General
Secretary-General of the Fifth United Nations Conference on the Least
Developed Countries (LDC5)**

At the

**Preparatory Committee
for the Fifth United Nations Conference
on the Least Developed Countries
First session**

**24 May 2021
10 am to 1 pm**

UNHQ, CR 1,2 and 3

Distinguished co-chairs of the PrepCom, Ambassador Fatima and Ambassador Rae Excellencies,

A lot has already been said about the challenges the LDCs face this morning.

Beyond any doubt, we live at a time of great changes ahead. Business as usual is not an option.

We are here to come up with solutions and we can leverage the preparatory process to chart the way forward.

LDCs have conducted national reviews and 28 have submitted their national reports.

A synthesis report has been prepared on lessons learned and best practices in the implementation of the IPoA in LDCs.

I will briefly highlight progress reported by several LDCs and some lessons learnt.

It is encouraging to note the growing importance of the service industry, increased access to mobile broadband and ICT, improvements in primary and secondary school enrollments, growing importance of building resilience against climate change and the strengthening of agricultural productivity through agribusiness and land reform.

The African Regional Review meeting, held in February, adopted a Political Declaration negotiated by the African LDCs and Haiti. The Declaration outlines components of a renewed partnership for sustainable development between the LDCs and their development partners with the goal to tackle LDCs structural impediments.

OHRLLS has worked closely with the UN system and others to organize events on various strategic topics. Several UN entities have published in-depth assessments in their areas of expertise.

A new OHRLLS Flagship report looks at where the LDCs stand more than a year into the pandemic. The report proposes action recommendations on how to now move forward such as investment in people to build capacity for sustainable structural transformation and the use of technologies to mobilize much needed finance.

These recommendations address what we all want: building back better. Their implementation would ensure that LDCs can enhance resilience to future shocks and accelerate the achievement of their development goals. Due to time constraints I cannot go into details, but I encourage all of you to visit our LDC5 website.

Preparations will go ahead full steam over the next 8 months. It is key that we engage various stakeholders, namely parliamentarians, private sector, academia, civil society and youth.

Just to share one example, an LDC Future Forum will take place in Helsinki at the end of August. The Forum will bring together researchers and policymakers to dig deeper into some crucial issues and offer innovative suggestions on how to take forward the sustainable development agenda of LDCs.

In closing, I appeal all over to all of you to go beyond engaging in the deliberations on the new programme of action for LDCs. We need your pro- active participation.

It is now that we must do the groundwork for concrete deliverables to be launched in Doha. The deliverables will help foster implementation of the new programme of action and enable LDCs to build back better and stronger. LDCs need these concrete action-oriented packages now more than ever.

As the substantive secretariat for the Conference, OHRLLS is there to support the process you will go through in turning ideas into an ambitious next programme of action for the LDCs.

I very much look forward to the discussions this week.

I thank you.