

**Sayın Bakan Yardımcımızın (BYAB) 75. Genel Kurulu yüksek düzeyli haftası marjında düzenlenecek EAGÜ Bakanlar Toplantısı'nda istifade edebilecekleri konuşma notu
(17 Eylül 2020)**

Madam Deputy Secretary General,
President of the General Assembly,
President of ECOSOC,

(Arzu edildiği takdirde: Ambassador Bozkır, before I begin, allow me to congratulate you on assuming your position as the President of the General Assembly (on Tuesday). Both the LDCs and our Group will be counting on your support.)

Excellencies, dear colleagues,

It is a great pleasure to join you today.

Since we last met in September 2019, the world has been confronted with a global health **crisis unprecedented** in our living memory.

Covid-19 also **exposed vulnerabilities and inequalities** within and among countries.

Without doubt, the Least Developed Countries (**LDCs**) are **disproportionately hit** by the pandemic.

Due to their fragile health infrastructures, limited social protection coverage and strained financing resources, they are **up against** an **immense crisis with severe** economic and social **consequences**.

This would have serious repercussions on development.

Even before COVID-19 Pandemic, we were on track to achieve **only half** of the **Sustainable Development Goals** (SDGs) by 2030.

Now, due to the adverse effects of the pandemic, we are even **going backwards** in some areas.

So, we need to **step up action**, make sure to **align the response and recovery efforts with the SDGs**, and **accelerate the implementation of the İstanbul Programme of Action**.

Excellencies, Colleagues,

Supporting the LDCs remains a central pillar of Turkish foreign policy.

Accordingly, Turkey has provided **2.5 billion US Dollars** of development assistance to the LDCs over the last decade (2009-2019).

Official Development Assistance (ODA) remains an important source of external financing for the sustainable development of LDCs and their immediate response to the pandemic.

Hence, we all need to **scale up our ODA commitments** in the face of this crisis as part of a more comprehensive and systematic multilateral response.

Furthermore, in many parts of the world, including the LDCs, diagnostic **tests** and basic **equipment** are still **much in need** to fight the spread of the virus and ensure effective medical responses.

On our part, we are doing our best: We responded to medical equipment requests of **146 countries**, **many LDCs among**

them, and 7 international organizations. (Turkey has ranked second in the world in this category of aid.)

In the meantime, in order to increase local production of essential medical technologies in developing countries, the UN **Technology Bank for LDCs that we host in Turkey** launched a “**Tech Access Partnership (TAP)**” (in collaboration with the World Health Organization, UNDP and UNCTAD),

The initiative brings together innovators, manufacturers and the academia with local manufacturers in developing countries to **share data, knowledge and other** necessary support.

TAP will help **boost the local production capacity** in the LDCs, thereby **raising their employment levels** and **decreasing the dependency on foreign aid** as well.

By January this year, the **debt of almost half** of the **least developed** and other low-income developing **countries** was **already under distress**.

So another **risk is** that the **present challenges** faced by poor countries **evolve into a widespread default**, giving way to a **devastating global debt crisis**.

To strengthen their pandemic response, the **G20** countries launched the **debt service suspension initiative** for the poorest countries and the **IMF** approved a **debt service relief** to 25 IDA countries (“international development association”—en fakir gelişme yolundaki ülkeler IDA’dan yardım alan konumundadır).

Turkey has been among the group of countries that supported both initiatives.

We are aware that **more needs to be done** on these issues at the IMF, the World Bank, the G20 as well as the UN.

And **we will continue our efforts in these bodies** to keep the vulnerable groups, including the LDCs, **at the focus** of our work, especially in these testing times.

Excellencies, dear friends,

Turkey is **proud to have hosted the Fourth Conference on LDCs in İstanbul (in 2011)** few years **after** the 2007-08 **Global Financial Crisis**.

The **Fifth UN Conference on LDCs** will take place again at a time (postponed to 2022) when our world is recovering and adjusting to the dynamics of the new global economy.

Turkey has provided **1 million US Dollars to support the preparatory meetings**, and will continue to cooperate with **Qatar** for a successful Conference.

Less than half a year to the deadline for the implementation of the **İstanbul Programme of Action**, this document **and the commitments therein remain as crucial** as ever.

We have to step up action to **implement the Programme within the remainder of the decade**. **And** we have to make up for the time lost along the way.

This is not only important for the LDCs, but for the world as a whole. Because, as the African proverb goes, “rain does not fall on one roof alone”.

As the **Co-chair of the Group of Friends of the LDCs**, Turkey will continue to be your steadfast partner in these testing times and the years ahead.

I thank you.