

**Remarks by the Chair of the Least Developed Countries at the FAO
Briefing on COVID 19 and its Impact Food Security in LDCs LLDCs and
SIDs**

Thursday May 7th, 2020

15:00 to 16:30hrs

**Ambassador Umarov, PR of Kazakhstan and Chair of the Landlocked
Developing Countries;**

Ambassador Young, PR of Belize and Chair of the AOSIS

Mr. Torero and Ms. Daza and all FAO colleagues present

Mr. Husain and all WFP colleagues present

Madame Fekita

Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen;

- It is my pleasure to come together with you all this afternoon, to discuss a topic that is pivotal to all countries and to our three groups of countries in particular. Food Security enshrined in Goal 2 of the the 2030 Agenda is a basic necessity, that is crucial in addressing poverty, education, health, human security, gender inequality, climate change and ultimately sustainable development.
- I thank Mr. Torero for his comprehensive presentation. I could not agree more with him as he articulates the magnitude of the impacts of COVID-19 on the food and nutrition security and the agricultural sector of LDCs. We also take note of the specific initiatives and support measures undertaken by the FAO in addressing the impacts of the pandemic. Let me share with you the unique challenges that LDCs have been facing in the face of COVID-19.
- We note the crucial role food emergency/humanitarian response has played in previous crises. And further note the role of WFP in ensuring that those in need are seen and their needs met. We thank Mr. Husain for his presentation and cannot emphasize more the multistakeholder and overlapping nature of food security as well as the crucial role played in the collaboration between the Rome based agencies.
- At the end of 2019 data had continued to point to a rise in world hunger for the third consecutive year, after decades of steady decline, resulting in a growing number of people facing crisis food insecurity or worse.

Globally in 2018, more than 113 million people across 53 countries experienced acute hunger requiring urgent food, nutrition and livelihoods assistance; and an estimated 821 million people – approximately one in nine people in the world – were undernourished. Of the 113 million 80 million were from LDCs accounting for 29 LDCs countries. Furthermore, the number of undernourished people in LDCs increased by 32.7 million during the period 2011-2017. The LDCs are already suffering severe consequences in the form of commodity price shocks, loss of exports, investment and remittances along with a rapid plummet in tourism, with long-term ripple effects. With these pre-existing conditions, LDCs are particularly exposed to the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic at a disproportionate magnitude.

- As we watch COVID 19 unfolding and its reach continue to grow in LDCs, our governments recognize the need to triangulate social, economic and environmental issues to create policies that address COVID 19 but also take into account pre-existing and continuing crises and issues such as poverty, resilient food systems, climate change and digital divides.
- This Pandemic has served to emphasize the crucial importance of multilateralism and partnership and the need to not only write off pre-existing inequalities, in the face of new ones, but also to take a holistic outlook on development. To ensure that it is not only sustainable but resilient. A development that encompasses policy for long term investment in climate resilience, agricultural and socio-economic innovation, recognition of technology and its crucial role, as well as finance, to ensure that at 2030 no country and no one is left behind.
- As countries with a large dependence on subsistence agriculture and small holder farmers; addressing food security in LDCs also means addressing poverty, climate change, women and girls' empowerment as well as education. Food security and nutrition in its complex and multidimensional nature needs to be addressed through comprehensive, holistic and cross-sectoral approaches at different scales and with many different stakeholders, including public and private sectors and civil society.
- The Group of LDCs have already finalized its Statement on COVID-19 and called for a “global stimulus package for LDCs”. We have delineated short, medium and long-term measures to address the impacts. Among others, the package calls for emergency support for social protection system in the short run and support to stabilize the agricultural sector in the

medium and long run. FAO can be an important partner in the implementation of these areas of the stimulus package for LDCs.

We look forward to increased and tailor-made support of FAO and WFP to LDCs in the days ahead.

THANK YOU FOR YOUR ATTENTION