

# Meeting Report

## **High-Level Meeting of the Least Developed Countries (LDCs) Fourth International Conference on Financing for Development (FFD4) Seville, 1 July 2025**

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Nepal and OHRLLS co-organised a High-Level Meeting of the Least Developed Countries in the margins of the Fourth International Conference on Financing for Development in Sevilla, Spain on 1 July 2025.

The aim of the meeting was to discuss how the effective implementation of the Compromiso de Sevilla, or the Sevilla Commitment can support LDCs to mobilize the financing, technical assistance and capacity-building support necessary to fully implement the Doha Programme of Action.

As such, this event represented a pivotal opportunity for LDC governments, other stakeholders of LDCs, and development partners to achieve the shared objective of financing the sustainable development of LDCs.

**A significant delegation of LDC officials was present, including two Prime Ministers, two Vice Presidents, and a Deputy Prime Minister, along with several Ministers.**

## **Welcome Remarks**

### **Moderator:**

#### **H.E. K.P. Sharma Oli, Prime Minister of Nepal**

Prime Minister Oli opened the meeting as moderator and delivered his statement. He underscored that LDCs spend more on recovery than prevention, calling this a failure of climate justice. He stressed that the Sevilla Compromise offers a turning point, reaffirming the global commitment to place people—especially the most vulnerable—at the heart of development efforts. He welcomed recognition of the DPoA, including provisions for pre- and post-graduation needs, and urged development partners to fulfill ODA and climate finance pledges, channeling more grants to strengthen resilience and unlock productive capacity.

#### **H.E. Ms. Rabab Fatima, Under-Secretary-General and High Representative for LDCs, LLDCs and SIDS**

Ms. Fatima emphasized the significance of FFD4, which occurs only once a decade, and comes at a critical moment for LDCs. She highlighted slow and uneven progress, with economic growth

below targets, stagnant FDI, and unsustainable debt burdens—29 LDCs spend more on debt servicing than on health, and eight spend more than on education. She pointed to systemic barriers such as low social protection coverage, food insecurity, and weak education outcomes. She welcomed the Compromiso de Sevilla, but underlined the need for *additional and more substantial commitments*, particularly concessional financing, debt relief, and capacity building. She announced deliverables advancing under the DPoA, including an International Investment Support Center, an online university, a resilience-building mechanism, and a food stockholding initiative, thanking Qatar for support. She committed OHRLLS to advocate alongside LDCs and ensure follow-up towards the 2027 midterm review.

### **H.E. Mr. Bob Rae, President of ECOSOC and Ambassador of Canada to the UN**

Ambassador Rae emphasized that the Sevilla Compromise is the product of compromise and must be seen as a platform for action. He warned that debt burdens risk strangling development, illicit financial flows are draining trillions from the global economy, and domestic resource mobilization remains essential though politically difficult. He stressed the need for sustained advocacy within the UN, IMF, and World Bank to deliver real results, and underlined that commitments must be backed by human action, not just aspirations.

### **Hon. Ntsokoane Samuel Matekane, Prime Minister of Lesotho**

Prime Minister Matekane reaffirmed Lesotho's commitment to the DPoA and underscored the importance of international solidarity. He emphasized mobilizing domestic public resources, implementing tax reforms, and tackling illicit financial flows. He called for tailored capacity building to help LDCs meet the 15% tax-to-GDP threshold and stressed the role of private sector-led growth, supported by incentives and concessional finance in key sectors such as agriculture, agro-processing, renewable energy, and manufacturing.

### **H.E. Mr. Michael Usi, Vice President of Malawi**

Vice President Usi called for honesty and action, noting that repeated promises without follow-up erode credibility. He urged candid discussion of barriers, the development of monitoring tools, and concrete action plans. He warned against repeating past meetings in new formats without results and pressed for urgent implementation.

### **H.E. Panapasa Nelesone, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Finance and Economic Affairs, Tuvalu**

Deputy Prime Minister Nelesone spoke of Tuvalu's existential climate threats, stressing that adaptation and resilience financing must be delivered as grants, not loans. He called for predictable long-term support for coastal protection, early warning systems, and addressing irreversible loss and damage. He urged reforms of MDB lending criteria to move beyond GDP and demanded timely delivery of climate finance to ensure the survival of island nations.

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## **Interactive Discussion**

### **Hon. Mr. Mulambo Hamakuni Haimbe, Minister of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation, Zambia**

Minister Haimbe reflected on Zambia's role as co-facilitator of the FFD4 outcome document with Nepal. He welcomed the Sevilla Compromise as a foundation for implementing the DPoA and called for concrete accountability mechanisms to ensure commitments are delivered. He highlighted Zambia's national progress in free education, renewable energy, and digital infrastructure, but emphasized the need for enhanced partnerships, green financing, and technology transfer.

### **Mr. Samadou Ousman, CDA, Permanent Mission of Niger to the UN**

The **chargé d'affaires** spoke of the challenges of being LDC, LLDC and highlighted the security issues faced by Niger. He raised the need for guarantees to lower the risk for investments in countries like his, as well as the need for access to loans with preferential rates in order to build economic structures and build resilience.

### **H.E. Mr Karamoko Jean-Marie Traoré, Minister of Foreign Affairs, Regional Cooperation and Burkinabè Abroad, Burkina Faso**

Minister Karamoko expressed concern over the current situation, where many countries remain trapped in a vicious cycle of severe and chronic debt, often resorting to new borrowing simply to service existing obligations. He acknowledged that the proposals presented to address this challenge contain promising elements and called for the courage to redirect debt towards productive investments that generate real economic value, thereby enabling countries to gradually reduce their dependency. He noted that in 2023, his country successfully mobilized USD 300 million from domestic resources, and in 2024 they mobilised USD 350 million. Emphasizing that every country should adopt domestic resource mobilization instruments suited

to its specific context, he stressed that such efforts are feasible if resources are managed transparently and used for the benefit of citizens. He concluded by calling for renewed engagement and innovative strategies to help nations break free from the debt trap.

**H.E. Ms. Fatima Haram Acyl, Minister Delegate in charge of the Economy, Planning and International Cooperation, Chad**

Minister Acyl outlined Chad's compounded vulnerabilities as both an LDC and landlocked country, including limited connectivity, economic reliance on oil, and security challenges. She stressed the urgency of diversifying the economy through agriculture and pastoralism and using the potential of the large youth population. She spoke of the work towards digitalizing revenue collection and building regional connectivity. She also highlighted Chad's heavy burden of refugees and called for tailored international support for Sahel countries facing both development and security crises.

**H.E. Ms. Maryam Al-Misned, Minister of International Cooperation, Qatar**

Minister Al-Misned reiterated Qatar's commitment as co-chair of the Group of Friends of LDCs. She recalled Qatar's pledge of \$16 million at LDC5 to support food security and resilience projects and highlighted new initiatives including an upcoming high-level meeting on sustainable graduation. She emphasized that investing in development is an investment in stability and dignity and urged the international community to honor ODA commitments and strengthen inclusive global trade and infrastructure systems.

**H.E. Mr. Anouparb Vongnorkeo, Vice Minister of Foreign Affairs, Lao PDR**

Vice Minister Vongnorkeo welcomed the Sevilla Compromise for capturing LDC priorities and supporting DPoA implementation. He emphasized the need for enhanced support for smooth and sustainable graduation, particularly through concessional finance, investment, and technology transfer. He highlighted Lao PDR's Integrated National Financing Framework and digital revenue reforms, stressing that domestic efforts must be complemented by international solidarity.

**Mr. Md Shahriar Kader Siddiky, Secretary, Economic Relations Division, Ministry of Finance, Bangladesh**

Secretary Siddiky noted Bangladesh's impending graduation from LDC status and the challenges of losing access to LDC-specific international support measures. He outlined national efforts to boost productivity, adopt new technologies, and strengthen private sector growth, while stressing the need for continued international support to ensure a smooth transition.

**Ms. Heidy Rombouts, Director General, Development Cooperation and Humanitarian Aid, Belgium**

Ms. Rombouts emphasized that supporting LDCs is in the common interest of all countries, calling for a fairer and more inclusive global system. She welcomed the Sevilla Compromise's country-led coordination platforms and underlined Belgium's support for technology transfer. She announced a new partnership between Belgium's Impact Licensing Initiative and the UN Technology Bank to expand access to intellectual property in clean energy, agriculture, water, health, and climate resilience.

**Ms. Işıl Cemali Doğan, Deputy Director General, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Türkiye**

Ms. Doğan reaffirmed Türkiye's strong commitment to LDCs, highlighting the disproportionate impact of recent geopolitical and economic shocks. She called for scaling up SDG-related investment through private capital mobilization, trade, and investment, alongside enhanced global solidarity. She urged a shift from aid-oriented approaches to sustainable development partnerships.

**Amb. Mr. Mamadou Sogodogo, Director Multilateral Cooperation, Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation, Mali**

The representative of Mali underscored the vital role of domestic resource mobilization in advancing national development priorities. He stressed the importance of solidarity with conflict and post-conflict countries, highlighting that in such contexts, resources are often diverted to fighting terrorism instead of supporting socio-economic progress. He called on OHRLLS and the international community to recognize the specific challenges of LDCs in conflict-affected situations and to provide privileged treatment and tailored support to enable them to achieve sustainable development.

**H.E. Mr. Lamin B. Dibba, Permanent Representative of The Gambia to the UN**

The representative of The Gambia emphasized the DPoA as a compass for LDCs and outlined national priorities in resilience, governance, and structural transformation. He stressed the importance of investing in people, leveraging science and technology, and enhancing trade capacity. He welcomed innovations such as the proposed online university for LDCs, while urging ambitious financing to close the \$4 trillion SDG investment gap.

### **Ms. Sarah Hunt, Policy Director, Irish Aid, Ireland**

Ms. Hunt reaffirmed Ireland's commitment to "reaching the furthest behind first." She highlighted Ireland's support for domestic resource mobilization, including partnerships to strengthen tax administrations in Malawi, Uganda, and Vietnam. She stressed that ODA remains essential as a source of international public finance, particularly in fragile and conflict-affected contexts, and reaffirmed Ireland's path towards achieving the 0.7% ODA target, with 0.15–0.2% of GNI directed to LDCs.

Additional speakers inscribed, who were unable to intervene:

- Mr. Thani Mohamed Soilihi, Minister Delegate for Francophonie and International Partnerships, France
- Mr. Pradeep Kurukulasuriya, Executive Secretary, UNCDF
- Ms. Luz Maria de la Mora, Director, Division on International Trade and Commodities, UNCTAD
- South Sudan
- Eritrea

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## **Conclusion**

The Chair closed the meeting by thanking all speakers and noting that time constraints prevented interventions from UNCDF and UNCTAD, though their statements will be submitted to the record. He emphasized that the strong engagement and consensus demonstrated should translate into urgent, concrete actions to advance the Doha Programme of Action and realize the commitments of the Sevilla Compromise.