



**Office of the President  
of the General Assembly**  
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**Remarks by H.E. Mr. Volkan Bozkir,  
PRESIDENT OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY**

H.E. Mr. Eisenhower Mkaka M.P., Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Malawi and Chair of LDCs,

H.E. Ms. Amina Mohamed, Deputy Secretary General of the UN,

H.E. Mr. Munir Akram, Permanent Representative of Pakistan and President Economic and Social Council,

Ministers, Excellencies,

I am honored to address you all today at this annual gathering.

As a national of Turkey, it is rewarding to be here and to bear witness to the finalization of the Istanbul Programme of Action.

I am likewise encouraged to note that the organizational details and modalities of the Fifth UN Conference on LDCs have been finalized. This will provide an important opportunity to build a renewed and strengthened global partnership.

Colleagues, the harsh reality is that Least Developed Countries were struggling before COVID-19.

Multiple and mutually exacerbating challenges, such as climate change, inequality and the digital divide, were already casting a long shadow on the achievement of the SDGs well before we began wearing masks.

The pandemic has not only compounded pre-existing conditions and global challenges.

Fragile health systems, weak social protection systems, limited financial resources, and vulnerability to external shocks, meant many LDCs were simply not in a position to respond as effectively.

On the economic front, export earnings, tourism, foreign investments, and remittances, have all been deeply affected.

These impacts affect the most vulnerable. The International Labor Organization estimates that the livelihoods of almost 1.6 billion informal workers are at risk. COVID-19 has, in many ways, pulled back the curtain on global inequality.

It is imperative that the international community extends its full support to LDCs to tackle this pandemic – both the health impacts and the socio-economic response.

Amongst the priorities are access to essential medicines and health care facilities; universal access to vaccines – once they are developed; increased official development assistance; comprehensive debt relief measures; support in managing climate change, and scaled up investment to sustainably recover from this crisis.

On the recovery front, we must look beyond ‘building back’ and go further. We must look to change course and to build resilience against future shocks, employing the SDGs as the blueprint for a more sustainable future.

We must capitalize on the experience gained from the UN Technology Bank for the LDCs, which was the first ever SDG target to be achieved. The bank has huge potential in bridging the digital divide, gaining access to technologies and building the innovation capacity of LDCs.

Like all countries, LDCs must make every effort to secure a green economy and a climate-resilient recovery. The Food System Summit in 2021 and the Biodiversity High Level Event in a few days offer crucial opportunities to galvanize action within LDCs towards climate resilient development.

You can rest assured of the full engagement and support of my Presidency in undertaking necessary preparations for the Fifth UN Conference on LDCs.

As mandated by the General Assembly, I and the President of the ECOSOC will host a dedicated thematic session to provide substantive inputs to the Conference. Soon, my office will be in touch with details of this event.

I once again express my honor and happiness to be a part of this very fruitful and successful gathering. And I wish you all the best in your endeavors.

Thank you.