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

Statement by

Rabab Fatima

**High Representative and
Under- Secretary-General
Least Developed Countries, Landlocked Developing Countries
and Small Island Developing States
and
the Secretary-General of the
Fifth United Nations Conference on the Least Developed
Countries**

**3:30-6:00 22 September 2022
Trusteeship Council Chamber**

Honourable Nancy Tembo, M.P., Minister of Foreign Affairs of Malawi and the Chair of LDCs,

His Excellency Mr. Csaba Kőrösi, President of the General Assembly

His Excellency Mr. Antonio Guterres, Secretary General of the United Nations

His Excellency Mr. Soltan bin Saad Al-Muraikhi, Minister of State of Qatar and the host of the LDC5

Her Excellency Ms. Lachezara Stoeva, President of the ECOSOC

Honourable Ministers from LDCs and the Friends of LDCs

Excellencies, Distinguished Delegates,

At the outset, I wish to express my sincere thanks and appreciation to you, Honourable **Nancy Tembo, M.P.**, Minister of Foreign Affairs of Malawi for your outstanding leadership of the Group of LDCs, especially in navigating the Group through the preparatory process of the Fifth Conference of the LDCs.

I also thank Dr. Agnes Mary Chimbiri-Molande and her team for efficiently leading the Group of LDCs in New York.

Let me also express my sincere appreciation and thanks to His Excellency Soltan bin Saad Al-Muraikhi the Minister of State for Foreign Affairs of Qatar for hosting the high-level luncheon earlier today, and for his government's continued generous support for the LDC5 process. Amb. Alya Al-Thani and her able team deserve special thanks and commendation for their support.

I am grateful to the President of the General Assembly and the President of ECOSOC for their participation and strong words of support.

The high-level participation from LDCs and Friends of LDCs, and their strong commitment of support are truly encouraging.

Excellencies,

At the outset, I wish to thank you all for your warm words of support to me. I shall make every effort to live up to your expectations and the confidence that has been placed on me and the Secretary-General.

Just six weeks into my role, I am deeply encouraged by the level of support that I see for the Least Developed Countries and for my Office – and I look forward to working closely with you all to take forward our shared commitment and aspirations to bring about transformative change.

Excellencies,

This year's Ministerial meeting takes place at an extraordinary moment in history. The world is facing cascading and interlinked global crises and conflicts. The COVID-19 pandemic has now entered its third year. Vaccination rates are still woefully skewed against the global south. According to Africa CDC, vaccination coverage in the continent is only 21.6 per cent against the global average of 63.3 per cent.

Escalating conflicts, especially the war in Ukraine, are exacerbating food, energy, humanitarian, and refugee crises. And this is all being played out against the backdrop of a worsening climate emergency.

Make no mistake, the aspirations set out in the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development are in great jeopardy.

Far from recording the expected progress, we must now report that the number of people in extreme poverty has increased for the first time in a generation. The share of working poor has also increased for the first time in two decades.

Over the first two years of the pandemic, over 100 million more people have been pushed into extreme poverty. LDCs, as so often, have been the hardest hit. A business-as-usual approach will leave more than 350 million people in LDCs languishing in extreme poverty by 2030.

But this is not inevitable. Together, we can shift gears and drive towards transformative change. And I want to share with you five key points in this regard:

First - the recently agreed Doha Programme of Action for LDCs is a highly ambitious document. The DPOA gives a clear blueprint for the international community about what needs to be done by all stakeholders. This is not a vague wish list, it tells the international community what to do, as well as when and how.

The new Programme represents a new generation of commitments to achieve a decade of unparalleled development progress in the LDCs. Successful

implementation of the programme will address the ongoing challenges and structural vulnerabilities of LDCs. It will build resilience against future shocks. And accelerate the implementation of the 2030 Agenda.

We must turn this opportunity into action and transform potentials into prosperity. We must not regret in 2031 that the Doha Programme was a missed opportunity.

Second - As I said at the outset, the LDCs face extraordinary challenges and constraints, but these countries also represent enormous human, cultural and natural resource potentials. LDCs have the potential to become the global frontier market in terms of production, consumption, distribution and value chain networks.

These are young, talented nations. Vulnerable, but vibrant. I am certain that from the millions of young people, and a growing working-age population, we will see more and more development leaders who can drive transformative change for themselves and for the world. Together we must develop new strategies to unleash the enormous opportunities that LDCs offer.

Part of the answer can be found in my **third point**. And this relates to the extraordinary potential offered by science, technology and innovation.

At present a new wave of digital inequality is deepening the divide between LDCs and the rest of the world. This must be reversed. Strengthened

international cooperation to support LDCs in improving science, technology and innovation can help unleash a huge digital dividend.

This support should include financial contributions and technology transfers. By getting the LDCs online, we can flip the switch for transformational growth.

My **fourth** point relates to finance.

To have any chance of addressing the impacts of the ongoing crises, and to reap the potentials of new opportunities, LDCs need huge investment. Significant additional domestic public resources, supplemented by international assistance are critical.

Predictable finance, including ODA, domestic resource mobilization, trade and private sector financing, are critical means to provide universal sustainable social protection systems.

When it comes to long-term development finance commitments, this is the time for the international community to step up, not sidestep. To show solidarity and support. The Secretary-General has already said that the \$100 billion climate finance benchmark needs to gear up to \$300 billion per year. A 50:50 balance between mitigation and adaptation is a must.

International support is equally important for graduating and graduated countries to make good transitions.

Fifth, I want to remind you all of the importance of the 5th United Nations Conference on the Least Developed Countries. With the Programme of Action already adopted, the Doha Conference offers a unique opportunity to focus on implementation.

That includes the focus on key deliverables such as:

- an online university
- an investment support center
- food stockholding
- a new resilience building mechanism
- and graduation support facilities.

Preparations for LDC5 are in full swing, on all tracks: intergovernmental, private sector, civil society, parliamentarians and youth. Every voice will be heard. Every voice will count. Together we will usher in a new era for the 1.1 billion people of the marginalized people of the earth.

I request all of you to ensure participation in the Doha Conference at the Head of State or Head of Government level.

I must put on record the extraordinary support that we have received from the Government of Qatar in preparation of Conference, and the implementation of the DPoA.

We are deeply grateful for the commitment of HH the Emir, Honourable Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister, as well as the Minister of State of Qatar.

I must also put on record the strong leadership and support of Ambassador Alay to make the LDC5 an historical event.

In closing, I also want to recognize the extraordinary role played by the bureau of LDCs under the leadership of Malawi.

Wholehearted congratulations to the newly elected bureau, which will be chaired by Nepal.

You can rest assured of our full support in discharging our responsibilities.

Excellencies,

I look forward to working with you all in delivering for the LDCs. From potential to prosperity.