



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

**Opening Statement by Ms. Rabab Fatima
Under-Secretary-General and High Representative of OHRLS**

Ministerial Meeting on South-South Cooperation

“Renewed partnerships for actionable solutions in support of implementation of the DPoA”

**Exhibition Hall 2
Tuesday, 7 March 2023
09:00 a.m. to 09:30 a.m.**

His Excellency Dr. Saleh Bin Mohammed Al Nabit, President of the Planning and Statistics Authority of the State of Qatar,

His Excellency Rodrigo Malmierca Díaz, Minister of Foreign Trade and Foreign Investment of the Republic of Cuba, and Chairman of the Group of 77 and China,

Excellencies,

Distinguished Colleagues,

I am honoured to join you for the opening of this important meeting, and I am very grateful for your presence here today.

Your presence is a testament to south-south solidarity and lasting bonds.

As you know, this conference represents a once-in-a-decade opportunity for LDCs, to reflect on hard-won development gains, and to work on our blueprint to transform potentials into prosperity.

But we meet at an extraordinary time.

The LDCs find themselves in a confluence of daunting challenges and multiple crises:

- **the devastating impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic**
- **the triple crises of food, fuel and finance**

- a bleak global economic outlook
- and the worsening impacts of climate change

More than ever before, LDCs need renewed and robust partnerships to generate transformative changes in the lives and livelihoods of the 1.2 billion people.

As a crucial means of bringing about change, South-South cooperation has been time-tested. Its strength and vitality has yielded impressive results, not least during the Covid-19 pandemic, when global solidarity was often found wanting.

This partnership also represents enormous untapped potential for the future.

By unlocking this potential, we can boost innovation and forge a broad coalition of partners, both from the North and the South to fast-track sustainable development in the LDCs.

In recent decades, global South partners have provided an increasing volume of development assistance, technology, duty-free and quota-free market access to LDCs and support for human capital development.

And LDCs also have benefited from innovative solutions through knowledge sharing and peer learning.

The Doha Programme of Action for the next decade promises to build on these firm foundations.

The DPOA recognizes the crucial role of South-South and triangular cooperation in supporting the economic growth and sustainable development of the LDCs.

And it emphasizes the need for increased cooperation in the areas of trade, investment, technology transfer, and capacity-building.

It, however, underlines that South-South cooperation and commitments are not a substitute but a complement to North-South cooperation

The timely and full implementation of the DPOA must be a common endeavour.

And in doing so, South-South and triangular cooperation should go hand in hand with North-South cooperation.

An open, transparent, and inclusive dialogue today will help us to assess the current shortfalls and identify innovative and actionable solutions.

Excellencies, Distinguished Guests,

Let me briefly address a few substantive points where South-South cooperation has transformative potential for the decade ahead.

First, would be to harness the potential of South-South cooperation to stimulate technological growth and boost innovation capacity in LDCs.

Southern partners could demonstrate leadership in scaling up the transfer of affordable, easily adaptable, and environmentally sound technologies to LDCs. This can drive structural transformation and help LDCs to develop robust digital economies fit for the future.

The UN Technology Bank for LDCs can be an important conduit for advancing this agenda.

A second area of potential growth is the employment of innovative financing to alleviate financial constraints of LDCs in sustainable development. Development banks in the South can play a critical role in bridging financing gaps in sustainable infrastructure development in ICT, energy and transport in LDCs.

A third priority area recognized by the DPOA, is the need to promote capacity building, knowledge and experience sharing to support LDCs climate resilient transition.

Despite having done the least to cause it, LDCs stand at the forefront of the climate crisis. They can certainly benefit from experiences of the global South partners in developing green industrial policies and in the application of adaptation technologies.

Fourth, the developing countries are increasingly becoming important trading partners of the LDCs.

Many global South partners have already offered DFQF market access to the LDCs. Regional and sub-regional trade agreements can offer further opportunities to unlock the full potentials of South-South trade.

Finally, LDCs need urgent support to build human capital, including digital knowledge and skills. This is particularly true for women and girls.

Building on their domestic successes, global South partners can provide locally relevant approaches to advancing education and skills development in LDCs.

Digital literacy and entrepreneurial education and skills training are already promising areas of South-South cooperation, and further

development of this work promises to yield transformative results in the future.

Excellencies,

There is much to do, but also every reason to be optimistic.

The LDCs are home to vast potentials and opportunities with a growing market, dynamic labor force, and rich natural endowment.

The DPOA contains deliverables to narrow development gaps, and to maximize this potential.

Excellencies,

Robust South-South and triangular cooperation is integral to the coherent and integrated implementation of the DPOA.

In this Decade of Action, LDCs need support from all partners in their efforts to achieve an inclusive, equitable, sustainable, and resilient future.

The DPOA is not a paper exercise, it is a plan for a better future.

Its implementation is in the hands of LDCs.

And in the hands of their partners.

I look forward to hearing about new initiatives, concrete pledges, and innovative partnerships to ensure the effective implementation of the DPOA.

Let us reaffirm our resolve here.

Let us redouble our commitments to the LDCs.

I thank you.