



*As prepared for delivery*

**Statement of Mr. Joshua Setipa, Managing Director for the UN Technology  
Bank for LDCs**

**Side Event: “Empowering LDCs through science, technology and innovation”**

24 February 2021

10:00 – 12:00 Lilongwe

11:00 – 13:00 Istanbul

Lilongwe, Malawi

Honorable Ministers,  
Distinguished delegates, ladies and gentlemen,

Over the past 2 days we have heard speaker after speaker highlight how central science, technology and innovation are critical and central to achieving transformational impact in the LDCs even under these challenging times of COVID19 pandemic.

We also heard how the COVID-19 pandemic has amplified how Science, technology, and innovation (STI) are important to effectively reduce the probability of shocks and build more resilient societies. STI are enablers for countries to not only respond to the current pandemic but to prepare for other global crisis such as HIV/AIDS, Ebola as well as for future pandemics thus LDCs must Build Back Better.

### **Moderator**

Since its operationalization in 2018, the core driving principle of the Technology Bank has been to design programmes that compliment rather than duplicate, that leverage on existing initiatives of partners within and outside the UN system and that listen to governments and other stakeholders and reflect their national priorities.

To fully understand the unique individual countries technology needs and priorities, we launched Technology Needs Assessments in 2019 and were able to conduct them in Bhutan, Guinea- Conakry, The Gambia, Timor-Leste and Uganda before suspending work due to Covid 19 restrictions. We have just launched the second batch of TNA and this will cover Benin, Sierra Leone, Sudan, Djibouti, Sao Tome

and Principe, Kiribati, Haiti, Mozambique, Rwanda, Malawi, Nepal, Zambia, Cambodia, Lesotho and Bangladesh.

A common thread emerging from the TNAs we have conducted to date is that priority should be given to the ICT sector as it is very critical for technology development and implementation which is also important for unlocking the full innovation potential of the LDCs.

In response to the pandemic and realizing the destructive impact it was likely to have on the LDCs given the inherent vulnerabilities of their health care systems, the Technology Bank together with the UNDP, UNCTAD and WHO launched the Tech Access Partnership (TAP), to strengthen developing and least developed countries' manufacturing capacities of essential COVID-19 related equipment, medical diagnostic kits, and medical devices. To date we have transactions in different state of readiness in Uganda, Liberia, Gambia, Lesotho and Zambia among others covering production on N95 masks and assembly of ventilators.

The Technology Bank has also undertaken a comprehensive capacity building programme which has covered key areas such as enhancing research capacity, training in utilisation of satellite technologies for climate change mitigation and disaster management, biotechnology and industrial design. For example, to date our research capacity building programme has trained over 3500 researchers in 43 LDCs, with 64% being males and 36% female.

The Technology Bank is also supporting the establishment and strengthening of Academies of science which as we know play a very critical role of advising governments on STI policy development and implementation. In December 2020, the Angola Academy of Science was launched and will be followed by the Democratic Republic of Congo, the Central African Republic, Malawi, and Lesotho

in 2021. Furthermore, in 2021, the programme will support the establishment of academies in Cambodia, Chad, Liberia, Niger, Sierra Leone and Solomon Islands.

Chair, before I conclude, I wish to highlight a critical issue which is central to the Banks continued ability to support the LDCs. This relates to resources. As you are aware, the Technology Bank relies 100% on extra budgetary sources and is not part of the UN regular budget.

To date, the Bank has benefited from the generous financial support of the host country, Turkey. In addition, Norway, India, Bangladesh and Guinea have also made a financial contribution and this has enabled the Bank to undertake its activities. It is however important for me to note that without resources, the Bank will not function and will fail in its mandate. I therefore appeal to all LDCs and their development partners to provide financial and in-kind support to the Bank.

I thank you