



ECOSOC

United Nations Economic and Social Council

TAKING ACTION TO IMPROVE LIVES

**Annual Ministerial Meeting of the Group of Friends of the Least
Developed Countries**
17 September 2020

Statement by His Excellency Munir Akram, President of ECOSOC

**Excellencies,
Colleagues,
Ladies and gentlemen,**

I thank the Permanent Representative of Malawi, H.E. Dr. Perks Ligoya, as chair of the Least Developed Countries for the invitation.

2. Today, the world is facing a triple challenge: COVID-19, SDG implementations and Climate change.
3. As the Secretary-General has said: ‘inequality define our times’.
4. While ‘leaving no one behind is the rallying cry for the 2030 agenda for sustainable development; inequalities among and within nations have never been so pronounced as they are today.

5. The developed countries have mobilized \$11 TR to recover from the COVID crisis; the developing countries yet to mobilize even a fraction of the estimated \$2.5 TR they need for COVID recovery. Yet, “none of us will be safe from COVID unless all of us are safe”.

6. The Prime Minister of Pkaistan last April, called for Global Initiative for Debt Relief. Pakistan has actively participated in the Secretary General, Prime Minister of Canada and Jamaica’s initiative for financing for development and co lead the Group on debt vulnberability. I fully endorse the position expressed by you Mr. Foreign Minister with regard to the aspirations and demands of the Least Developed Countries (LDCs).

7. Today global solidarity and continued multilateral cooperation is vital.

8. I have identified three priority areas for ECOSOC: financing the SDGs and recovery from COVID-19, sustaibale infrastructure investments; and harnessing science technology and annovation. I plan to pursue these objectives through special meetingsand consultations.

Excellencies,

8. The preparations for the Fifth United Nations Conference on the LDCs, to be held in Doha, Qatar will offer an opportunity to reflect on how to elaborate and implement these policies.

9. The new Programme of Action for the Least Developed Countries should also accelerate the implementation of the 2030 Agenda in LDCs.

10. It will need to include strong commitments by all countries to help the LDCs in building their institutional capacities and mobilizing adequate financial resources.

Excellencies,

11. The LDCs 2021 triennial review, to be undertaken by the Committee for Development Policy (CDP), will decide whether to recommend five countries for graduation: Bangladesh, Lao PDR, Myanmar, Nepal, and Timor-Leste.

12. The CDP, an expert subsidiary body of ECOSOC, will also identify countries that meet the criteria for graduation for the first time.

13. The LDC indicators, however, do not reflect the impact of COVID-19 in 2021.

14. In the discussions at the last session, following discussions facilitated by my delegation the Council advised the CDP to review country-specific impact of COVID-19 and take this information into account when making recommendations.

15. While the 2021 Triennial Review will celebrate LDC's progress, it is essential to remember that LDC graduation does not mean that countries will need less support, particularly considering the current global challenges.

16. The international community must continue to improve ways to support graduating and graduated countries to ensure a smooth transition.

17. The LDC category should translate into prioritization and actual resource allocations for LDCs.

18. I hope the forthcoming General Assembly quadrennial comprehensive policy review of the UN system's operational activities – the QCPR – will review the UN development support to LDCs.

19. I intend to bring these issues for discussion at the joint thematic event that the President of the General Assembly and I will host during the 75th session of the Assembly.

20. It will be an opportunity to continue building a common ground on how the implementation of the 2030 Agenda in LDCs can be accelerated during the Decade of Action and Delivery.

21. The joint thematic event could provide substantive input to the LDCs Conference in 2022.

22. It is my hope that the Group of Friends of LDCs will continue to advocate and mobilize support to enable the LDCs to respond to the triple challenges of COVID, SDGs implementation and Climate change.

I thank you for your kind attention.