

Statement delivered by H.E. Ms. Mahjabeen Khalid Hussain, MP of Bangladesh on behalf of the least developed countries at the General Debate of the Second Committee of the Seventy-second Session of the General Assembly (New York, 2 October 2017)

Mr. Chair,

1. I have the honour to deliver this statement on behalf of forty-seven least developed countries. We align ourselves with the statement made by Ecuador as the Chair of the Group of 77.
2. At the outset, I would like to congratulate you for your election as the Chair of the Second Committee and all members who have been elected to serve in the Bureau of the Committee. We are confident that under your leadership we would be able to conclude the work of the committee efficiently.
3. The theme of this year's General Debate: "Focusing on People: Striving for Peace and a Decent Life for All on a Sustainable Planet" captures the need for a balanced approach to sustainable development for a peaceful world. The deliberations and actions of this committee would play an important role in giving a push for the implementation of the 2030 Agenda.
4. The least developed countries continue to be plagued with multiple structural challenges. Out of 23 countries that are facing high severity and magnitude of acute food insecurity, 18 are LDCs with a combined population of around 72 million. Under the current growth trajectory, nearly 35 per cent of the population in least developed countries could remain in extreme poverty by 2030. The long-standing challenges are compounded by new and emerging challenges, such as climate change, increased incidences of natural disasters and public health emergencies, conflicts, declining commodity prices and rising capital outflows.
5. We would also like to mention that the LDCs in conflict and post-conflict situations and those experiencing political instability, or unable to deliver basic State services, require context-specific approaches, including targeted national policies and international support measures to address these challenges and to support peacebuilding, State-building activities and sustainable development.
6. We are concerned, and this has been reflected in the Report of the Secretary general on Progress towards the Sustainable Development Goals 2017 and other studies conducted by the UN, that LDCs remain far below many of the targets of the SDGs. This concern leads us to the conclusion that with the current pace of development, LDCs would not be able to meet the target set by the Istanbul Program of Action of the graduation of half of

the LDCs by 2020. Hence, the special needs of these countries must have a wider recognition.

7. We welcome with appreciation the findings and recommendations of the report of the Secretary-General on Crisis Mitigation and Resilience Building for LDCs. In this regard, we urge that a comprehensive multi-stakeholder resilience-building mechanism for LDCs be established. This would entail a number of measures to be established or revitalized at the national, regional and global levels to respond to various types of disasters and shocks as elaborated in the report of the Secretary-General.
8. The onus of development lies primarily with us, the least developed countries. There are visible efforts made by the LDCs to align existing policies with the 2030 Agenda. While we are doing our bit, the international community must deliver on their commitments to provide us with all sorts of support crucial for our success. There must be participatory, cooperative and enabling environments at all levels to support the least developed countries.
9. The widespread, unprecedented impacts of climate change disproportionately burden the poorest and most vulnerable countries, especially LDCs. We are concerned that LDCs are still far from addressing their actual finance needs to implement the Paris Agreement. We, therefore, call upon our development partners to ensure effective delivery on climate change commitments and access by the least developed countries to all relevant climate change-related funds.
10. Official development assistance continues to be the largest and a critical source of external financing for the development of the least developed countries. We express our deep concern that total ODA from OECD-DAC countries to LDCs declined in nominal terms from US\$41 billion in 2014 to US\$37.3 billion in 2015 and the preliminary data for 2016 shows that bilateral net ODA to LDCs further decreased by 3.9 per cent in real terms compared to 2015. We call upon all development partners to fulfil the ODA related internationally agreed targets.
11. With regard to trade, we have reasons to be deeply concerned. In 2015, merchandise exports of the least developed countries contracted by 25 per cent, a significantly bigger drop than in 2014 and further declined by 6 per cent in 2016, resulting in a considerable decline in their share of world merchandise exports, standing at 0.94 per cent in 2016. This trend must be reversed and our development and trading partners have a big role to play here.
12. We look forward to a greater foreign direct investment in our countries as means to address productive capacity building and full and productive employment creation. We

reiterate our call for implementation of the Investment Promotion Regime for the LDCs as a SDG target.

13. Recognizing the contribution of migrants and remittances in our economies, we strongly urge partner countries to start taking actions in line with the targets stipulated in the 2030 Agenda to facilitate orderly, safe, regular and responsible migration and mobility of people, including through the implementation of planned and well-managed migration policies.
14. Science, technology and innovation can be effective tools for furthering development in the LDCs. We welcome the establishment and operationalization of the Technology Bank for the LDCs. There must be bigger efforts to mobilize resources for its sustenance and effective functioning.
15. We are encouraged that notwithstanding persisting challenges and constraints, several least developed countries have met the criteria for graduation and some others have announced their intention to reach the status of graduation by or around 2020. We reiterate that the existing processes related to graduation and smooth transition should be strengthened so that graduating and recently graduated countries would not face any disruption of their development trajectory, including challenges and uncertainties in achieving the SDGs.
16. The United Nations has been a long-standing development partner of the LDCs. We express our serious concerns at the fact that the share of expenditure for operational activities for development of the United Nations system in the LDCs is declining. We urge the United Nations development system to continue to prioritize allocations to least developed countries.

Mr. Chair,

17. The Second Committee is assigned to work on a host of issues. The diversity in agenda items provides us with the opportunity to address the complexities in development discourse. We hope that through the works of the Second Committee, global partnership would be revitalized for providing support to the LDCs in particular for the eradication of poverty, the promotion of inclusive growth and the implementation of social protection systems. The Committee must reiterate that full and timely implementation of the Addis Ababa Action Agenda, in particular those parts that relate to least developed countries, is of vital importance for them. We remain committed to constructively engage with all Member States in the Committee to push its agendas forward.

I thank you.