

**Statement delivered by Hon'ble Minister for Planning of Bangladesh H.E. Mr. A H M
Mustafa Kamal on behalf of the Least Developed Countries at the
General Debate of the High-level Political Forum on Sustainable Development
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Trusteeship Council, United Nations**

Thank you, Mr. President.

I have the honour to deliver this statement on behalf of the Group of LDCs. We align ourselves with the statement made by Egypt on behalf of G77 and China.

We would like to appreciate you for convening this session of the High Level Political Forum.

As we are aware, the 2030 Agenda provides the least developed countries the opportunity to bolster their efforts to overcome the structural impediments, ensure good governance, establish human rights and gender equality, and pursue sustainable development and inclusive growth. However, it also recognizes the LDCs as the poorest and most vulnerable countries of the world who need enhanced global support to meet its targets. The success of the SDGs would also contribute to the implementation of the Istanbul Programme of Action.

Let me highlight the status of implementation of some of the goals that the HLPF is reviewing in its current cycle which are reflected in the Secretary General's report and its statistical annex.

Under SDG 6, the proportion of population using safely managed drinking water services in 2015 was 71.2% globally, while it was only 33.4% in LDCs. Under SDG7, the proportion of population with access to electricity was 87.4% worldwide in 2016, which was only 44.8 per cent in LDCs. Universal access to electricity in all LDCs by 2030 would require 12 billion USD to 40 billion USD per year. Under SDG 11, on average, the percentage of the urban population living in slums was 62.67 per cent in 2014 against the global figure of 23 per cent.

We are deeply concerned over the fact that we hardly see any progress in the implementation of the SDG 17.

Total net official development assistance (ODA) from DAC donors was 41.2 USD billion in 2010, which has declined to 39.1 billion in 2016. We are frustrated seeing no significant progress in the establishment of the Investment Promotion Regime for the LDCs. Debt service as a proportion of exports of goods and services was 3.5 per cent in 2010 and since then it has more than doubled reaching 8.6 per cent in 2016.

In this connection, I would like to express my concern about the global economy also. Recently, IMF has expressed its deep concern that the world debt is growing fast, which currently amounts to 164 trillion USD or 225% of total world GDP. Debt has increased by two folds for the low-income countries in last two years. Economic globalization has suffered setbacks and we have witnessed the rise of inward-looking and protectionist tendencies in some countries' policies, particularly in trade, and the growth of anti-globalization thinking. Ultimately, the LDCs are facing serious threat from different directions, including increased debt burden, lesser amount of ODA and impediments to future trade expansions.

There has been some progress in access to internet and broadband connectivity. However, the rate is still very low, as the fixed Internet broadband subscriptions per 100 inhabitants is only 1.10 and proportion of individuals using the internet is 15.6 per cent in LDCs.

Furthermore, the LDCs are highly vulnerable and exposed to various kinds of shocks and crises, which include those related to environment and climate change, disasters, floods, droughts, cyclones, epidemics, conflicts, and other calamities. According to some estimates, between 2010 and 2017, over 249 million people were affected in LDCs by various shocks and crises.

All the factors culminate into one idea which is that the required amount of funding may not be available to deliver the 2030 Agenda in a timely manner.

Given the magnitude of challenges that LDCs are facing, reinvigorated efforts are required at all levels to mobilize resources and provide technical assistance for building capacity and resilience against shocks.

We would reiterate our call to all our development partners to reverse the declining trend in their support and to fulfil the quantifiable targets set out under goal 17, especially those related to ODA, FDI, debt relief, technology transfer, capacity building and addressing systemic issues. These should complement LDCs' sustained efforts aiming at resource mobilization domestically, strong social safety net programmes, fiscal buffers against shocks and market-based insurance programmes.

The Technology Bank for the LDCs in Turkey, the establishment of which signifies meeting the first SDG target, would need technical and financial support bridge the technology gaps in the LDCs.

As a growing number of LDCs are meeting the graduation threshold, it is important to bring the vulnerabilities after graduation into the mainstream sustainable development discourse. We urge the development and trading partners to continue their support to the graduating and the graduated LDCs for a sustainable graduation.

I would conclude requesting you Mr. President to ensure more time in the HLPF dedicated to the discussion on the challenges LDCs facing in the implementation of the 2030 Agenda.

Thank you.