**Press Release**

**Bangladesh and Canada lead a transformative and ambitious agenda for the 5th LDC Conference**

**New York, 24 May 2021:**

Today, Ambassador Rabab Fatima, Permanent Representative of Bangladesh to the UN and Ambassador Bob Ray, Permanent Representative of Canada jointly convened the first Session of the Preparatory Committee (PrepCom) meeting of the Fifth United Nations Conference (LDC-5) on the Least Developed Countries (LDCs) at the UN Headquarters in New York. They were elected as the co-chairs of the PrepCom at its organizational session in February 2021. The LDC-5 conference will be held in DOHA, Qatar in January 2022.

The LDC-V conference is envisaged to be one of the biggest UN conferences in 2022. The next programme of Action for the LDCs is expected to come up with a new global compact to address both the immediate and structural issues of the LDCs. As a Co-Chair, Bangladesh will also have the opportunity to move forward some of its key priorities including sustainable graduation and international support measures for graduation. Notably, UN recommended Bangladesh to graduate from the LDC category in February, 2021.

The President of the Republic of Malawi Lazarus McCarthy Chakwera joined the meeting virtually as a keynote speaker in his capacity as the global Chair of the LDCs. As the host of the LDC-5 conference, the State Minister for Foreign Affairs of Qatar Soltan bin Saad Al-Muraikhi also delivered a keynote speech. Among others, President of the UN General Assembly Volkan Bozkir, President of the ECOSOC Munir Akram, UN Deputy Secretary-General Ms. Amina J. Mohammed OECD Development Assistance Committee Chair Ms. Susanna Moorehead, and USG, OHRLLS Ms. Fekitamoeloa Katoa Utoikamanu, spoke at the meeting.

The General Debate was addresses by a large number of Member States including important development partners, who highlighted serious consequences facing LDCs due to the pandemic and expressed solidarity and partnership towards an ambitious 10-year Programme of Action for the LDCs.

Highlighting multidimensional challenges posed by the COVID-19 pandemic to the LDCs, Ambassador Fatima identified access to COVID-19 vaccines as the top priority for the LDCs. She said, “ if this issue is not addressed immediately, LDCs will face serious humanitarian and economic misery for years to come. ”

She stressed the need for an incentives-based graduation package for the graduating and graduated countries from LDCs as they are at a high risk of sliding back—both by the COVID-19 impact and the loss of LDC specific support measures.

Among other things, she also underscored the multidimensional challenges and vulnerabilities faced by the LDCs in the areas of poverty and inequality, trade, climate change, external debt, migration and remittances.

 This meeting sets in motion the substantive work for the LDC5 Conference to be held in Doha, Qatar in January 2022. It will continue through the week. Bangladesh Foreign Minister Dr. A. K. Abdul Momen, M.P.​ and Information and Communication Technology Affairs Adviser to the Prime Minister Sajeeb Ahmed Wazed are expected to participate in different thematic sessions of the meeting later this week.

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