MYANMAR

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Statement by Mr. Htin Linn Maung, Adviser of the Myanmar Delegation under Agenda Item 21: Groups of Countries in Special Situations, sub-item (a) Follow up to the Fourth United Nations Conference on the Least Developed Countries at the Second Committee of the 74th Session of the United Nations General Assembly (New York, 18 October 2018)

Mr. Chairman,

Myanmar aligns itself with the statements delivered by distinguished representatives of Palestine on behalf of the Group of 77 and China, Laos on behalf of ASEAN and Malawi on behalf of LDCs.

We thank the Secretary-General for his comprehensive report on the implementation of the Istanbul Programme of Action (IPoA) for LDCs.

Mr. Chairman,

The world is facing formidable challenges. Increasing trade tension, slowing economic growth, raising inequality and unemployment continue to impede the pace of progress in many countries especially LDCs. Adverse effects of climate change and natural disasters further compound the challenges. Against this backdrop, least developed countries are most vulnerable group of the countries.

The Istanbul Program of Action is a comprehensive development framework to reduce poverty and achieve structural transformation in LDCs. Unless the special attention is given to LDCs to address the emerging challenges, achieving the targets of Istanbul Programme of Action for LDCs will remain elusive.

With only one and a half years left to implement IPoA, let me highlight the following important points in this august meeting:

Firstly, availability of the funding is essential for the effective implementation of global development agenda including IPoA and Sustainable Development Goals. Official Development Assistance (ODA) continues to be a critical source of external financing for the development of the LDCs. However, it is disheartening to note that share of ODA to LDCs still remains at 0.09 percent of the donor's GNI. We encourage our donor countries to fully comply with the Addis Ababa ODA targets for LDCs. Moreover, we wish to invite the international organizations such as IMF, WTO, UNCTAD and other financial institutions to support LDCs to overcome basic challenges they face and to achieve IPoA.

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Secondly, the development of ICT is extremely important at the age of globalization. Most of the LDCs are lagging behind in this critical area which is key driver for transformation. We welcome the establishment of the Technology Bank for LDCs. We thank the Government of Turkey and UN-OHRLLS for their support in its operationalization. We encourage donor countries to provide financial support to make the Bank operational to enhance ICT development in all LDCs.

Third, the importance of energy in our development agenda can hardly be overemphasized. Although most of the LDCs are blessed with abundant sources of renewable energy, access to electricity in LDCs is still limited. To attain universal access to affordable, reliable and modern energy, a higher level of investment in infrastructure will be required. We therefore encourage our development partners to support the development of energy sector in LDCs.

Fourth, Public-private partnerships are an important source of funding and expertise for infrastructure investment and maintenance. However, investment in infrastructure that includes private sector participation has remained at minimal levels in LDCs. We need to create the enabling environment for private sector participation.

Mr. Chairman,

Istanbul Programme of Action (IPOA) set an ambitious target of graduating half of the LDCs by 2020. Despite the challenges they face, LDCs have been making efforts to implement the Istanbul Program of Action with the support of development partners. For the first time in the history of the LDC Group, 12 LDCs have met the graduation criteria. This is indeed a significant development that shows the efforts of LDCs to meet the targets of the Istanbul Program of Action.

To ensure smooth transition to graduation with sustainable economic growth, financial and technical supports from development partners are essential. In this respect, we look forward to receiving continued support from the United Nations particularly UNOHRLLS, and our development partners in our efforts to graduation.

Mr. Chairman,

As IPoA targets and SDGs are interlinked and reinforcing each other, Myanmar has integrated the IPoAs and SDGs into its Myanmar Sustainable Development Plan-MSDP (2018-2030). Guided by MSDP, the Government of Myanmar has undertaken a series of reforms to remove economic distortions.

As a result, Myanmar has experienced rapid growth in recent years, becoming one of the region's fastest growing economies with an annual growth rate of 6.5% in 2018-

2019. In 2018 Triennial Review of Committee on Development Policy (CDP), Myanmar has met all LDC gradation criteria for the first time. I am of the view that the graduation must be smooth as well as sustainable. We are now intensifying our development efforts to build ground for sustainable graduation.

Myanmar thanks the Government of Qatar for its offer to host the Fifth United Nations Conference on Least Developed Countries in Doha in 2021. We would like to strongly suggest that our next programme of Action should focus on the experience, best practices and lesson learned in the implementation of IPoA.

Mr. Chairman,

The targets of IPoA and Sustainable Development Goals will not be achieved by business-as-usual. We need transformation and innovation to speed up, step up and scale up our efforts for more action and more partnership. In concluding, I would like to reaffirm Myanmar's commitment to accelerating the momentum of implementation of IPoA towards achieving sustainable development for all.

I thank you, Mr. Chairman.