



## **Thank you, Chair.**

Afghanistan aligns itself with the statement delivered by the representative of Guinea on behalf of the Group of 77 and China, the statement delivered by the representative of Malawi on behalf of the Least Developed Countries, and the statement delivered by the representative of Kazakhstan on behalf of the Landlocked Developing Countries.

As a Least Developed Country, Afghanistan takes this opportunity to re-emphasize the importance of the Fifth United Nations Conference on LDCs and a robust preparatory process that builds the necessary consensus for a bold and progressive Programme of Action.

Afghanistan welcomes the election of the bureau members and wish them success. Afghanistan assures you of our full cooperation and stands ready to support you. We further welcome the election of Canada and Bangladesh as co-chairs.

Further, allow me to thank Turkey for hosting the successful Fourth UN Conference on LDCs in 2011, during which we adopted the Istanbul Programme of Action. We are grateful for Turkey's continued support to LDCs and action for the implementation of the IPoA.

We thank Qatar for their briefing on the status of preparations for the conference. We are encouraged by the steps taken so far. I also want to reiterate Afghanistan's gratitude to Qatar for hosting the conference and for their generous support to LDCs.

Afghanistan also thanks USG 'Utoikamanu and her team for their extraordinary efforts to facilitate a successful conference and for their valuable support to countries in special situations. We are also grateful for the PGA's special attention to the plight of our countries and for creating the Advisory Board for LDCs, LLDCs and SIDS.

## **Dear colleagues,**

We are happy to meet today to kick-start the preparations for LDC5 and to see us moving forward with the conference despite the lingering challenges posed by COVID-19.

Afghanistan looks forward to being deeply engaged in the preparatory process leading up to the conference. Our preparations must be based on a systematic study of the implementation of the IPoA and an analysis of the restraints and challenges faced by LDCs. The two regional reviews are critical in this regard.

