

Opening Remarks by

Ms. Rabab Fatima

Under-Secretary-General and High Representative for LDCs,  
LLDCs and SIDS at the FFD4 Prep. Comm.

Side Event: *Aligning International Development Cooperation  
with Country Needs and Priorities: Challenges and Way Forward*

Tuesday 11 February 2025

3:00 p.m. - 4:30 pm

Room CR-6, UNHQ, New York

Co-organized by UN-OHRLLS,

Amb. Lok Bahadur Thapa  
Amb. Antonio Manuel Lagdameo  
Amb. Chola Milambo,  
USG Li Junhua,  
Excellencies, Distinguished Colleagues,

We are very pleased to organize this event with the Permanent Missions of Nepal, the Philippines, Zambia, and UN DESA/FSDO, on aligning international development cooperation with country needs and priorities.

The event's theme is very relevant. We are in the midst of multifaceted global crisis, yet financing gap for SDGs is widening. With the 2030 fastú t

The COVID-19 pandemic reversed hard-won progress. Extreme poverty in LDCs rose from 32% in 2019 to 35% in 2022.

Debt levels are alarming. Median public debt in LDCs surged to 56% in 2022; while 40% of SIDS are now in debt distress. And about a third of the LLDCs are facing serious debt challenges.

For many, debt servicing exceeds critical investments in health, education, and climate resilience.

Food insecurity is another pressing challenge. 60% of LDC populations face hunger. By 2025, 258 million people could experience acute food shortages. And over half of the population in the LLDCs - 58% - face moderate to severe food insecurity.

Meanwhile, development financing remains grossly inadequate. The SDG financing gap in developing countries has reached \$4 trillion annually, with LDCs, LLDCs and SIDS facing acute shortfall.

ODA commitments remain below target, and alignment with country priorities is insufficient.



robust mechanisms for inclusive dialogue. The DPOA commits to ensuring ODA commitments with LDCs' national priorities. Studies show that this can enhance effectiveness by 2-3 times. This is also true for LLDCs and SIDS.

**Third**, enhancing predictability and long-term partnerships is necessary. We must move away from short-term, project-based aid towards long-term, programmatic approaches that ensures stability and sustained impact. Innovative financing solutions must be explored.

**Fourth**, reducing fragmentation will enhance efficiency. Expanding pooled funds and strengthening country-led coordination can reduce

Excellencies,

FFD4

forget, that we cannot win the battle of SDGs without first making progress on the ground in these countries.

I thank you all.

