

- Your Excellencies, distinguished colleagues, thank you for the invitation to this annual ministerial meeting.
- I started as a minister for foreign trade and development three months ago. It is great to talk with you today.
- The Covid-19 pandemic, conflicts and Russia's unprovoked war on Ukraine have had negative impacts around the world, but the least developed countries have been hit the hardest.
- We have to change this. I want to assure you that Finland is a great supporter of Sustainable Development Goals.
- Finland developed from a war-torn agrarian society to what we are today. Some cornerstones of our development have been democracy, education, gender equality and using the potential of technology and innovation.
- Finland has supported LDC countries since the beginning of our development assistance and we continue to build partnerships.
- Finland contributes to development also as part of the EU. In 2022, EU and its Member States collectively provided 43% of global assistance. Global Gateway is the EU's effective contribution to pursue the SDGs.
- In 2021 Finland, together with UN, we organised the first [LDC Forum](#). Next forum will be held in the beginning of 2024. We have agreed to organise five more Forums annually.
- The purpose is to bring together researchers and policy makers from LDC countries and elsewhere to find common solutions. LDC permanent representatives to UN will be invited. [JATKUU ]

- The theme of each Forum is based on the Doha Program of Action. The next Forum will focus on the role of innovation in the structural transformation of societies.
- I look forward to cooperation with UN and especially the LDC countries, as well as welcoming your representatives to Helsinki.