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Make no mistake, the aspirations set out in the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development are in great jeopardy.

Far from recording the expected progress, we must now report that the number of people in extreme poverty has increased for the first time in a generation. The share of working poor has also increased for the first time in two decades.

Over the first two years of the pandemic, over 100 million more people have been pushed into extreme poverty. LDCs, as so often, have been the hardest hit. A business-as-usual approach will leave more than 350 million people in LDCs languishing in extreme poverty by 2030.

But this is not inevitable. Together, we can shift gears and drive towards transformative change. And I want to share with you five key points in this regard:

- the recently agreed Doha Programme of Action for LDCs is a highly ambitious document. The DPOA gives a clear blueprint for the international community about what needs to be done by all stakeholders. This is not a vague wish list, it tells the international community what to do, as well as when and how.

The new Programme represents a new generation of commitments to achieve a decade of unparalleled development progress in the LDCs. Successful

implementation of the programme will address the ongoing challenges and structural vulnerabilities of LDCs. It will build resilience against future shocks. And accelerate the implementation of the 2030 Agenda.

We must turn this opportunity into action and transform potentials into prosperity. We must not regret in 2031 that the Doha Programme was a missed opportunity.

- As I said at the outset, the LDCs face extraordinary challenges and constraints, but these countries also represent enormous human, cultural and natural resource potentials. LDCs have the potential to become the global frontier market in terms of production, consumption, distribution and value chain networks.

These are young, talented nations. Vulnerable, but vibrant. I am certain that from the millions of young people, and a growing working-age population, we will see more and more development leaders who can drive transformative change for themselves and for the world. Together we must develop new strategies to unleash the enormous opportunities that LDCs offer.

Part of the answer can be found in my . And this relates to the extraordinary potential offered by science, technology and innovation.

At present a new wave of digital inequality is deepening the divide between LDCs and the rest of the world. This must be reversed. Strengthened



, I want to remind you all of the importance of the 5<sup>th</sup> United Nations Conference on the Least Developed Countries. With the Programme of Action already adopted, the Doha Conference offers a unique opportunity to focus on implementation.

That includes the focus on key deliverables such as:

- an online university
- an investment support center
- food stockholding
- a new resilience building mechanism
- and graduation support facilities.

Preparations for LDC5 are in full swing, on all tracks: intergovernmental, private sector, civil society, parliamentarians and youth. Every voice will be heard. Every voice will count. Together we will usher in a new era for the 1.1 billion people of the marginalized people of the earth.

I request all of you to ensure participation in the Doha Conference at the Head of State or Head of Government level.

I must put on record the extraordinary support that we have received from the Government of Qatar in preparation of Conference, and the implementation of the DPoA.

