Ms. Amina Mohammed, Special Adviser to the Secretary General on the post-2015 Agenda

Thank you very much,

Co-Chairs,

President of ECOSOC,

Excellencies,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Let me begin by adding my appreciation to our Host, Ambassador Acharya and the Government of Austria for giving me this opportunity to join you in discussing the post-2015 Development Agenda in the context of LLDCs. This is happening at a really opportune moment as we receive all the outputs of the intergovernmental processes and begin that last mile of negotiations next year toward September 2015.

Just to take us back a bit. What Rio did that was different from everything else that we had done in the past, was member states determining that they would take the lead and they would determine the shape of the next development agenda. When that happened, there was a lot of criticism about the prescription of the MDGs, and that we all laud how well they have done, even though so much more needs to be done. It’s unfinished business. But we did say member states taking the lead, ownership, so that when we came to 2015, we wouldn’t spend five years trying to understand what this new set of goals was, that we would in fact begin a transition owning the agenda from the MDGs to the SDGs.

So at this point, I would like to commend the member states, the work that they have done so far – of the Open Working Group in producing the set of goals that they have and their targets; the Financing for Development experts group that also produced a report that gave us the skeleton of what they feel we can do to resource this new agenda; the structured dialogues that we have had on technologies; and then last but not least, the accountability consultations that happened in the General Assembly but also at the regional level. The engagement of the LLDCs in all of this process has been absolutely crucial. There have been key inputs for what we see as a new agenda that articulates universality, transformation, the integration of a sustainable development agenda, and one that leaves no one behind, that gives everyone a life of dignity, that really turns around the discussion that we have on development and has in a way that we haven’t had it before – that it’s about all of us. It is only going to be as good as we treat and we see the poorest and most vulnerable members of our global family, and if we take that as a litmus test, then we surely will be making an inclusive agenda a reality.
As previous speakers have articulated, we do recognize the specific vulnerabilities and special needs. There has been an enormous amount of lessons learned, research and documentation on what we need to do, so we are not short on those ideas, and they have found their way into the Open Working Group’s Sustainable Development Goals. This platform that you have for us in these few days is really very important to reflect on how far we have come in this journey and what we need to have to reinforce it as we go forward. Looking at the convergence between what we see as the priories of the LLDCs and that of the Open Working Group, we can see that they address sustainable economic growth and job creation, that infrastructure is included, that we have dealt with the issues of inequalities, urbanization, energy, sustainable consumption, production. We have also filled the notable gap in the MDG framework on the environmental dimension of the agenda, and there that has been articulate by targets on energy, climate change and desertification. We have also included a goal on promoting peaceful societies. We placed a lot of emphasis on the means of implementation, specific references to domestic resource mobilization, ODA, aid for trade, South-South and triangular cooperation, and really looking at how regional banks would play a greater role. In fact what we have done is said that there are so many things that are really mutually reinforcing in an agenda that brings all of us together in partnership. The report of the Financing Committee has also been in line with the priorities identified in the Programme of Actions, although it does not specifically refer to LLDCs, or any other types of countries. It underscores the need for more diverse sources of development financing and sets out similar options to unlock the tremendous resources that will be required for the post-2015 Development Agenda.

There has also been really broad recognition that putting technology at the service of poverty eradication and sustainable development is an essential part of the transformation that is going to be required by the new agenda. After the Open Working Group suggested to fully operationalize the technology bank and the science, technology and innovation capacity building mechanism, the structured dialogues on the transfer and dissemination of clean and environmentally sound technologies, these all provide an opportunity for us to engage with. They could also contribute effectively to the economic growth and sustainable development of LLDCs.

We have also been able to welcome the diversity, not just of the audience here but of that interaction with the whole intergovernmental process, and we need to keep that momentum going. I think the opportunity to discuss and hear from you today will help us close the gap of those who have been having this discussion at the level of New York and sometimes Geneva with the sectors in the countries that matter, because in the end what will matter is how we implement this on the ground. And with the best ideas in the world, if we don’t land these in countries that can transition with them from the get-go, then we will suffer the same consequences of the MDGs – a lack of ownership in terms of the new agenda. We must try to keep this momentum in the next year. The number of goals and especially the targets you alluded to on desertification are not a done deal. There is a year to go where we have to look at these 17 goals, 169 targets. Many argue these are very many, but I would suggest we need to look at the substance of what we provided. How we communicate that to the country level
is a different thing, but the substance of it, really articulating what we need in terms of actions on a political agenda that is not legally binding is going to be important over the next year. And therefore really looking at the things that we have done that have worked and how we can take these to scale in the next agenda, beginning to work out how we become more fit for the purpose of the country level, as governments, as donors, as civil society, and the UN system, as we move forward toward trying to make this a reality.

The Secretary General’s synthesis report, as asked by the member states, is an opportunity to bring all these streams of work together and to help provide clarity and focus, momentum and ambition for the year of the negotiation, and what it will do is respect the balance that has been achieved in the outcome of the Open Working Group and carry through the member states’ work by offering ways to communicate this at the country level for implementation and in particular the implications for monitoring and review.

On that note, I would bring us to a deeper discussion of the accountability mechanism that we will require for an agenda that, as I said, is not legally binding. This is voluntary, a political agenda that really needs to be brought behind what is a very substantive framework. The exact arrangement still remains to be determined. The High Level Political Forum and ECOSOC still continue to put in those issues, though broad outlines have emerged. What we do need is a robust, inclusive and transparent accountability mechanism that will promote the implementation of the post-2015 Development Agenda. And this means that we have to recognize the new partners. The president of ECOSOC alluded to this as well. A discussion needs to happen on how we engage with partners, understanding that we must all be held to account in the different roles and responsibilities that we take in this new agenda. Businesses are new. Some think it’s a surprise, but parliamentarians are new to this discourse as well, and they are key for they determine the laws, the appropriation on resource and the oversight on what we do at the national level. All of these need to be partners in discussing how we define moving forward on this agenda. Of course we will see civil society who have been with us long, but we will also see many new faces from academia and others that we need to facilitate in terms of their engagement. A key component for this and lessons learned from the MDGs in the way in which we monitored and reviewed our progress has been the absence of credible data. And the high-level panel of experts that we put together by the Secretary-General called for a data revolution. Recently an advisory panel for the data revolution was put in place, and we hope that by the end of this week we can share that report that really tries to determine what we should recognize as being the common the consensus of a data revolution. It’s already happening. We know that we need it if we want to make sure we actually tackle this aggregated data that we need, the ones that slip through the cracks, the investments that can be better made, and we hope that this can go toward helping the negotiations by providing more of a robust basis for the indicators that would soon have to be articulated for accounting and monitoring this agenda.

I think that we still need to have this discussion much more at the country level. As I have said before, many of the priorities that we articulate, that we see in the Open Working Group and others, I believe by the end of this session and in the next couple of days you will have an Outcome Document. I think one really has to look at what we say in these different fora and
measures it up with the representatives who are shaping this new agenda. There is often a disconnect between what happens in New York and what happens at the country level, what happens at the regional level and what happens in rooms like this. And yet we are all of the same countries. We are all representing different parts of a development agenda. If we are asking for a place in this agenda, then we need to align those ambitions and make sure that we are reinforcing ambitions, the ambition that we need for the challenges and the complexities in the world that we have today.

2015 is a real opportunity, and I think will end by saying that there are a few milestones that the intergovernmental negotiations are going to come about in the next year. Certainly the synthesis report and what I hear today helps us strengthen the inputs into the synthesis report of the Secretary-General. But so too does it help with the financing for development process we have our member states negotiating. That will end July next year in Addis Ababa. If it doesn’t take strong commitments to Addis for the Sustainable Development Agenda, then our Agenda remains rhetoric. So there are all sorts of issues that will come up as to how this will not happen, then I would ask that we look at the implications of not having concrete outcomes in July, and that there is an opportunity for us to address how we can do this together.

It is going to be important for us to look at the UNFCCC negotiations. Yes, they are a different track. Yes, they are legally binding, and they are not part of this, but they do have an incredible amount to bring to this discussion. There are the synergies between climate change and development. They are not separate issues to a minister of finance when they address a budget every day, looking at floods and mitigation and adaptation in their development concerns. These are one and the same to them. How do we bring that closer together and recognize that they are actually mutually reinforcing while respecting the two different processes?

Finally, I would say that we have an opportunity in a lifetime. This is a generation that can eradicate poverty within the next 15 years. We have all the solutions that need to do it. What we really need is not just the political will but the courage to take the action behind the political will we sing on to over the next year.

Thank you.