

**Opening Remarks for the Virtual LDCs/SIDS Trust Fund**

**Workshop for the Asia Region**

H.E. Ms. Nazhat Shameem Khan, President of the Human Rights  
Council

Wednesday, 24 November 14h00

Your Excellency Mr. Abdulla Shahid, President of the United Nations  
General Assembly,

Your Excellency Mr. Ahmed Khaleel, Minister of State for Foreign  
Affairs of the Republic of the Maldives,

Your Excellency Dr. Asim Ahmed, Permanent Representative of the  
Republic of the Maldives,

Mr. Mahamane Cissé-Gouro, Director, Human Rights Council and  
Treaty Mechanisms Division,

Mr. Eric Tistounet, Chief, Human Rights Council Branch of the  
OHCHR,

Distinguished delegates, present and former beneficiary delegates of  
the Trust Fund from the Asian, African, Caribbean and Pacific regions,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Bula Vinaka and good day.

It is a pleasure to speak with you all during this opening ceremony of  
the LDCs/SIDS Trust Fund Workshop for the Asia Region.

At the outset, allow me to thank the Republic of the Maldives for hosting this workshop as well as the OHCHR and its LDCs/SIDS Trust Fund for organising it.

I would also like to take a moment to recognise the role of the Republic of the Maldives in ensuring the success of the Trust Fund. Not only did the Republic of the Maldives play a key role in establishing the Trust Fund through resolution 19/26 in 2012, the Republic of the Maldives has, since then, continued to serve as a champion for the engagement of LDCs and SIDS with the Council. I am convinced that these efforts have contributed to make the Council a more inclusive and, thus, a more effective body.

In this connection, I would like to state that the regional workshops for the Trust Fund, organised pursuant to resolution 34/40, have proven an effective tool to increase LDCs and SIDS engagement with the Council.

In fact, I have first-hand experience with the effectiveness of the regional workshops. In 2019, my own country, Fiji, hosted a regional workshop for the Pacific region. And earlier this year I attended the virtual workshop for the Africa region.

Based on my experiences, I can say that these regional workshops are a good opportunity both to take stock of the achievements, challenges and lessons learned regarding the engagement of LDCs/SIDS with the Council and to discuss how to further strengthen their engagement with the Council.

Excellencies,

2021 has been particularly important year for the engagement of LDCs/SIDS with the Council for three specific reasons.

First, this year the Bureau of the Council has consisted of three LDCs/SIDS serving as Vice Presidents: H.E. Ms. Keva Lorraine Bain of the Commonwealth of the Bahamas as Vice President from the GRULAC region; H.E. Mr. Ali Ibn Abi Talib Abdelrahman Mahmoud of the Republic of the Sudan as Vice President from the African region; and, subsequently replacing the Vice President from the Republic of the Sudan, H.E. Ms. Ebyan Mahamed Salah of the Federal Republic of Somalia.

This is in addition to my service as President of the Council, from the Republic of Fiji.

Second, this year, 19 delegates from LDCs/SIDS were able to join us in Geneva for the June and September sessions, respectively. In fact, at the 48<sup>th</sup> session of the Council, the Trust Fund supported 16 delegates in their participation with the Council, the second largest cohort since 2014.

Third, the Council adopted texts particularly important for LDCs/SIDS this year.

For example, the Council adopted a decision during its 46<sup>th</sup> session deciding to convene, during the high-level segment of its forty-ninth session in 2022, a high-level panel discussion on the occasion of the

tenth anniversary of the LDCs/SIDS Trust Fund. This was sponsored and co-sponsored by 160 UN Member States, which is a testament to the strong support for the Trust Fund and its role in increasing inclusivity at the Council.

And, at its 48<sup>th</sup> session, the Council adopted resolutions recognizing that a clean, healthy and sustainable environment is a human right and establishing a new Special Rapporteur on climate change, respectively, both of which are priorities for LDCs/SIDS.

Excellencies, Distinguished delegates

In closing, I would like to say that this workshop is an opportunity for us, LDCs/SIDS from all the continents, to advocate for the promotion and protection of human rights, to articulate challenges to the implementation of those rights and to consider how to better promote LDCs/SIDS participation with the Council, especially in the context of the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic. In this regard, I encourage all participants, and in particular former beneficiaries of the Fund, to take an active part in the discussions and make concrete suggestions for the outcome document of the workshop.

I wish you all a very fruitful, stimulating and productive workshop.

Vinaka vakalevu and I thank you.