Parliamentary Forum at the 5th United Nations Conference for the Least Developed Countries

Geneva, 5 November 2021

Dear Madam President,

Dear Mr. President,

We are honoured to write to you today to encourage your parliament’s participation in the Parliamentary Forum at the 5th United Nations Conference on the Least Developed Countries (LDC5), from 22 to 27 January, in Doha, Qatar.

The Least Developed Countries, 46 in total, include a population of some 900 million people. Despite commitments made ten years ago at the 4th LDC conference in Istanbul, these countries remain far behind the rest of the world in terms of human development and economic prospects. They are also among the most vulnerable to climate change and natural disasters. Only a handful of these countries have graduated from the LDC category since 2011, when the Istanbul Programme of Action for the LDCs came into effect.

We are very concerned that without more determined efforts by the global community as well as the LDCs themselves, progress in these countries will proceed too slowly. This in turn will push the Sustainable Development Goals further off track.

As communicated to you on 26 April (IPU letter to parliaments), the IPU is leading the parliamentary track to the LDC 5 conference in close cooperation with the Shura Council of Qatar and the United Nations.

As part of this track, the IPU and the Shura Council will organize a one-day Parliamentary Forum on the eve of the main UN conference, on Saturday, 22 January. In preparation for this meeting, we are working on a number of reports focusing exclusively on key policy questions for the LDCs. We are also following the negotiation of a new Doha Programme of Action (DPOA) taking place at United Nations Headquarters in New York.

Most importantly, a Parliamentary Message to the LDC5 conference will be adopted by the IPU Governing Council when it meets on the occasion of the upcoming 143rd Assembly on 26-30 November, in Madrid.

The LDC5 conference will be held in person and with extraordinary safeguards in place to prevent the transmission of the coronavirus that is responsible for the current pandemic. To this effect, national delegations will be asked to register as early as the next few weeks. We therefore encourage you to reach out as soon as possible to the minister in charge of the process and ensure that your parliament is appropriately represented in the national delegation to the conference.

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With funding generously provided by Qatar as the host country, the UN is covering the travel and accommodation costs of one Member of Parliament for each of the 46 LDCs. Per usual practice, the IPU will not be able to accredit members of parliament to the LDC5 conference nor facilitate their travel arrangements. It is therefore very important that all accreditation requests for participating parliamentarians be submitted to the UN through the national delegation to the conference.

With regard to our own Parliamentary Forum on 22 January, a draft programme will be drawn up soon and posted to the event’s dedicated page on the IPU website. An information note for participants will be prepared around the same time based on the information available from the UN organizers.

An update on preparations for the LDC5 Conference will be provided by the UN High Representative for the Least Developed Countries, Ambassador Courtenay Rattray, at the upcoming 143rd Assembly in Madrid.

Regular updates on the LDC5 conference and its preparatory process are available at www.un.org/ldc5. Inquiries about the Parliamentary Forum can be sent to ldc5@ipu.org.

We look forward to your parliament’s robust contribution and participation in this important process.

Yours sincerely,

Martin Chungong
Secretary General of the Inter-Parliamentary Union

Hassan bin Abdullah Al-Ghanim
Speaker of the Shura Council