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Office for South-South Cooperation

Statement by Ms. Dima Al-Khatib

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***African countries, Least Developed Countries and Landlocked Developing Countries:  
Turning the tide, regaining lost ground and embarking on the road to the SDGs***

Thursday, 13 July 2023, 4:15 PM - 6:00 PM  
Conference Room 4 at UNHQ

Your excellencies,

Distinguished delegates,

To accelerate the recovery from COVID-19 and ensure progress towards the SDGs, advance the Doha Programme of Action, Africa's Agenda 2063, and the Vienna Programme of Action through South-South and triangular cooperation, several transformative measures could be considered. Here are some key actions and recommendations:

- 1- **Support resilience and sustainability through South-South and triangular cooperation:** This development cooperation modality can be leveraged to enhance resilience building and prepare countries against future shocks, eradication of poverty, address loss and damage in climate change, mobilize financial and in-kind resources and promote transfer and adaptation of technologies to address these crises that are affecting developing countries most adversely.

This could be achieved through enhancing the institutional capacities and human resources in LDCs and LLDCs to unleash structural transformation and address the overreliance on primary commodities. This can include training programmes, workshops, and technical assistance to enhance skills, for example, in trade policies, transport, logistics, customs administration, and infrastructure development. By enhancing their skills and capabilities through South-South cooperation they would be able to effectively implement trade facilitation measures.

- 2- Another vital area is **resource mobilization and access to innovative financing.** Developing countries with financial resources and expertise can support African countries, LDCs, and LLDCs in accessing funding for



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COVID-19 socio-economic recovery, and SDG implementation.

This could include greater participation in innovative funding mechanisms such as blended finance and support for the adoption of an investment promotion regime for LDCs as agreed in the Doha Programme of Action; access to sovereign funds of developing countries; including easier access to grants, concessional loans, and attracting private investments through joint projects and partnerships. This also includes debt relief measures, debt restructuring and suspension of debt payments.

- 3- **Promotion of Trade, investment and regional integration** are also critical areas for Africa, LDCs and LLDCs. South-South cooperation can facilitate linkages for increased trade and investment opportunities among countries of the South. Encouraging regional integration, investment flows and supporting the implementation of the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA) agreement, can boost economic recovery, regional value chains, create jobs, and promote sustainable development.
- 4- **Climate action and environmental cooperation** are critical to ensure environmental sustainability. Encouraging collaboration on renewable energy projects and climate resilience strategies through South-South and triangular cooperation can help in transitioning to more sustainable and climate-friendly development paths. Sharing experiences and engaging in environmental regional cooperation can support resilience and contribute to a greener and more sustainable future. However, this also requires access to innovative technologies.
- 5- Strengthening **digital connectivity is another vital area for Africa, LDCs and LLDCs**. Cooperation on digital infrastructure development, connectivity and digital skills training can enhance economic resilience, improve access to services, promote inclusive growth and bridge the digital divide. This will also improve access to essential services, education, and economic opportunities, especially in remote and underserved areas.
- 6- Last but not least, Africa has the youngest population in the world, with 70% of sub-Saharan Africa under the age of 30. Such a high number of young people is an opportunity for the continent's growth. South-South and triangular cooperation can facilitate **partnerships for education and skills**



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**development for the youth** whose opportunities were disrupted by the pandemic. This will ensure that young people in these regions have access to quality education and vocational training that will provide decent work opportunities.

By leveraging South-South and triangular cooperation in these ways, African countries, LDCs, and LLDCs can accelerate recovery from COVID-19, and foster inclusive and sustainable development.