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**Statement by
Ms. Rabab Fatima**

**Under-Secretary-General and High Representative
for the LDCs, LLDCs and SIDS**

at the side event on

**“Unpacking the potential of STI for enhancing agricultural
productivity in LDCs and LLDCs”,**

STI Forum

10 May 2024, 13:15-14:30

New York

**H.E. Mr. Lok Bahadur Thapa, Permanent Representative of Nepal,
and Chair of the LDC group,**

**H.E. Gladys Mokhawa, Permanent Representative of Botswana,
and Chair of the LLDC group,**

**H.E. Ms. Elina Kalkku, Permanent Representative of Finland, and
the host of the LDC Future Forum**

Excellencies, Distinguished Panellists, Dear ,grN-7.5 (ma)1..4 (npd)-7.6 (15

This is fundamental to

Therefore, there is no alternative but to find new and innovative ways to increase agricultural productivity for these growing population.

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The agriculture sector of LDCs and LLDCs are also characterized by traditional farming methods and practices, low levels of value addition, high vulnerability to climate change and disasters, and inadequate access to national, regional, and global markets.

To overcome these challenges, they need stronger international support measures, aligned with their national strategies to reap the maximum benefits of STI and innovative solutions in enhancing agricultural productivity.

Allow me now to highlight a few specific points:

First: the LDCs and LLDCs require a multifaceted and well-coordinated approach to leverage STI for agricultural productivity.

The fundamental issues of access to electricity, internet, and enabling digital infrastructure, need to be urgently addressed.

It is critical to increase investment in R&D, including by enhanced collaboration among research, academic institutions, and industry.

In the recent LDC Future Forum hosted by Finland in March, we have seen some encouraging examples of locally led innovations and technologies such as, ‘mobile irrigation system’, and ‘agricultural incubators’.

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But how do we bring these technologies to the doorsteps of the farmers in an affordable and user-friendly manner?

We need active engagements of all critical stakeholders, including national governments, regional and global partners, and specialized UN agencies.

There needs to be tailored programmes to empower smallholder farmers, so that they can truly benefit from these cutting-edge technologies.

Third: it is critical to put nature at the heart of any new approach to boost productivity.

We need sustainable solutions for the future of farming. This can be done through environment-friendly technologies and practices.

And the Preparatory Committee for the LLDC3 Conference is also at its final stage of negotiations to agree on the next POA for the LLDCs.

Given the shared and overlapping priorities of the LDCs, LLDCs, and SIDS, our discussions here are expected to have important recommendations for these two major conferences.

We have an excellent panel today to delve further into this important topic. I thank them for joining us.

I would like to recognize in particular, Mr. Deodat Maharaj, the newly appointed Managing Director of the UN Technology for LDCs. The Bank has identified agriculture and food systems as a key focus area for STI support in LDCs. I look forward to hearing his plans and ideas on how the Bank can contribute further to this area.

Excellencies, Distinguished Panelists and Dear Colleagues – I thank you for being with us here today. I look forward to a very productive discussion.