



***“Mobilizing international solidarity, accelerating action and embarking on new pathways to realize the 2030 Agenda and respond to COVID-19: African countries, Least Developed Countries and Landlocked Developing Countries”***

Thursday, 9 July 2020 from 9:00 PM – 11:00 PM Doha Time.

***“Mr. Al-Kuwari, how can the lessons from the COVID-19 pandemic and its effects be used as an opportunity for enhancing resilience and structural transformation, in LDCs, LLDCs and Africa?”***

Your Excellencies,

Distinguished Guests,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Thank you, Madame Moderator.

- We started this year with a decade left to achieve the 2030 Agenda and realized the great need to accelerate our efforts towards its achievement.
- Being faced with such a disruptive challenge as Covid-19, we need to stimulate creative, “out of the box” thinking in order to nevertheless ensure progress towards achieving the SDGs. As Qatar Fund for Development, a young and dynamic donor agency, we focus on innovative, scalable solutions to tackle the development and humanitarian challenges of our times and, most importantly, promote human development by all means.
- Convinced that every country has relevant experiences to share, and every country has new things to learn when tackling own development challenges, we aim to capture and nurture *local solutions* that enhance resilience and stimulate structural transformation.
- This said, QFFD joined forces with UNDP and Germany in building the world's largest and fastest learning network around development challenges – the Accelerator Labs Network, currently active in 78 countries, a majority of them LDCs or LLDCs in Africa. Through a genuine grassroots approach, the Labs explore socially acceptable, locally-sourced solutions that address development challenges of the 21<sup>st</sup> century more effectively and efficiently.
- ***An example:*** the Lab in **Uganda** partnered with Jumia Food Uganda, a leading e-commerce company, connecting informal market vendors to e-commerce in order to reach consumers in the wake of Covid-19 and related movement restrictions. This

partnership has helped sustain supply chains for micro, small and medium enterprises (MSMEs) and connect them with consumers online. So far, five markets have already joined this platform, several more are following.

- Madame Moderator, the next major disruption is merely a matter of time, and it will again be in addition to all the existing chronic development and humanitarian challenges. Lessons learnt for the future from our perspective are:
- **Firstly**, locally-sourced solutions can offer creative, innovative, socially acceptable and often also scalable solutions for chronic as well as immediate development and humanitarian challenges. We encourage a broader exchange on lessons learnt and good practices within the international community.
- And **secondly**, I would like to urge the international community to have a more robust forecasting and decision-making framework in place to ensure EARLY collective action at three levers: Anticipation, Prevention and Protection. We need to have “standby action plans” and anticipatory financing mechanism to reduce the humanitarian impact and costs of a subsequent response. This will not only help safeguarding lives and livelihoods, it will also amplify sustainable development gains.
- Madame Moderator, since 2012, The State of Qatar through QFFD has disbursed over \$ 1 Billion in supporting LDCs and SIDS with a focus on Relief Aid, Economic Empowerment, Health, Education and infrastructure development to ensure progress towards the Sustainable Development Agenda. Recently, His Highness the Emir of the State of Qatar, pledged \$ 100 million to support SIDS and LDCs in mitigating and adapting to climate change, another great challenge of the 21<sup>st</sup> century humanity is facing. We would like to reaffirm our commitment to SIDS, LDC and LLDCs and look forward to hosting the upcoming 5<sup>th</sup> UN Conference on LDCs in Doha, where the Programme of Action for the next 10 years will be adopted.