**Statement by Nepal on behalf of the LDC group at the Trade Facilitation Committee meeting at the dedicated session on technical assistance**

**21 October 2021**

* Thank you Chair for convening this dedicated session and giving me the floor.
* My delegation would like to make this statement on behalf of the LDC group.
* The LDCs are fully committed to effective implementation of the Trade Facilitation Agreement and putting their efforts at the maximum possible level towards this.
* Every LDC has been facing different problems in relation to the provisions and the corresponding implementation periods.
* Technical assistance provided by various donor members and international organizations contributed to familiarizing, categorizing and notification.
* Most LDCs have notified their definitive dates for Category B last year and indicative dates for Category C this year. They have also notified technical assistance requirements.
* Effective implementation of those category C measures has strong connection with significant additional support from our development partners in terms of resource, technological, institutional and human capacity building as provisioned in the Article 21.2 and 21.3 without compromising existing development priorities.
* LDCs facing various challenges even in notifying their dates of implementation will definitely face many more obstacles in implementation.
* Therefore, additional support from development partners to implement the provisions by engaging with the areas as notified by the LDCs in their technical assistance requirements would be helpful.
* Capacity constraints, technology constraints, and limited awareness, among others are hindering implementation of TFA in most LDCs.
* Additionally, landlocked least developed countries have further difficulties, especially within their territory, to develop and maintain sufficient trade infrastructure including ICT infrastructure.
* Trade facilitation for LDC Members requires bridging huge digital gap and connection of entire domestic business with ICT system and e-commerce and then linked with the cross-border trade.
* Involvement of relevant domestic institutions and stakeholders at the maximum possible level would be highly effective for achieving the expected results in a more coordinated and collaborated manner.
* Additionally, implementation of the COVID-19 pandemic may need to be considered while designing future technical assistance programme.
* We appreciate the work of TFAF and the Annex D organizations which provide in country support to us and collaborate with the WTO on several activities for LDCs.
* Finally, the LDCs extend sincere appreciation to all donor country members for their continued support and cooperation in implementation of the TFA.
* I thank you Chair.