



**Welcoming remarks by Mr. Michael Møller
United Nations Under-Secretary-General
Director-General of the United Nations Office at Geneva**

**Official Welcoming Ceremony of the SIDS Delegates without Permanent Mission in
Geneva attending HRC 32
Thursday, 9 June 2016, 09:00 - 09:30
Room XX, Palais des Nations**

**Mr. President of the Human Rights Council,
Ambassador Fasel,
Excellencies,
Ladies and gentlemen:**

I am very pleased to welcome the delegations from Small Island Developing States and Least Developed Countries to Geneva on this special session marking the 10th anniversary of the Human Rights Council. Over this ten year period, the Human Rights Council has become an increasingly important and essential organ of the United Nations. Human Rights are inherently universal so every State has a stake in what happens at the Human Rights Council – whether Member or not of the HRC. I thank all of you for having come to Geneva, knowing that for some of you this has been a particularly long journey.

The Voluntary Technical Assistance Trust Fund to Support the Participation of Least Developed Countries and Small Island Developing States in the work of the Human Rights Council is a very important tool enabling all of us to benefit from the interaction here in Geneva with States and people from all corners of the world. As highlighted by the various activities in the context of the International Year of Small Island Developing States in 2014, SIDS and LDCs face particular challenges and have much to contribute in tackling global issues. You have been at the forefront of the negotiations leading to the ambitious Paris Agreement on Climate Change, for example. Such determined action is also needed in the Human Rights Council and other fora here in Geneva, and I am very grateful to those States supporting the participation of SIDS and LDCs through the Fund.

The many organizations based in International Geneva will play a key role in the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the other crucial frameworks that our leaders agreed on last year. As the operational hub and the human rights capital of the international system, Geneva offers a unique ecosystem and opportunity to make sure that the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals will be thoroughly rooted in human rights.

Decisions made and the work done across International Geneva have a direct impact on people everywhere around the world, for example by enhancing cooperation for disaster risk reduction – an issue that is particularly relevant to SIDS and LDCs. In short, decisions adopted in Geneva impact everyone, and therefore everyone needs to be represented in the decision-making process here in Geneva. In this spirit, I once again warmly welcome you to International Geneva. The United Nations is here to support all our Member States and I encourage you to make the best of your time here. I very much hope that many of you will soon return for longer terms, ideally, establishing a Permanent Mission in Geneva. I can assure you that the Swiss are excellent hosts and all of us will make you feel at home.

Thank you very much.