



Statement by Mr. Gauri Pradhan, International Coordinator
Opening Session

LDC Civil Society Forum

26-28 May 2016, Antalya, Turkey

His Excellency Mr. Ali Naci Koru, Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Turkey

His Excellency Mr. Masud Bin Momen, Permanent Representative of Bangladesh to UN

Her Excellency Ms. Bénédicte Frankinet, Co-Chair, General Assembly's Midterm Review of the IPoA

His Excellency Mr. Gyan Chandra Acharya, Under-Secretary-General, UN-OHRLS & Secretary-General of the Midterm Review

Respected colleagues and friends,

First of all, I would like to welcome you all and express my prime pleasure to be here with you at this opening programme of LDC Civil Society Forum in conjunction with the official Comprehensive High-level Midterm Review of the Implementation of the Istanbul Programme of Action for the Least Developed Countries for the Decade 2011-2020.

I also would like to thank you all again on behalf of LDC Watch for being with us, at this important forum which will deliberate on the Midterm Review of IPoA from LDC people's perspective and alternatives, bringing voices from the frontlines in the official process. Five years after the UN LDC IV held in Istanbul, Turkey, we have gathered here to appropriately review the development, share the lessons learned and graduation challenges as well as opportunities of the LDCs, the most marginalised and vulnerable members of the global community. We appreciate this opportunity and the continuity given to the organisation of the parallel Civil Society Forum which reinforces the recognition of civil society as a key stakeholder in their own right.

The inception of civil society forum as an integral part of UN Official Conference on LDCs dates back to LDC III held in Brussels in 2001. Since then we have been closely working with the United Nations, LDC Governments, Development Partners and CSOs for the rights, justice and development of the UN-defined LDCs. Five years back, when LDC IV was concluded with the Istanbul Declaration and Istanbul Programme of Action (IPoA) in 2011, we were together to put our commitments to rapidly reduce poverty, vulnerability and marginalization of LDCs and uplift their status to middle income countries through a systematic graduation process. In the last five years, we have made some significant progress in areas of education, health and poverty reduction in some LDCs, however the unfavourable global economic environment, inadequate delivery of global commitments by the international development partners and lack of adequate domestic reforms in the LDCs have missed the opportunities for the implementation of IPoA and other IADGs in the context of LDCs.

The Mid-term Review is taking place at such a critical time after adoption of four landmark global agenda in 2015: the Paris Climate Agreement; the Addis Ababa Action Agenda of the Third International Conference on Financing for Development; the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction. The Mid-Term Review of the IPoA, therefore, also offers an opportunity to build-up synergy and coherence between IPoA and 2030 Development Agenda. The SDG theme of “leaving no one behind” is especially applicable to the LDCs to draw attention to the most vulnerable populations of the world for the next one and a half decade. We reiterate No SDGs without LDCs!

Over the next two days, we will collectively deliberate on the structural causes of poverty, vulnerability and marginalisation of LDCs that remain persistent. This is mirrored by the fact that majority of the LDCs are plagued by violence, instability and conflict which are clearly symptomatic. Adding to the woes is the burden of inherent environmental vulnerabilities being further aggravated by the rapidly increasing climate change which has put their very survival at stake. Therefore, there is an urgent need indeed to revitalise genuine “partnerships for transformative change in LDCs” and to enhance people’s power to resilience for their survival and development in LDCs.

Beginning from today, we will be conducting plenary sessions on four key thematic issues of the global agenda and negotiations which are pertinent to the IPoA and LDC development

interests: our calls to Fair Trade; Climate Justice; Synergy and Coherence with the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and Fair and Equitable Graduation of LDCs!

Over the next two days, we also look forward to engaging on the development of the Outcome Document in the form of a Political Declaration. On behalf of LDC Watch, we have provided our views on the Zero Draft at the Special Thematic Event in February and at the Preparatory Meeting of Experts in March this year. We would further appreciate the continued space for civil society voice at this Comprehensive High-level Midterm Review. We will conclude the forum with the adoption of the LDC Civil Society Declaration which we would hand over to the office of the Secretary-General of the MTR for official record.

On this note, I welcome all of you once again and I am hopeful that the energy, commitment and political will of us all will result in an effective and meaningful Midterm Review of IPoA. The MTR must reiterate the commitment to addressing the special needs of LDCs and further strengthen global partnership in the eight priority areas of IPoA. We believe that the review will also focus that LDCs must be at the centre of development cooperation if we really wish to build up a just world with peace, progress and prosperity.

In closing, I would like to express our sincere thanks to the office of the Secretary-General of the MTR/UNOHRLLS, the Government of Turkey and all other individuals and organisations for their generous support and encouragement towards convening this forum.

Thanking you.

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