



**Consultative Meeting of LDCs and Friends of LDCs on the comprehensive High-level Midterm  
Review of the implementation of the Istanbul Programme of Action (IPoA)  
Dolce Palisades Hotel, Palisades, New York, 18-19 February 2016**

**Excellencies, colleagues and friends,**

I, on behalf of LDC Watch, would like to thank UN OHRLLS for inviting us to present LDC civil society voice to this important consultative meeting of LDCs and friends of LDCs. We highly appreciate being a part of the midterm review process of the implementation of the Istanbul Programme of Action.

Based on our follow-up and monitoring work in the implementation of the IPoA through our national, regional and international consultations, we've witnessed some best practices as well as critical constraints in delivering the current programme.

In the meantime, Samoa graduated in January 2014 and 10 additional least developed countries had reached the graduation thresholds as of March 2015. In terms of ownership and leadership, we appreciate a number of LDC governments coming up with their national graduation strategies. This should be scaled up urgently to accelerate the implementation of the IPoA in all LDCs.

Regarding regional mechanisms for follow-up and monitoring, the role of UN regional commissions is significantly instrumental and therefore needs to be further enhanced. The same holds true for the UNCTAD's contribution to LDCs in its technical assistance and intergovernmental consensus building. The role of the UN OHRLLS of course is key and duly acknowledged. We have found our engagement in this regard productive and look forward to continued cooperation and partnership.

A big majority of population in LDCs is still living and working in a very difficult circumstances. Access to quality medical services, healthy sanitation and potable drinking water facilities is still very limited. Food security system is not functioning well. Although 60 per cent of the population being under 25 years of age, youth gaps in employment are persistent. Most of the LDCs have achieved gender parity in primary schools, however, the gender gap for tertiary education remains very wide. Coverage of social protection programmes in LDCs is very

limited. Today, majority of the LDCs are confronted by conflict, painful transition and instability, symptomatic of poverty, vulnerabilities and deprivation of basic rights. Disasters and diseases are becoming common and additional development challenges.

Policy coherence is the other key concern in relation to global partnership. Coherence, synergy and consistency in aid, trade, debt, and climate policies are imperative especially for enhancing productive capacity as the first priority area action of the IPoA. We have in particular seen with the recent climate and trade negotiations in Paris and Nairobi respectively, that the special and differential treatment due to LDCs still remains undelivered. More policy space to LDCs in international decision-making is crucial towards strengthening their country ownership and leadership.

Despite the encouraging announcement of graduation plan by a significant number of LDCs, the pace and process of nurturing economic growth, eradicating poverty, curbing inequality and increasing the resilience of vulnerable groups bringing about structural transformation and enabling the countries to reach middle-income status is rambling. The human resource potential of the least developed countries is yet to be fully tapped for economic and social development of majority of people.

In order to bring significant changes and enhancement in productive capacity in LDCs, the role of civil society in providing substantive inputs in national policy making of LDCs must be promoted as we had deliberated upon during the Special Thematic Event. Inclusive and broad-based representation and participation of civil society in the national process will contribute to democratic ownership of the IPoA and its implementation. We would like to call upon UN, LDC Governments and development partners to support our efforts for enhancing our resources capacity for advocacy, monitoring and social mobilisation for the effective implementation of IPoA and other Internationally Agreed Development Goals.

Eradication of poverty, transformation of economic structure and enhancing resilience capacity in LDCs will depend on the effective implementation of outcome documents of 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, the Addis Ababa Action Agenda, the agreement on climate change adopted at the twenty-first session of the Conference of the Parties and the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015-2030 together with the provisions of the Istanbul Programme of Action. We have been repeatedly saying that SDGs are not possible without a fair and sustainable development of LDCs. LDC governments and the international community must take leadership, partnership and mutual accountability as basic foundations for successful implementation of the IPoA.

Speaking of critical constraints, clearly delivery of Means of Implementation (MoI) remains a crucial challenge. Both, quantity and quality of official development assistance (ODA)

commitments to LDCs must be met with urgency. Technology transfer and capacity building are other integral aspects of Means of Implementation (MoI). As LDC civil society, we are calling for technology transfer free from intellectual property rights. Article 66.2 of the TRIPS Agreement which is also referenced in the IPoA must be accelerated in order to contribute to enhancing productive capacity.

Let us reiterate that the IPoA is a renewed and strengthened global partnership for development of LDCs with lessons learnt from its predecessor the Brussels Programme of Action. Mid-term Review of IPoA is therefore a great occasion for all of us to reinforce global commitment and multiply efforts towards attaining common objectives in the least developed countries in a more accelerated and coherent manner. Greater ownership and leadership of LDCs; delivery of means of implementation by development partners; empowered civil society, policy coherence, enhancing productive capacity and more policy space of LDCs in international decision-making are indeed the key lessons learnt of the past decade. Ingredients of success depend on credible national leadership, robust international support and mutual accountability. Let us not allow history to repeat itself in this decade!

**Thank you.**

**Gauri Pradhan**  
**International Coordinator**