

# Informal Interactive Civil Society Hearing of the General Assembly

In Preparation for the Fourth United Nations Conference on the Least Developed Countries (UN LDC IV)

New York, April 1, 2011

## **I. Introduction**

The General Assembly, by its resolution 65/171 of 20 December 2010, decided to convene the Fourth United Nations Conference on the Least Developed Countries (LDC-IV) from 9 to 13 May 2011 in Istanbul, Turkey, to, among others things, undertake a comprehensive appraisal of the implementation of the Programme of Action by the least developed countries and their development partners, and to formulate and adopt a renewed partnership between the least developed countries and their development partners.

In its resolution, the General Assembly requested the President of the General Assembly to organize, before the second session of the Intergovernmental Preparatory Committee, a day of informal interactive hearings with civil society actors, in consultation with Member States, in particular the least developed countries, the Bureau of the Intergovernmental Preparatory Committee and the Civil Society Steering Committee for LDC-IV.

By the same resolution, the General Assembly requested the President of the General Assembly and the Secretary-General of the Conference to jointly preside over the informal interactive hearing with civil society actors.

The following note is intended to provide some background on the meeting as well as logistical information.

## **II. Registration**

The on-site registration for the Hearing will take place in the main lobby of the General Assembly building at the United Nations Headquarters on 1 April 2011. Registration will open at 9AM.

Please bring a valid government issued photo ID and a print out of the confirmation letter that you received. The meeting will begin at 10AM. Please bear in mind that you will have to pass through the UN Security tent, so in order to ensure timely access we encourage you to arrive early. Registration will be open until 5PM.

Once you have received your badge you may proceed to the ECOSOC Chamber to observe the meeting.

## **III. Background**

The Least Developed Countries (LDCs), a group of countries recognized by the UN as “the poorest and weakest segment” of the international community, require special support from the international community to overcome poverty and achieve sustainable development. Presently, the list of LDCs comprises 48 countries, with 33 from Africa, 14 from Asia and one from Latin America. To streamline

support from the international community and to mobilize the appropriate resources, the UN has organized three Conferences on LDCs since 1981. LDC-III (Brussels, 2001) resulted in the Brussels Programme of Action (BPoA) for the LDCs for the Decade 2001-2010, which will soon come to an end.

LDC-IV will assess the results of the BPoA and adopt new measures and strategies for the sustainable development of the LDCs into 2020.

LDC-IV is being convened to provide the opportunity for Heads of State and Government, together with representatives of international organizations, civil society, academia and the private sector to:

- comprehensively assess the implementation of the Programme of Action for the Least Developed Countries for the Decade 2001-2010 (the Brussels Programme);
- share best practices and lessons learnt, and to identify obstacles and constraints encountered as well as actions needed to overcome them;
- identify new challenges and opportunities for LDCs and the actions required at national and international levels to respond to them effectively;
- reaffirm the global commitment to address the special needs of the LDCs made at major United Nations conferences and summits;
- mobilize additional international support measures and action in favour of the LDCs and, in this regard;
- formulate and adopt a renewed partnership between the LDCs and their development partners.

This is particularly relevant as international development cooperation – as well as development policies and practices – have not brought the results hoped for. In 1971, only 24 countries had been identified as least developed by the UN. Today, there are 48, meaning that the number of LDCs has doubled within a time span of four decades. A more sustainable and inclusive development model is necessary to support those countries that are already faced with issues such as weak economic structures, geographical and environmental constraints, high debts, food insecurity, trade imbalances, and human rights violations.

Consultations and negotiations on the outcome of LDC-IV have been ongoing in New York since January 2011. This process has been facilitated by the Ambassador of Finland to the UN in New York.

In order to provide input to the preparatory process for LDC-IV, the General Assembly President was asked by UN Member States to organize a ‘hearing’ with Non-governmental and Civil society organizations.

General Assembly resolution A/C.2/65/L.55 “requests the President of the General Assembly to prepare a summary of the hearings, to be issued as a General Assembly document prior to the High-level Plenary Meeting.” The outcome of the hearings (the summary by the President of the General Assembly) will thus constitute a formal input into the political process leading to LDC-IV.

#### **IV. Themes of the Hearing**

The President of the General Assembly organized the Hearing into three thematic sessions and - in consultation with Member States, in particular the least developed countries, the Bureau of the Intergovernmental Preparatory Committee and the Civil Society Steering Committee for LDC-IV -

established specific themes and selected speakers for the three sessions. The three themes listed below are an attempt to highlight key aspects of issues related to advancement of LDCs, while also emphasizing the interrelated nature of the LDC development agenda with the international development and macroeconomic issues more broadly.

Discussion in the three sessions will aim for action-oriented strategies for LDC graduation, including case studies highlighting best practices and lessons learnt. Attention will be given to the interrelation between these actions and strategies and the constraints of structural and systemic factors, and how to redress those.

The primary purpose of the Hearing, which will be summarized by the President of the General Assembly, is to provide Member States with concrete and specific input as they prepare for LDC-IV.

The themes and active participants in each session are:

***Session 1: Harnessing Productive Resources for Sustainable Development (Friday, 1 April; 11h00 – 13h00)***

Speakers:

- Ms. Beverly Keene, Jubilee South, (Argentina)
- Mr. Rudy de Meyer, 11.11.11, (Belgium)
- Mr. Camille Chalmers, PAPDA, (Haiti)
- Ms. Odile Ndoumbe Faye, AAWAORD, (Senegal)
- Mr. Danny Singoma, PRODDDES, (Democratic Republic of Congo)

Respondents:

- Mr. Simon Stocker, EuroSTEP, (Belgium)

***Session 2: Enhancing Productive Capacity and Resilience against Global Crises (Friday, 1 April; 15h00 – 16h15)***

Speakers:

- Ms. Njoki Njoroge Njehu, Daughters of Mumbi Global Resource Center, (Kenya)
- Ms. Roina Vavatau, Samoa Umbrella for Non-Governmental Organisations, (Samoa)
- Mr. Sarba Raj Khadka, Rural Reconstruction Nepal, (Nepal)
- Mr. Aldo Caliari, Center of Concern, (USA)

Respondents:

- Ms. Huguette Bopke, Social Watch, (Benin)
- Ms. Azeb Girmai, ENDA-Ethiopia, (Ethiopia)

***Session 3: Promoting Good Governance and Effective Monitoring Mechanisms for Development (Friday, 1 April; 16h15 – 17h30)***

Speakers:

- Ms. Thida Khus, SILAKA, (Cambodia)
- Mr. M. Ihsan Karaman, Doctors Worldwide Turkey Coalition, (Turkey)
- Mr. Roberto Bissio, Social Watch, (Uruguay)
- Ms. Jane Nalunga, South and East African Trade, Information and Negotiation, (Uganda)

- Mr. Amadou Taal, The World View, (Gambia)

Respondents:

- Mr. Seong-hoon Lee, Korea Human Rights Foundation (KHRF), (Korea)
- Mr. Barry Coates, Oxfam International, (New Zealand)
- Mr. Eshetu B. Yimenu, Poverty Action Network Ethiopia (PANE), (Ethiopia)

## **V. Format**

The format is intended as a platform for inclusive participation by civil society, while leaving room for an exchange of views with Member States. The Vice President of the General Assembly and the Secretary-General of the Conference and the United Nations Office of the High Representative for the Least Developed Countries, Landlocked Developing Countries and Small Island Developing States (USG Diarra) will moderate the three panel sessions.

As in past Hearings, two types of speaking roles for civil society and private sector representatives at the Hearings were established: ‘Speakers’ and ‘Respondents’. Additionally, civil society and private sector representatives will attend as ‘Observers’, but Observers will not have the opportunity to speak.

Each thematic session will have 4 to 5 Speakers representing civil society from the podium. Each Speaker will have 5 minutes to make their presentation.

The floor will then be opened for an exchange of views with Member States. Preferably, interventions from the floor will not be prepared statements. Those speaking from the floor will be requested to speak as briefly as possible, but for no more than 3 minutes.

Seated on the floor will be 1 to 3 additional representatives of civil society who will act as Respondents and will participate in the exchange of views, and will also be limited to the 3 minute time limit for their interventions.

The Hearing is also open to Observers, but they will not have the opportunity to take the floor.

The day will proceed as follows:

10:00am – 11:00am: Opening Session

11:00am- 1:00pm: Theme 1

3:00pm – 4:15pm: Theme 2

4:15pm – 5:30pm: Theme 3

5:30pm – 6:00pm: Closing Session

## **VI. Additional Information**

Further questions can be directed to:

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