

Statement by His Excellency Mr Gordan Jandroković  
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Mr Secretary General,  
Mr Chairman,  
Honourable Ministers,  
Excellencies,  
Distinguished delegates,  
Ladies and Gentlemen,

Please allow me to begin by expressing my gratitude to the Government of the Republic of Turkey for their hospitality extended to all of us while hosting the Fourth United Nations Conference on the Least Developed Countries.

This Conference represents a continuation of our efforts to enhance global action towards improving the circumstances of LDCs.

This action is both urgent and essential as the problem - despite already invested international efforts, remains acute:

The situation in the majority of LDCs has failed to improve and, in some cases, even worsened.

Moreover, the number of Least Developed Countries has almost doubled in the last four decades.

Therefore, we welcome this Conference which provides a timely and well set-out opportunity to make a difference to the lives of over 800 million people of which approximately 53% live in extreme poverty.

Croatia, successfully turning from a recipient to a donor country of development assistance, has a firsthand experience of the positive and negative effects it can impose on the recipient country.

Croatia's ODA (official development assistance) legislation thus incorporates the lessons learned; primarily that aid can be efficient only if paired with strengthening democratic processes, empowering state institutions and encouraging state accountability.

It puts to the foreground the priorities identified by the recipient countries in their respective development strategies.

Priorities that should be based on principles of sustainable development, good governance and democracy, rule of law and respect of human rights.

We are also convinced that there is no development without security.

Croatia thus actively contributes to peacekeeping and peacebuilding operations under the auspices of the UN, EU and NATO in seven Least Developed Countries, with 356 civil and military representatives.

In addition, I would like to emphasize that Croatia will continue to further increase the amount allocated to LDCs for development assistance over the next years.

We will continue to place special attention on education and basic health care when providing development aid to LDCs, because we believe that these are the best investments for the future.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

This Conference certainly provides a unique opportunity for all partners to commit to the establishment of a new and effective international support architecture.

An architecture that needs to be consistent with the priorities identified by the LDCs.

The Brussels Plan for Action led to significant progress in some areas, such as trade and Foreign Direct Investment.

However, many of the commitments remained unmet.

Various efforts by the Least Developed Countries to reduce poverty and to spur growth have not produced the desired results.

Moreover, multiple crises due to oil and food price escalation, coupled with the global financial meltdown, resulted in their increased vulnerability.

Sustainable growth can be most effectively achieved through a comprehensive approach encompassing:

- Implementation of necessary structural changes enabling the LDCs to sustain external shocks and effectively fight poverty,
- Governmental assistance in promoting responsible investments of private companies and in developing access to financial services,
- Effective public – private partnerships,
- And complementary action by the civil society in sustainable development field.

To that effect, the outcome of this Conference should be synchronised with other on-going international initiatives, such as:

- the Millennium Development Goals,
- the Doha Trade Talks,
- the Paris Declaration on Aid Effectiveness,
- the Monterrey Process on Development Finance
- and last but not least, the global climate discourse.

Croatia remains committed to advancing and deepening the global partnership for development.

This certainly includes our strong support to the Istanbul Program of Action.

Let me conclude by wishing all of us a successful Conference resulting in renewed partnership between the Least Developed Countries and their development partners.

Thank you for your attention.