



**STATEMENT**

**BY**

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**OF THE**

**REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA TO THE UNITED NATIONS**

**AT THE**

**PLENARY SESSION OF THE FOURTH UNITED NATIONS CONFERENCE ON  
LEAST DEVELOPED COUNTRIES (LDC IV)**

**Istanbul, Turkey**

**12 May 2011**

Mr President,

Honorable Heads of State

Honorable Ministers,

Excellencies,

Distinguished Delegates,

Ladies and Gentlemen

On behalf of the Government of the Republic of South Africa, it is my pleasure to address the Fourth United Nations Conference on the Least Developed Countries (LDC IV) in solidarity by the people of South Africa to all least developed countries (LDCs) who have over decades remained vulnerable at all levels.

South Africa wishes to align itself with the statement made by the delegation of Argentina on behalf of the Group of 77 and China. We wish to express our appreciation to the Government of the Republic of Turkey in hosting this important event and for the hospitality extended to us in the beautiful city of Istanbul.

Mr President,

Former President Nelson Mandela spoke eloquently in the spirit of the South African people when he said at his inauguration that "We pledge ourselves to liberate all our people from the continuing bondage of poverty, deprivation, suffering, gender and other discrimination." This is perhaps the best guidance that a distinguished elder statesman can provide to those of us who have decided to take action in the spirit of solidarity with the LDCs.

We, Member States of the United Nations, have together acknowledged the significant constraints and structural impediments faced by the LDCs in their development efforts. We also agree that we must work towards streamlining our development co-operation

initiatives in accordance with the priority areas for action identified in the proposed Istanbul Programme of Action (IPoA), 2011-2020, including those aimed at

- building the productive capacity of LDCs,
- ensuring food security, and
- reducing their vulnerability to climate change and external shocks, such as economic crises.

There must be a commitment towards the development of their infrastructure, agriculture, information and communications technology, science and technology, as well as increased trade opportunities to promote their developmental objective of economic diversification.

Mr President,

For South Africa, the monumental task of graduating half of the 48 LDCs, with a total combined population of 880 million, appears to be a test of the highest magnitude. It must be said, however, that 33 of the 48 Member States classified as least developed countries by the United Nations, are African countries. These LDCs on the African Continent have experienced economic growth of 7 per cent for several years, though reducing poverty has proven to be more of a challenge. South Africa is committed to seeing our fellow Africans liberated from the bondage of poverty. This ten year Programme of Action is confirmation of the importance and urgency of our collective initiatives.

South Africa is committed to economic development through regional and international co-operation in an interdependent world. We will continue to advocate for countries of the North to be more responsive to the developmental needs of developing countries and, in particular, the least developed countries.

Mr President,

We will continue to promote the socio-economic development of the African continent. With limited resources, South Africa has used the ARF, has managed to give increased

funding to support post conflict reconstruction and development (PCRD) efforts, and has been an important milestone for South Africa and the Continent as we look towards the future. We are now in the process of transforming the ARF by establishing the South African Development Agency (SADPA) which will inform and direct our development assistance framework. We will utilize the Agency to advance trilateral and bilateral development co-operation.

In the interim, it is a further source of pride to us that infrastructure development, so critically highlighted during this Conference, has become central to our development commitments in Africa. Regional economic integration can work towards the eradication of poverty and under-development through the delivery of improved infrastructure such as road and rail, ICT and agricultural development.

We are mindful that, at the core of our development efforts, is the NEPAD. This year NEPAD celebrates its tenth year of existence. The African Union, NEPAD and the African Development Bank are critical participants in the process of rejuvenating our infrastructure. It is therefore a happy convergence that the Istanbul Programme of Action highlights the need to assist LDCs in developing their productive capacities. The support of the international community in addressing the lack of adequate physical infrastructure in LDCs is essential for the development of LDCs.

Building on this, we, as UN Member States also need to ensure that our decisions and plans of action are coherent and take into account the policies which we implement in all multilateral fora. In this regard, convergence with initiatives relating to the promotion of global economic growth, the completion of the Doha Development Round, including market access issues for LDCs, and the partnership for the achievement of the MDGs, is critically important.

Development can act in support of the achievement of good governance, sustainable peace and security as well as in preventing conflict and preventing the relapse of countries into conflict. In this context, my country reaffirms the importance of South-South Cooperation, as we also implement, with our IBSA partners India and Brazil, through the IBSA Facility for Hunger and Poverty alleviation.

We are also still cognizant that ensuring that the LDCs break out of the "poverty trap" will depend very heavily on the effective implementation of the commitments of development partners, most especially regarding ODA. In this regard, we recall the need for developed countries to reach the level of at least 0.5 per cent of gross national product for official development assistance by 2010, as well as a target of 0.15 to 0.20 per cent of gross national product for official development assistance to the LDCs.

Mr. President,

South Africa continues to support LDCs as part of the G20 agenda, which focuses on economic development and supports the social objectives of the MDG process. Nine key development pillars have been agreed on to resolve significant bottlenecks to inclusive, sustainable and resilient growth in developing countries and low-income countries in particular. The work of the G20 Development Working Group is intended to supplement, not replace, other existing multilateral efforts for development, such as the United Nations' MDG targets.

South Africa will continue to lobby the G20 countries to improve its outreach with non-G20 countries, especially LDCs. Our goal is to ensure that the G20 development agenda remains directly relevant to the needs of those who stand to benefit from G20 initiatives through the multi-year action plans that were agreed at the November 2010 Seoul Summit.

Mr President,

Bearing in mind all of the recent international developments that are shaping the direction of international development co-operation, South Africa is pleased to work with willing partners for the eradication of hunger and poverty, utilizing all available and viable avenues. This commitment is further reflected as a strong additionality to the new IPoA through the section on South-South co-operation. The message that South Africa has sent is clear: we have the political will to assist where it matters most. We do so in the understanding of the principles that underpin South-South co-operation, as endorsed in the 2009 Nairobi Outcome Document. We also re-iterate the importance of

South-South Cooperation as a complement, not a substitute, of North-South Cooperation.

In conclusion, Mr President, my delegation wishes to thank all negotiating partners of the United Nations system for considering the plight of LDCs, landlocked developing countries and Small Island Developing States and calls upon the international community must use the IPoA to reaffirm our global efforts to a achieve a comprehensive, result-oriented, forward-looking and, above all, coherent partnership for the development of the LDCs.

I thank you.