

## **Fourth UN Conference on LDC**

### **UNDP Statement**

**May 9, 2011**

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Mr. Chairman, Excellencies, ladies and gentlemen, it is an honour and pleasure for me to join all of you and represent UNDP at the opening plenary session of the Fourth UN Conference on the Least Developed Countries (LDCs).

Over the past decade, many of the LDCs have made tremendous progress on economic, social and human development. The 2010 UNDP Human Development Report shows that in the last decade five African LDCs - Burkina Faso, Ethiopia, Mozambique, Rwanda, and Uganda - are among the top ten countries that improved on the human development index.

Looking over four decades, from 1970 to 2010, the top ten movers up the Human Development Index include not only large developing countries well known for rapid growth such as China, but also LDCs such as Laos and Nepal that have made important strides in health and education. This has happened despite deep-rooted structural vulnerabilities and the recent succession of external shocks – the fuel, food and financial and economic crises.

Even with this progress, the challenge of extreme poverty in LDCs is daunting. Other challenges have become more prominent. Volatility in global commodity prices is placing an additional burden on the stretched capacities of LDCs. Conflict and unrest still scars the lives of millions. Climate change is likely to exacerbate the vulnerability of many LDCs. Such challenges must be tackled through strengthening the resilience of countries and communities.

In UNDP, we recognize the considerable diversity among the LDCs both in terms of progress they made on human development and the challenges that remain. We believe that faster and sustained progress in the LDCs on human development is eminently possible in the next

decade, in line with the Programme of Action decided by the LDCs themselves. And we stand ready to devote our resources to ensure this happens.

UNDP has a strong presence in each of the LDCs, where we work with governments and other partners to reduce poverty, enhance self-sufficiency, and strengthen the underpinnings for sustainable human development.

The MDG Summit last year gave the world an ambitious agenda for action over the next five years - to reduce poverty and hunger; empower women; increase access to education, healthcare, clean water and sanitation; reduce the incidence of deadly diseases; and protect the environment.

UNDP is already working with LDCs such as Bangladesh, Bhutan, Burkina Faso, Chad, Lao PDR, Mali, Niger, Togo and Uganda, to identify bottlenecks to MDG progress and accelerate finding solutions to these in partnership with governments, the wider UN family and other development partners.

These efforts should be supported by actions that promote inclusive and equitable growth, including investing in productive capacities and establishing social protection systems that can minimize the impact of shocks and protect families through times of change. Growth must also be sustainable, because transitioning to low-carbon and climate resilient economies would not only increase resilience to environmental shocks but also to economic volatility. Specific measures should be taken to ensure that LDCs can benefit from new technologies and innovative financing mechanisms.

Inclusive governance is also central to this agenda. Poor people in LDCs must be included in decisions that affect their lives; and LDCs themselves must be heard in systems of international governance. Indeed, the international community should make far greater efforts to put in place the global partnership for development as envisaged in MDG 8, making real the

commitments on ODA, debt relief and trade for LDCs. This includes supporting new forms of south-south and triangular cooperation for development.

UNDP is already working with LDCs not only in advancing inclusive, equitable and sustainable growth but also in building inclusive, responsive and capable governance structures.

We will have the opportunity over the coming days to discuss many of these issues in more depth. But let us also remember that as important as the next five days will be, our action and implementation after Istanbul will define our success in supporting development in LDCs.

Let me assure you that UNDP will be at the forefront of turning these words into reality.

Thank you.