THE FOURTH UNITED NATIONS CONFERENCE ON THE LEAST DEVELOPED COUNTRIES
ISTANBUL, TURKEY
9-13 MAY 2011
"The LDCs represent the poorest and most vulnerable segment of humanity. They remain at the epicentre of the developmental emergency."

- United Nations Secretary-General BAN KI-MOON, September 2010

"The current modalities of international development cooperation do not suffice to achieve the Millennium Development Goals. They have to be complemented by productive investments generating wealth and employment and by the integration of vulnerable countries into the global trade regime in a fair, equitable and transparent manner.

Regional integration and the strengthening of South-South cooperation are another means of ensuring integrated development in the most vulnerable countries. The strengthening of productive capacities, trade as the engine of growth, and the green revolution are indeed the priorities of the Fourth UN Conference on the Least Developed Countries."

- Under-Secretary-General CHEICK SIDI DIARRA, High Representative for the Least Developed Countries, Landlocked Developing Countries and Small Island Developing States (Tangier, Morocco, November 2010)
LEGISLATIVE MANDATE

In its resolution 63/227 of 2008, the United Nations General Assembly decided to convene the Fourth United Nations Conference on the Least Developed Countries (LDC-IV). The Conference is the first major meeting on development of the new decade, and takes on the toughest challenge in the global fight against poverty. Resolution 64/213 of 2009 designated the Office of the High Representative for the Least Developed Countries, Landlocked Developing Countries and Small Island Developing States as the focal point for the conference’s preparations, and accepted the Republic of Turkey’s offer to host.

OBJECTIVES

LDC-IV and the preparatory process leading up to it will: comprehensively assess the implementation by LDCs and their development partners of the Brussels Programme of Action for the LDCs for the decade 2001-2010; share best practices and lessons learned; 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.

A new Programme of Action for LDC development is expected to emerge from the Conference in Istanbul, Turkey, 9-13 May 2011, to determine the development paradigm for years to come. The key objectives for the next ten years must include reducing by half the number of people suffering from poverty and hunger, and moving rapidly toward national self-sufficiency by means such as building a critical mass of physical and social infrastructure, fomenting an agricultural revolution and establishing productive capacities to generate jobs. In addition, up to half of all LDCs must be in a position to graduate from this category in the next ten years.

KEY AREAS FOR LDC ACHIEVEMENT:

- Productive Capacity
- Official Development Assistance
- Quality Foreign Direct Investment
- Agriculture and Food Security
- Trade
- Climate Change
- Universal Access to Essential Services
THE
48 LEAST
DEVELOPED
COUNTRIES

The LDCs are the countries most vulnerable to natural and climate change-related disasters. Their combined population of 885 million people, of whom 75 per cent are living on less than $2 a day, suffer from diseases long eradicated in other parts of the world. With most LDCs off-track to attain the Millennium Development Goals, their progress would be key to a successful culmination of the MDG campaign.

Rudimentary technologies, poor physical infrastructure and unreliable energy supply hamper global competitiveness, but there is also a large upside potential:

• Spurred by a boom in commodity prices, the LDCs overall have been growing at 6 or 7 per cent a year for most of the decade, and even during the depth of the downturn in 2009 their economies managed to expand by more than 4 per cent.
• Most of their governments are enacting investor-friendly reforms, and they have young and creative workforces.
• Trade and incoming investment are on the upswing.
• Their lands account for a significant share of the world’s strategic minerals and resources: oil, gas, coal, gold, silver, diamonds, bauxite, cobalt, uranium and coltan.
• The LDCs also hold vast tracts of arable land; rainforests that stave off global warming and host great biodiversity; abundant sources of renewable energy; enormous fresh water reserves; and precious marine and coastal resources.

This drawing indicates the locations of the least developed countries relative to each other and to the world’s land masses, and is not intended nor should it be perceived as completely accurate in its scale or indication of national borders.
A FOUR-TRACK CONFERENCE

An intergovernmental track involving the governments of LDCs and their development partners;

A parliamentary track involving members of the legislature from LDCs and their development partners, organized in collaboration with the Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU);

A civil society track with activities by civil society organizations, including NGOs, academia, media and foundations, organized in cooperation with the United Nations;

A private sector track involving activities by private sector actors organized in cooperation with the United Nations.

PREPARATORY PROCESS

National level preparations enabled the 48 LDCs to assess the results of the Brussels Programme at the country level and to make recommendations for further action in the context of their respective national priorities.

Through regional level preparations, LDCs shared their experiences, discussed shared challenges and opportunities, and identified regional mechanisms, including regional institutions, to respond to them.

Thematic reviews at the global level allowed UN agencies and other international organizations to contribute expert knowledge in their respective areas.

Two meetings of the Intergovernmental Preparatory Committee (PrepCom) are responsible for negotiating an Istanbul outcome text.

- First PrepCom (10-14 January 2011, New York) elected Ambassador Jarmo Viinanen from Finland as Chair of the PrepCom process.
- Second PrepCom (4-8 April, New York), preceded by Civil Society Interactive Hearings with Member States (1 April).
THE FOURTH UNITED NATIONS CONFERENCE ON THE LEAST DEVELOPED COUNTRIES

PLENARY MEETING
9 – 13 May 2011, Istanbul, Turkey

COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE
9 – 13 May 2011, Istanbul, Turkey

PREPARATORY PROCESS

INTERGOVERNMENTAL PREPARATORY COMMITTEE
10 – 14 January and 4 – 8 April 2011, New York, USA

COUNTRY LEVEL PREPARATIONS
2009 / 2010

PARALLEL THEMATIC ROUNDTABLES & PANELS
PARALLEL PARLIAMENTARIANS FOR LDCs FORUM
PARALLEL CIVIL SOCIETY & PRIVATE SECTOR FORUMS
OTHER PARALLEL AND SPECIAL EVENTS

PRE-Congress EVENTS ON SELECTED THEMES 2010 – 2011
PRE-CONGRESS CIVIL SOCIETY EVENT 2010
REGIONAL REVIEW MEETING IN AFRICA 8 – 9 March 2010, Addis Ababa, Ethiopia
REGIONAL REVIEW MEETING IN ASIA & PACIFIC 18 – 20 January 2010, Dhaka, Bangladesh
ADVOCACY EVENTS AND INITIATIVES 2009 – 2011
RELEVANT INTERGOVERNMENTAL PROCESSES AND GLOBAL EVENTS* 2009 – 2011

*Relevant intergovernmental processes in ECOSOC, the General Assembly, UNCTAD, the UN Conference on Climate Change, and the UN Summit on the MDGs.
PARTICIPATION

The entire preparatory process for the Conference is designed to be inclusive and transparent so as to promote dialogue between all stakeholders — Governments, civil society, private sector, business associations, philanthropic and non-profit organizations, parliamentarians, academia and the media. There is thorough involvement of the full range of the UN System throughout the Istanbul process, via the Inter-Agency Consultative Group.

EMINENT PERSONS GROUP

The UN Secretary-General appointed a Group of Eminent Persons to advocate on behalf of the LDCs over the course of the Istanbul process. These members, selected in light of their international stature, expertise and strong commitment to development, are also mandated to provide the Secretary-General with their own perspective on LDC development challenges and opportunities via a Report of the Group of Eminent Persons.

The two co-chairs of the group are: Alpha Oumar Konaré, former President of the Republic of Mali; and James Wolfensohn, chairman and CEO of Wolfensohn & Company and former President of the World Bank.
BACKGROUND

Beginning in 1981, three global conferences have focused attention on the situation of the LDCs.

The UN General Assembly convened the First United Nations Conference on the Least Developed Countries in Paris in 1981 to respond to the special needs of the LDCs.

To continue the focus on the need for special measures for those countries, the General Assembly convened the Second United Nations Conference on the Least Developed Countries, also in Paris, in 1990. Its outcome was embodied in the Paris Declaration and Programme of Action for the Least Developed Countries for the 1990s.


The Fourth Conference will be convened at the Heads of State and Government level, hosted by the Government of Turkey in Istanbul. It is expected to adopt new measures to build sustainable development in the least developed countries in the next decade.

UN OHRLLS

The UN Office of the High Representative for the Least Developed Countries, Landlocked Developing Countries and Small Island Developing States (UN-OHRLLS) has been designated by the General Assembly as the coordinator of the Conference and its preparatory activities.

UN-OHRLLS was established by the United Nations General Assembly in 2001 through its resolution 56/227, with functions recommended by the Secretary-General in paragraph 17 of his report A/56/645.