

**Report on
the Workshop for National Focal Points of Least Developed Countries
in preparation for the Fourth United Nations Conference
on the Least Developed Countries
Sunday, 3 April 2011
UN Headquarters, New York**

The Second Workshop of the National Focal Points of the least developed countries was held on 3 April 2011 at the United Nations Headquarters in New York. Around 42 countries attended the event. Sixty-six delegates, representing 32 countries, attended the Workshop from LDC capitals. The UN-OHRLLS funded the participation of two delegates from each LDCs. The event was vitally important for LDCs for the preparations of the Intergovernmental Preparatory Committee (PrepCom) meeting in the week ahead as well as the remaining preparations for the Istanbul Conference until May 2011.

H.E. Mr. Gyan Chandra Acharya, Chair of the Global Coordination Bureau of the Least Developed Countries, opened the session of the Workshop. He stated that LDC group provided primary documents. Other groups and countries also provided their inputs for the draft outcome of the Fourth UN Conference on LDCs. Based on all the inputs, the Chair of the Intergovernmental Preparatory Committee (PrepCom) came up with his text. Mr. Acharya informed that the second reading on the text had already been concluded. There were some agreements, but still many issues needed to be resolved, he added. Ambassador Acharya further stated that there had been progress in LDCs, but it was uneven. He underlined the need for addressing the structural constraints and multiple crises in LDCs. He noted that they had been looking for enhanced and renewed partnership in Istanbul. He suggested the negotiators to follow a balanced approach in case of divergence.

Additionally, Ambassador Acharya stressed that the central objective of the new Programme of Action was lifting as many countries as possible from the poverty-level. Therefore, measures in the Istanbul Programme of Action should correspond to the objectives. Business as usual would not work. Forward looking, ambitious and comprehensive outcome would be key to the success of the Conference. He mentioned that the LDC group was seeking key deliverables in the outcome document and there should be some progress in the priority areas of LDCs. He underlined that productive capacity building through infrastructure development was a key priority for LDCs. Another challenge as he underlined would be how to deal with the goals and targets that go beyond 2015 in the areas of human and social development. LDCs have been facing structural vulnerabilities, which is unique for this group of countries. They were seeking support from the partners to address their special developmental challenges.

Ambassador Acharya asserted that South-South cooperation would be a real value-addition in the new Programme of Action. He added that there should be a proper balance between governance and development issue in the new PoA. LDCs were asking for support and more flexibility from the partners. He underlined that the Conference must

focus on core objectives to bring about real changes in the lives of the people of LDCs. He encouraged the national focal points to participate in the inter-governmental negotiation as this would add value to the process. He concluded his remarks by saying that LDCs were looking forward to a productive, constructive, result-oriented, forward looking and ambitious outcome document for LDCs for the decade 2011-2020.

Mr. Cheick Sidi Diarra, High Representative, stated that the workshop was very important for the preparations of the Meeting in the week ahead as well as the remaining preparations for the Istanbul Conference until May this year. He mentioned that thoughtful ideas and constructive suggestions of the participants would provide substantive backstopping for the negotiators towards a successful Istanbul outcome.

He provided the participants with an updates on where the substantive and organizational preparations for the Conference stood. He stated that there was a broad consensus on the enormity of challenges that LDCs had been facing. However, the development partners were yet to come up with a commensurate level of international support measures for LDCs. Divergence among the negotiating groups was wide on key proposals on the table. Nevertheless, the positive thing was that all parties were fully engaged in the process and seemed to have good wills to continue the negotiations. He expressed his hope that the views and understandings of various groups and negotiators would converge in days ahead.

Mr. Diarra provided an update on the thematic pre-conference events that had taken place since the first Prep-Com meeting held in January. He informed that a number of events had taken place and delivered key policy recommendations for the Outcome of the Istanbul Conference. He highlighted some of the important events organised by his office individually or in collaboration with other partners.

The High Representative also shared that the Group of Eminent Persons, set up by the Secretary-General in August last year, had submitted their report to the Secretary General. The Group had reached a conclusion that given the long-standing and wide-spread challenges faced by LDCs, business-as-usual would not work.

Mr. Diarra also presented the structure and some highlights of the Istanbul Summit. He informed that the Conference would be organized around four interrelated tracks, namely the Inter-governmental track; the Parliamentary track, the civil society track and the Private sector track. He informed the participants that the host country Turkey would cover the participation of up to 11 delegates from each LDC. He urged all member states to send their delegation before the deadline for smooth arrangements of travel, accommodation and other logistical support for the delegation.

Mr. Shanker Bairagi, Deputy Permanent Representative of Nepal, apprised the participants of the status of negotiations on the outcome document. He said that the presence of the capital-based delegates was important for consolidated national ownership and leadership. He stressed the need for unity and solidarity of the Group. Mr. Bairagi mentioned that his delegation, in its capacity as the chair of LDCs, would provide

first draft for the political declaration, which would be shared with the Group members for their comments and contributions. Finally, it would be submitted to the Chair as an input of LDCs for the Political Declaration.

Mr. Bairagi informed that Second reading on the draft was concluded, but there was no interaction among the negotiators. Delegates only provided their inputs. He expressed his frustration that there had been no new commitment from partners thus far. He referred to resolution 63/227, which called for additional support measures for LDCs. He preferred to follow the structure of the Brussels Programme of Action for the new Programme of Action. While partners were proposing joint actions; in BPoA it was a dichotomized obligation. Therefore G77 had been calling for the deletion of the joint actions as proposed by the partners. Development partners were also proposing MDG-type outcome, with all partners being put under partnership.

Mr. Bairagi also informed the participating delegates that the definition of “development partners” was another area where no convergence was reached between developing and developed countries. Development partners wanted an expanded definition of partnership bringing all actors together. He said that this approach would not be acceptable as the countries of the north had historical commitment and responsibilities. Therefore putting all countries together would not be acceptable and there should be a clear provision of common but differentiated responsibilities. He also added that partners were insisting on making reference to “fragile states” and wanted strong language under peace and security chapter. He went on saying that LDCs wanted quantifiable targets beyond 2015, while the partners wanted to set general goals and targets.

Mr. Bairagi also commented that the development partners were overemphasizing on social and humanitarian issue, governance, human rights, peace and security, domestic resource mobilization and creating favourable domestic environment and south-south cooperation. He informed that the partners had agreed to a balanced role of the state and market. He also informed the delegates of the priority areas of the new Programme of Action.

Opening the general discussions, the representative of **Bangladesh** appreciated the delegation of Nepal for the good work they had been doing. He mentioned that the partner countries were confining the scope of the outcome within MDGs and according special emphasis on good governance, human rights and peace and security, which were basically political issues. There had been tendencies of rolling-back from earlier commitments by the development partners and they were trying to shift the responsibility to emerging countries of the South. Bangladesh delegation also mentioned that policy-space was not there and the issues related to climate-change and trade were watered-down. There had been lop-sided importance on private sector and a number of unrealistic requirements had been put. Transfer of technology was a hollow and would not deliver. He also emphasized on strong follow-up and monitoring mechanism for the effective implementation of the new Programme of Action.

The Representative of **Mali** suggested that the primary objective of the new Programme of Action was enhancing productive capacity of LDCs. He mentioned that many changes had taken place since 2001. Some countries of the South were supporting LDCs in the spirit of solidarity. They remained grateful to them. The delegation of **Benin** urged upon the Chair to continue to negotiate. He mentioned that the ultimate objective would be ensuring graduation of LDCs by the end of the decade.

The delegation of **Mozambique** underscored that the most important thing was how to address the supply-side constraints in LDCs. By expressing frustration, he raised questions as what would be the added value of the new Programme of Action and whether it would be only a “fashioned-nature of Programme”. He highlighted that raw materials, market access for raw material products, creating supply-side capacity and infrastructure development in LDCs were really important.

Mr. Bairagi from Nepal said that Istanbul outcome should be Brussels PoA plus. The draft PoA contained Brussels Programme of Action, but also included new development. Trade, supply-side capacity all were there. Trade section contained three components: market access, rules of origin and supply-side constraints. Under commodity, there was strong formulation. LDCs should enjoy sovereignty over their raw materials and should benefit through value addition and value retention.

The delegation of **Sierra Leone** stated that the Programme of Action should be robust to bring about changes in the life of their people. The delegation of **Lao PDR** underlined that the new Programme of Action should focus on the unfinished agenda of the Brussels Programme of Action. He expressed doubt about the ambitious goal of the draft PoA to graduate half the number of LDCs by the end of the programme cycle. He inquired about some details about the Conference.

Mr. Erdenebileg Sandagdorj, Acting Director of the UN-OHRLLS mentioned that the list of speakers would be opened soon. DGACM would coordinate that. Regarding the outcome of the UN-LDC IV, he underlined that there should be concrete commitments. There should be more support from the countries of the South. He also suggested that existing commitments as contained in the Brussels Programme of Action should be reaffirmed in the new Programme of Action.

The delegation of **Lesotho** appreciated for involving other chapters of LDCs. He emphasized that real economy needed to grow to sustain the progress in MDGs. Productive capacity was important. Keeping up the existing commitments were also vitally important. Outcome of the pre-Conference events were to be taken on board. Mobilization of financial resources was central to implement the Programme of Action. Replenishment of IDA-16 was successful. Third Global review of the Aid for Trade to be held in July would be significant. Enhanced Integrated Framework was already in operation and needed to be consolidated. He urged upon the Chair and LDC group to use Geneva-based expertise in the negotiations.

The representative of **Guinea** mentioned that there was a lack of will from the partners. He said that the Member Countries would do ten year Programme to lift LDCs out of the Group. He underlined the need for pondering mobilization of innovative sources of finance to meet the resources gap.

The **Chair of LDCs** in his concluding remarks stressed the need for continuous interaction to enhance cooperation among New York, Geneva and capitals of LDCs. They recognized respective roles of all those elements. He stressed that the financial crisis should not be a pretext for not making additional commitments by donor countries. LDCs had been facing structural constraints, traditional challenges as well as new and emerging challenges. Therefore reiteration of existing commitment would not suffice. There should be new and additional commitments. Innovative sources of finance should be additional to the traditional development assistance. He further added that LDCs had identified their priority areas and they did not want IPoA as a political agenda; it should rather be an economic agenda. LDCs had asked for 1% of GNI of the developed countries as an economic package for LDCs. He mentioned that the social sector was important; but without economic growth, progress could not be sustainable. He also underlined the need for enhanced support from the countries of the South, within the framework of South-South Cooperation.
