

**Summary**  
**of the Workshop for National Focal Points of Least Developed Countries**  
**in preparation for the Fourth United Nations Conference**  
**on the Least Developed Countries**  
**Sunday, 9 January 2011**  
**UN Headquarters, New York**

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The Workshop of the National Focal Points of the least developed countries was held on 9 January 2011. Around 40 countries attended the Workshop. More than 50 delegates, representing 30 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 this year.

**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 the presence of delegates from LDCs, was a clear testimony to national ownership and leadership by LDCs of their development process. Ambassador Acharya also underscored the importance of LDC IV Conference, as it would chart out a ten-year roadmap for LDCs' development. He noted with enthusiasm that a comprehensive outline of PoA had already been drafted by the Group of LDCs and was ready to be negotiated with the partners. Prior to the negotiations of this primary document at the first session of PrepCom, the workshop was to provide the LDCs delegates with an opportunity to further understand and discuss the priority issues, as well as the mechanisms and measures to strengthen renewed development partnership.

Additionally, Ambassador Acharya recalled the core objective that must be borne in mind by least developed countries, was their graduation from this status. This goal cannot be achieved by LDCs without being backed by strong international support measures. Helping LDCs is indeed crucial for the sake of attaining shared objectives of global peace, stability and prosperity for all, and thus must be the shared responsibility of both LDCs and their development partners.

Ambassador Acharya highlighted the necessity to set a PoA with broader and longer-term vision which would allow at least half of LDCs to graduate from their status, through structural transformation, poverty eradication, sustained growth and sustainable development. Achieving these objectives will be easier with an ambitious and comprehensive international support architecture.

**Mr. Cheick Sidi Diarra, High Representative**, invited delegates to share ideas and suggestions to provide substantive backstopping for a successful conference. He recalled that national level review and evaluation of the implementation of BPoA were the basis of the preparatory process for the Conference.

Mr. Diarra informed that besides the intergovernmental mechanism, three tracks, such as Parliamentarians, Civil Society and The Private Sector, were also active in the preparatory process. His office would set institutional basis for these three tracks to keep them engaged in the implementation of the new Programme of Action.

Besides these different components of the preparatory process, a group of Eminent Persons had been established by the Secretary General to examine obstacles faced by LDCs and to recommend new paradigm for their economic transformation. The Group would raise public awareness and build a strong political commitment in support of LDCs.

Mr. Diarra noted that despite progress in some areas, such as capital formation, health, education and gender equality, structural transformations in LDCs had not occurred. Poverty remained high and least developed countries were still highly vulnerable to external shocks. Regarding delivery of commitments by the development partners, he acknowledged that there was some progress, but still much to be done, especially in areas of ODA, as well as Duty-Free Quota-Free markets access for all LDCs products.

The appraisal of BPoA revealed the inadequacy and lack of sufficiency of international support measures. This might be due to the lack of reflection of LDCs categorization and specificities in development cooperation policies of the donor country and the multilateral financial institutions.

Mr. Diarra also elaborated on the follow-up mechanisms that his office had been pursuing and provided an outline on how his office would beef-up the review and follow-up mechanism after the adoption of the new Programme of Action.

The High Representative emphasized the necessity to show unity and solidarity within the LDC Group in order to succeed in the negotiations. Finally, he urged delegates to actively participate in all the events organized during the Conference to deliver a strong political message on how importance they accord to this Conference. He called upon all LDCs to represent at the Head of State or Head of Government level in the Conference to be held in Istanbul from 9-13 May 2011.

**Mr. Shanker Bairagi, Deputy Permanent Representative of Nepal**, introduced the draft outcome document and presented its key objectives. He stated that in addition to the objectives contained in BPoA, LDCs' graduation has been made a priority objective in the new programme of action. Another key priority for LDCs is the enhancement of national resilience to economic and external shocks, as well as to social and environmental vulnerabilities. Development governance was also highlighted as a key issue in the new document.

The draft outcome contains a section that elaborates principles which would guide the implementation of the Programme of Action. The inclusion of these principles aims to unfold the new programme of action in a more coherent manner than what was done for BPoA. The new development process must favour a more balanced role of States and

markets. A sustainable development strategy would require reallocation of resources in a more balanced manner between social and productive sectors. Additionally, the new PoA shall underscore principles of security and solidarity, equity and respect for LDCs. It also calls for a fair representation of LDs in the global economic governance structures.

Mr. Bairagi mentioned that successive Programmes of Action for LDCs had failed. Consequently, a new international support architecture was essential for LDCs. This would be based on, among others, consolidating LDCs related international support measures, systems and mechanisms, recognizing LDCs as a special category by all donors, including IFIs, and providing an additional 1 % of developed countries' GNI for the priority areas as identified by LDCs.

Additionally, a number of new mechanisms are proposed in the primary document, such as Commodity Stabilization Fund, Counter-Cyclical Financial Facility, Science and Technology Bank, DFQF for all products from all LDCs, and a fund for food security.

Opening the consultations on the draft document, the representative from **Bangladesh** considered the draft as an excellent basis and reminded that the UN LDC IV would be an important event that comes once in every ten years. He considered the draft to be an "initial position of LDCs". He suggested that the draft needed to go through G77 and LDCs would have to keep in mind the collective interests of the group and to be able to recalibrate their common position based on their negotiations with G77 and other partners.

The Representative of **Dem. Rep. of Congo** suggested that the document was adopted at a high level (Ambassadorial level) and must be supported by LDC group. He invited all delegates to devise a negotiating strategy with G77 and partners.

**Malawi** Representative shared that his country had submitted its national report. Economy of his country was moving well with more than 7% growth rate. In 1990, the rate of poverty was 54%, which had fallen to 32% in 2009. He further added that his country had been doing well in five of the 8 MDGs. They were having difficulties with three MDGs, for which they needed more external assistance. He suggested having annual target and mid-term target in the new PoA for effective monitoring of its implementation. He also stated that donors should be able to help specific countries in specific areas.

The Delegate from **Mali** said that the BPoA had not been achieved. This should not be lost. Partners have changed their development strategy due to crisis. He underscored the need to focus on productive capacity in LDCs. He added that employment and productive capacity development were important to stabilize growth and distribution. He also emphasized the need for strong solidarity among the group.

The delegate from **Sierra Leone** echoed his voice with the High Representative and stated that despite some progress in LDCs, challenges remained in a number of areas

such as infant and maternal mortality and poverty alleviation. He stressed that it would be essential for LDCs to increase their productive capacity in LDCs.

The representative from **Eritrea** called for more solidarity and unity within the Group of LDCs and also called for establishing a strong mechanism of follow-up and appraisal of the new PoA.

The delegate from **Laos** proposed that the Chair of LDCs would be defending the draft outcome on behalf of the Group of 77. He assured to support the chair in its endeavour. The Chair of LDCs responded that this would require the authorization of G77, which is currently in a transition period. He suggested division of labour among different LDC delegates on various themes.

**Uganda's** delegate mentioned that there had been lack of recognition of LDCs as a category within International Financial Institutions, as well as the lack of coherence between this category and others, such as the category of Low Income Countries. He underscored the need for signing off the new Programme of Action by all international and regional organizations. Additionally, he expressed concerns on the loss of a number of advantages for graduating countries. He accused that the existing criteria do not take in to account some of the key challenges faced by LDCs. The Lao delegate also mentioned that youth un-employment was another big challenge in LDCs.

Following Uganda, the representative of **Samoa**, which will be graduating by 2014, expressed the same concerns and interests for a smooth graduation.

The Workshop was concluded with a strong call by the LDCs chair to remain actively engaged in the preparatory process by all LDCs.