



**67th Session of the General Assembly
Second Committee**

**Item 23, Groups of countries in special situation, Least Developed Countries (LDCs) –
Landlocked Developing Countries (LLDCs)
United Nations, New York, 17 October 2012**

"In support of proposals made for transitioning towards a paperless committee, complete copies of this statement will be made available on the websites of the Delegation of the European Union to the UN (<http://www.eu-un.europa.eu/>) and the 2nd Committee, respectively."

Mr President,

I have the honour to speak on behalf of the European Union and its Member States.

The Acceding Country Croatia^{*}, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia^{*}, Montenegro^{*}, Iceland⁺ and Serbia, the Countries of the Stabilisation and Association Process and potential candidates Albania and Bosnia and Herzegovina, as well as Ukraine, the Republic of Moldova, and Georgia, align themselves with this declaration.

Mr President, a year ago, in the immediate aftermath of the Istanbul conference we confirmed here our commitment to LDCs and LLDCs and our determination to deepen our partnership. We have since then jointly translated this commitment into action:

1. Regarding the concrete implementation of the Istanbul Programme of Action: With LDCs in the lead and in full partnership with them, the EU and its Member States have stepped up their efforts, and through both bilateral and regional programmes -, we have met our commitment to channel 0.15% of GNI of ODA to LDCs. We are determined to concentrate our future efforts, both in policy and financial terms, even more on the most vulnerable. By the same token, we will focus our unilateral trade preferences under the EU GSP scheme on countries most in need. LDCs in particular will continue to benefit from duty-free quota-free market access to the EU market for all their products (except arms and ammunition).

Our development policy and aid is focused where it has the greatest impact. We remain directly engaged in social areas, but will also concentrate our efforts in key enabling sectors, such as the energy sector and the agriculture, food and nutrition security field. Structural reforms in LDCs and LLDCs will be key to enhance productive capacity and unlock domestic potential for sustainable and inclusive growth and development. We would also like to underline the importance for LDCs and LLDCs to continue integrating trade in their development strategy. Indeed, openness to trade, complemented by good governance and sound domestic policies, is a condition to successful development. In this respect, the EU and its Member States will continue to provide LDCs with increasingly focused Aid for Trade.

^{*}Croatia, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Montenegro and Serbia continue to be part of the Stabilisation and Association Process.

⁺Iceland continues to be a member of the EFTA and of the European Economic Area.

Overall, we need to jointly define a path which goes beyond aid and trade and focuses on the broader policy coherence for development.

2. Regarding the Smooth Transition Process: In this regard, we are determined to accompany LDCs in reaching the ambitious objectives they have set for themselves in Istanbul notably for half of them to meet the criteria for graduation by 2020. We have thus strongly engaged this year in the work of the General Assembly Ad Hoc Working Group. Graduation is the demonstration of the success achieved in terms of the sustainable development of the country. There again, our engagement is strong, transparent and predictable. The main focus of our work ahead should be on the predictability and orderly phasing out of benefits post graduation. We continue to strongly encourage trading partners, including emerging economies and developing countries in a position to do so, to provide duty-free quota-free access to LDCs and to maintain market access benefits for a clear and known period of time after graduation as the EU does.

We believe that each country has the main responsibility for its own development. A lot of data and information is available to LDCs, notably through the CDP portal. We agree that it could be made more readily available to ensure full awareness of graduating LDCs and acknowledge the CDP's work to improve the quality and accessibility of its portal. It is important that national transition strategies be put in place early on as the framework within which partners can work and which determines key challenges and best mix of supporting actions. There can be no one-size fits all solution. Transition strategies must be tailor made to each country so as to reflect the specific context, opportunities and vulnerabilities. Improved coordination and coherence of existing programmes in support to LDCs will be very important. More predictability is also needed from the United Nation decision making process to ensure expeditious and time-framed action by the General Assembly on graduating countries, to conclude the work of ECOSOC.

3. Regarding LLDCs: Finally, we should collectively pursue our efforts to deal with persistent challenges, including high transport and commercial transaction costs affecting the land-locked developing countries. Lack of access to the sea and difficult transit facilities add to their challenges in building productive capacities. Geographical difficulties prevent these developing countries from taking full advantage of the potential of trade as an engine for sustained economic growth. Within the framework of their bilateral and regional programmes, the EU and its Members States are determined to accompany LLDCs in overcoming these challenges. We are looking forward to fruitful negotiations on the modalities of the upcoming conference in 2014 so as to ensure a focused and efficient process bringing the best possible added value and outcome.

Mr President,

The follow up processes to the Rio+20 conference and the broader preparations for the post 2015 development agenda will spark key debates in the coming months. These are very relevant to countries in special situations as they are confronted with the most severe constraints to growth and development. We believe that the provisions of the Istanbul Programme of Action and these processes ahead possess common denominators and significant synergies and should be addressed in a coherent manner.

We are looking forward to a strong engagement with LDCs, as well as a fruitful cooperation with the Office of the Under-Secretary-General and High Representative for Least Developed Countries, Landlocked Developing Countries and Small Islands Developing States (UN-OHRLLS), and with his Excellency Ambassador Acharya, whom we would like to congratulate once again on his appointment.

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Thank you.