



THE PRESIDENT
OF THE
GENERAL ASSEMBLY

15 December 2015

Excellency,

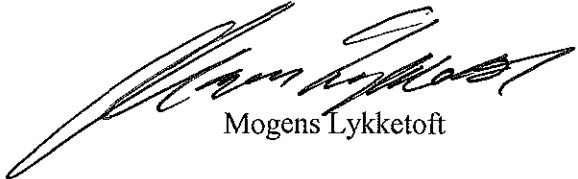
I have the honour to refer to the General Assembly Resolution A/RES/69/231, entitled "Follow-up to the Fourth United Nations Conference on the Least Developed Countries".

In this Resolution, the General Assembly requests the President of the General Assembly to organize, early in 2016, a one-day special thematic event, with the participation of Member States, non-governmental organizations, civil society, the private sector and academic institutions, in order to provide input to the comprehensive high-level midterm review.

I am therefore pleased to inform you that I will hold a special thematic event on "Building Synergy and Coherence in the implementation of the Istanbul Programme of Action in the context of the 2030 Development Agenda." This event will be held on the 11 February 2016 at the UN Headquarters in New York. A brief Concept Note on the event is attached.

It is my hope that this special thematic event will draw wide participation from Member States, as well as from the relevant stakeholders. A Background Note with additional details and a provisional programme will be disseminated in due course.

Please accept, Excellency, the assurances of my highest consideration.



Mogens Lykketoft

To all Permanent Representatives
and Permanent Observers to the United Nations
New York

CONCEPT NOTE
Special Thematic Event
“Building Synergy and Coherence in the implementation of the Istanbul Programme of Action in the context of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development”
New York, 11 February 2016

I. Introduction and Background

The Istanbul Programme of Action (IPoA) for the Least Developed Countries (LDCs) for the Decade 2011-2020 provides a comprehensive framework for the sustainable development of LDCs. Effective and timely realization of the eight priority areas of the Programme of Action would generate a far-reaching transformation of the socio-economic fabric of LDCs and have a game-changing impact on the lives of millions of people in these countries. It should also help half of the LDCs reach the graduation benchmark in a sustainable manner, which is the primary objective of the IPoA.

Despite considerable efforts, the recent development trajectory of LDCs indicates a relatively slow pace of economic diversification, compounded by marked volatility and fragility of their growth performance. The deceleration of economic growth or prolonged slow growth in many least developed countries was the offshoot of a confluence of national, regional and global factors. The economic rebound, underway in many least developed countries since the financial crisis, is slowing down.

Narrow production and export bases, growing environmental and climate change related challenges, multiple health emergencies, devastating natural disasters, widespread poverty and hunger, and institutional and capacity constraints are some of the structural impediments for LDCs. These are compounded by insufficient external support and greater exposure to external shocks, which has serious implications for their ability to fight against poverty and hunger.

The year 2015 was seminal in the chronicles of the United Nations. Member States have constructed a new global development compact that captures all dimensions of sustainable development with a special focus on the most vulnerable countries. The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, adopted in September 2015, provides a broad and integrated development framework for the next 15 years. The new development agenda recognizes LDCs as the most vulnerable countries of the world. The challenges and priorities of LDCs are firmly embodied in the basic architecture of the 2030 Agenda.

Other important Agreements of 2015, namely the Addis Ababa Action Agenda (AAAA), the Sendai Framework on Disaster Risk Reduction (DRR) and the Paris Agreement on Climate Change, recognize LDCs as the most vulnerable group of countries and contains specific measures to fortify their capacity in achieving the sustainable development goals. Taken together, these new global Agreements provide the structure within which international support for LDCs could be strengthened and scaled up, in order to ensure that this group of countries, not only achieves the objectives and goals of the IPoA in a timely manner, but also that they are not left behind in the realization of the 2030 Agenda.

Member States have decided to hold a comprehensive high-level mid-term review of the implementation of the IPoA in Antalya, Turkey in June, 2016. The mid-term review will undertake a comprehensive review of the status of implementation of the IPoA by LDCs and their

development partners, share best practices and lessons learned, identify obstacles and constraints encountered, and actions and initiatives needed to overcome them, as well as new challenges and emerging issues. The review will also reaffirm the global commitment to address the special needs of LDCs made at the Fourth United Nations Conference on LDCs. It will, additionally, further strengthen the global partnership for the development of LDCs in all priority areas of the IPoA, in order to ensure the timely, effective and full implementation of the Programme of Action during the remainder of the decade, while building synergies with the 2030 Agenda for sustainable development.

General Assembly resolution 69/231 articulated the organizational structure of the mid-term review process of the implementation of the IPoA. As per the resolution, a number of preparatory processes will culminate into an intergovernmentally negotiated and agreed outcome in the form of a political declaration. As part of the preparatory process, the General Assembly has requested the President of the General Assembly to organize, early in 2016, a one-day special thematic event, with the participation of Member States, non-governmental organizations, civil society, the private sector and academic institutions, in order to provide input to the comprehensive high-level midterm review.

II. Objective

The primary objective of the special thematic event is to build common ground on how the implementation of the IPoA can be enhanced during the remainder of the decade by building synergies and coherence in the implementation of the Istanbul Programme of Action and the 2030 Agenda. The event also aims to discuss how to strengthen global partnerships for sustainable development, with a view to ensuring full implementation of the IPoA during the remainder of the decade and thereby realizing its ambitious objective of enabling half the number of LDCs attaining the graduation threshold. Participants will be invited to make specific expressions of support to LDCs.

III. Format

The one-day special thematic event will consist of an opening plenary session, two interactive panel discussions and a closing plenary session. The panel discussions will be composed of presentations by renowned experts, government representatives from LDCs, partner countries and the development practitioners to be followed by an interactive dialogue among all meeting participants, including representatives of the Member States, institutional stakeholders, civil society and the private sector.

IV. Participation

Member States will be invited to participate in the thematic meeting. Representatives of UN agencies and entities, international financial institutions, regional development banks, the private sector, civil society and other stakeholders will also be invited to attend at the highest level possible.

V. Outcome

The outcome will be a President's summary, which will be circulated to all Member States and stakeholders.