



THE PRESIDENT  
OF THE  
GENERAL ASSEMBLY

19 April 2016

Excellency,

I have the pleasure to enclose herewith a letter, dated 18 April, 2016, from H.E. Ms. Bénédicte Frankinet, Permanent Representative of Belgium and H.E. Mr. Jean-François Régis Zinsou, Permanent Representative of the Republic of Benin, the co-facilitators of the inter-governmental consultations on the preparatory process of the high-level midterm review of the implementation of the Istanbul Programme of Action, submitting a new version of the draft outcome document, which has taken into account the comments received from delegations during the preparatory meeting of the experts on 28-31 March, 2016.

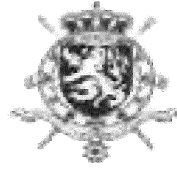
This new draft will serve as the basis for the first informal consultation which will take place on 25 April 2016.

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

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Mogens Lykketoft', written in a cursive style.

Mogens Lykketoft

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



New York, March 18 April, 2016

Excellency,

We have the honor to refer to the letter of 5 November 2015 from the President of the General Assembly informing you about our appointment as co-facilitators to conduct inter-governmental consultations of the General Assembly's midterm review of the implementation of the Programme of Action of Istanbul, to be held in Antalya, Turkey, on 27, 28 and 29 May 2016.

In line with the General Assembly decision A/RES/69/231 adopted on 19 December 2014, we have been requested to present a draft outcome document in the form of a political declaration.

In this regard, following the preparatory meeting of experts held between 28 and 31 March 2016, we are pleased to attach a new version of the draft outcome document, which will be put for consideration to the meeting scheduled for the 25<sup>th</sup> of April, 2016. This version takes into account the comments by delegations in the preparatory meeting of experts.

We look forward to your continued support for the review, as well as your constructive engagement in the negotiation process.

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

H.E. Mrs. Bénédicte Frankinet  
Co-Facilitator  
Permanent Representative of Belgium  
to the United Nations

H.E. Mr. Jean-François Régis Zinsou  
Co-Facilitator  
Permanent Representative of Benin  
to the United Nations

All Permanent Representatives and  
Permanent Observers to the United Nations  
New York

## **Midterm review of the Program of Action of Istanbul**

### **Outcome document (Draft 18 April, 2016)**

#### **Preamble**

1. We, the Heads of State and government and High Representatives participating in the Comprehensive Mid-term Review of the implementation of the Istanbul Programme of Action for the Least Developed Countries for the decade 2011-2020, gathered here in Antalya from 27 to 29 May 2016, to undertake a comprehensive review of the implementation of the Program of Action of Istanbul by the Least Developing Countries (LDCs) and their development partners, share best practices and lessons learned and identify obstacles and constraints encountered and actions and initiatives needed to overcome them, as well as new challenges and emerging issues.
2. We further strengthen the global partnership for development for LDCs in all priority areas of the Istanbul Program of Action in order to ensure the timely, effective and full implementation of the Program of Action during the remainder of the Decade, in the context of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, of which the Addis Ababa Action Agenda on financing for development is an integral part, the Paris Agreement on Climate Change, the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction, as well as the Samoa Pathway and the Vienna Programme of Action for the Small Island Developing States and the Landlocked Developing Countries that are part of the LDCs.
3. We recognize that over the past few decades the world has witnessed remarkable socio-economic progress with most of the goals and targets of the Millennium Development Goals achieved globally. However, not all countries have fully shared in this global progress. Performances among LDCs were particularly diverse. A significant minority embraced stronger policies, strengthened governance, achieved substantial gains in reducing the prevalence of extreme poverty, and improved health and education outcomes. Others lost ground in some or all of these dimensions. Progress towards the Millennium Development Goals and other internationally agreed development goals was slowest in the LDCs affected by conflicts and post-conflict situations which require specific approaches to address poverty, security and governance in an integrated manner.
4. We recognize that despite many challenges and constraints, the LDCs represent an enormous human and natural resource potential for world economic growth, welfare, prosperity and food and energy security. Therefore, a successful, renewed and strengthened global partnership that effectively addresses the special needs of the LDCs will contribute to the cause of peace, prosperity and sustainable development for all. Further strengthening of our collective actions towards empowering LDCs' young populations and women will more effectively contribute to sustainable development, poverty eradication, job creation and social justice.

## **I. State of progress and lessons learned in the implementation of the Program of Action of Istanbul**

5. LDCs continue to face multiple structural challenges and constraints, including, inter alia, narrow production and export bases, stagnant trade and investment flows, diminishing productivity growth, weak land and natural resource governance, and widespread poverty, hunger and malnutrition. These longstanding challenges are compounded by new and emerging challenges such as climate change, increased incidences of natural disasters and public health emergencies, conflicts, declining commodity prices, and rising capital outflows. Without structural transformation that tackles institutional and capacity constraints, LDCs will remain fragile and vulnerable to various economic, social, and environmental shocks. Continued external support, including through Official Development Assistance, is necessary to assist LDCs address these important issues. Experience has shown that failure to provide necessary support has serious implications for LDCs' ability to make sustained progress in the fight against poverty and hunger, which is essential to reach the sustainable development goals in 2030.
6. Many LDCs have also made tremendous progress in achieving positive and sustainable development outcomes, in spite of significant challenges and constraints. For a significant number of LDCs, growth performance and prospects have been good on a sustained basis. Most LDCs are also considered to have policy frameworks conducive to inclusive economic growth.

### **7. General objectives, goals and targets:**

7.1. We recognize that while the LDCs have made significant efforts towards achieving the objectives, goals and targets of the Program of Action of Istanbul, a lot still remains to be done. There is a need to foster progress across all sectors. We recognize that many of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development's Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) include targets with relevant for the LDC's development needs and reaffirm the need to give LDCs special attention in the implementation of the 2030 Agenda.

7.2. We reaffirm our unswerving commitment to full, effective and timely implementation of the Istanbul Programme of Action. We also reaffirm our commitment to the full and timely implementation of the 2030 Agenda with special focus to the LDCs and our support to the task of mainstreaming it into the LDCs' national development policies and programs. We also reaffirm our determination to mobilize the means required to implement through a revitalized global partnership for sustainable development, in a spirit of global solidarity, focused in particular on poverty reduction and inclusion through the effective promotion of inclusive growth and the implementation of social protection systems, particularly for the poorest and vulnerable people.

8. **Graduation:** We emphasize that progress towards meeting the criteria for graduation accelerated since 2011. We congratulate those LDCs that have graduated and welcome that many LDCs are meeting the criteria for graduation and many others have expressed their aspirations to graduate. However, since the Least Developing Countries category was established in 1971, only four countries have

officially graduated and it appears, based on current trends, that concerted and revitalized efforts would be required for realizing the Program of Action of Istanbul's objective of enabling half the LDCs to meet the criteria for graduation by 2020.

9. **Productive capacity building:** We recognize that productive capacity building is a crucial tool for the promotion of sustainable development. It should support structural transformation and thus contribute to inclusive economic growth and social development, while safeguarding the environment and building resilience. During the last five years little progress was achieved in production diversification and value addition as well as effective participation of the LDCs in regional and global value chains, which are critical for these countries in reversing their marginalization, building productive capacities, accelerating structural transformation and generating full and productive employment and decent work for all with quick impact on poverty eradication. This situation requires strategic policy interventions at the national, regional, subnational as well as at the sectorial level. In this regard, regional cooperation and integration can play a catalytic role. An adequate international enabling environment is also crucial to access markets, linking into global value chains and national development efforts.

10. **Infrastructure and energy:**

10.1. We stress that the development of resilient physical infrastructure, promote sustainable industrialization and foster innovation are important prerequisites for sustained economic growth and sustainable development. Significant amount of investment and technology is essential, including through appropriate institutions and regulation, public-private partnerships, innovative financing and regional integration, to bridge the gap in this field. Promoting sustainable industries, and investing in scientific research and innovation, is all important ways to facilitate sustainable development. It is equally important to strengthen the underlying investment climate, including by improving predictability, governance and transparency, as well as procurement practices and policies. Development partners should continue to contribute to financial and technical support to the LDCs for their infrastructure development and management.

10.2. We emphasize that LDCs have made progress in expanding and improving the road and railway networks, ports, irrigation facilities and access to electricity services. However, the infrastructure deficit, including in small-scale infrastructure, and in particular in the rural areas, where a majority of the population lives and works, but also in cities and urban areas, has been a major bottleneck in the LDCs to deliver public services, enhance the scale of production and productivity, deliver employment and decent work opportunities and promote internal commerce and international trade.

10.3. We emphasize that the acute energy gap faced by LDCs is a severe constraint for their structural transformation. Reliable, affordable and uninterrupted access to sustainable energy is a key development enabler and multiplier, which can foster private sector development, strengthen productive capacity building, expand trade, and promote access to better social services and food security. Technical progress is also key to finding lasting solutions to both economic and environmental

challenges, such as providing productive employment and decent work for all and promoting energy efficiency.

## **11. Agriculture, food security and rural development:**

11.1. We recognize that the low agricultural productivity remains a major challenge in the LDCs due to lack of adequate investment in physical infrastructure, and access to markets, insecure user rights and access to land, including for women, limited capacity building, slow progress in regulatory and policy reforms, scientific and technological development, research and agricultural extension services, lack of access to financial services, including insurance, and adverse impacts of climate change and related extreme weather events, less predictable weather patterns, soil degradation, declining water availability and degrading water quality due to increasing frequency of droughts and floods, and soil and water contamination.

11.2. We acknowledge that progress in the development of the agricultural sector, which employs more than half of the population in most of the LDCs, is critical for sustainable development, including sustained poverty reduction, inclusive economic growth, women empowerment, rural development and addressing hunger and malnutrition.

11.3. We also acknowledge that developing countries are urbanizing rapidly, and that the proportion of urban residents who experience hunger and malnutrition is growing. Investments in agriculture systems are critical to feed developing countries' populations, and to reduce hunger and malnutrition among the rural poor. At the same time, investments in water and sanitation, social protection, livelihoods, and access to energy are critical to reducing hunger and malnutrition among the peri-urban and urban poor. Two hundred and then million people in the LDCs, predominantly those in rural areas, do not have access to sufficient, safe and nutritious food. The proportion of undernourished in the total population of the LDCs was the highest among all groups of countries. The availability and affordability of safe food are key challenges in the LDCs which are often affected by structural factors such as under-capitalized agriculture, underdeveloped markets, insecure property rights, high dependence on food imports, unclear tenure systems for access to land, poor transport infrastructure and food distribution systems as well as periodic economic and environmental shocks such as price fluctuations and negative weather conditions. We agree to work together to address these challenges in the LDCs and underline the vital role of the multilateral trading system in global food security.

## **12. Economy, trade and investment:**

12.1. We recognize that the five per cent average growth rate in the LDCs during the period under review was well below the seven per cent target of the Program of Action of Istanbul and SDG 8.1. We are concerned that the growth rates are estimated to fall in the last years. The Program of Action of Istanbul identifies trade and investment as major drivers of employment generation, economic growth, and structural transformation. The challenge is also one of inclusive growth and rising inequality as the pace of reduction in poverty has not been commensurate to that economic growth rate.

12.2. There has been some improvement in market access for LDCs products and their exports have gradually increased, but the share of the LDCs exports, remained highly concentrated in a few primary products vulnerable to commodity price volatility and to exogenous economic and environmental shocks, remained stagnant in world's total exports, standing in 2014 at 1.1%, a level that is far behind the two per-cent target of the Program of Action of Istanbul and the SDGs set for 2020.

12.3. We are concerned that the share of the LDCs in global Foreign Direct Investment inflows remained virtually unchanged from 2013 at 1.9 per cent while the Foreign Direct Investments in the LDCs remains concentrated in a small number of mineral-rich economies. We stress that a positive enabling domestic environment for investments as well as stronger and more focused policies, strategies and mechanisms by the LDCs, home countries of foreign direct investment, international organizations and other stakeholders can substantially increase foreign direct investment flows to the LDCs in the coming years.

12.4. We are also concerned by the impact that Illicit Financial Flows (IFFs) are having on draining resources away from the LDCs. IFFs have an adverse impact on domestic resource mobilization and the sustainability of public finances. The activities that underlie IFFs, such as fraud, tax evasion, and illegal exploitation of natural resources are also detrimental to development. The curbing of such flows is vital for the financing of the sustainable development goals and the Programme of Action of Istanbul.

### **13. Good governance, human development, gender equality and the empowerment of women:**

13.1. We recognize that the promotion and protection of human rights, good governance, human development, gender equality and the empowerment of women are essential to achieving peace, prosperity and sustainable development. Since the Program of Action of Istanbul's adoption, the LDCs have made some progress in these areas. Several LDCs have joined the Open Government Partnership, and we welcome their commitments to making their governments more open, accountable, and responsive to citizens. Forty-two LDCs have become parties to the UN Convention against Corruption. Substantial progress towards achieving education for all at the primary level has been made including gender parity for one third of the LDCs. Nearly 20 percent of all parliamentarians in the LDCs are women. Sixteen million people have gained access to an improved source for drinking water in the LDCs.

13.2. Despite these progresses made in many LDCs, we recognize that further efforts are needed to remove the barriers that women and girls face regarding gender-based violence, access to quality education, health care services, including sexual and reproductive health, water and sanitation and equal rights with men to economic opportunities such as formal employment, decent work, entrepreneurship and access to and ownership over productive resources, including land and other forms of property, credit, inheritance, natural resources and appropriate new technology. We must work to strengthen our attention to the meaningful participation of women and girls in decision-making as well as the elimination of all

forms of discrimination, gender-based violence and harmful practices against women and girls, including child, early and forced marriage and female genital mutilation. Greater efforts are also needed to better engage and empower youth. Youth need opportunities to learn, work and participate in decision-making process and to contribute to building inclusive and peaceful societies that are free from violence.

13.3. We reaffirm that achieving gender equality, empowering all women and girls, and the full realization of their human rights are essential to achieving sustained, inclusive and equitable economic growth and sustainable development. We reiterate the need for gender mainstreaming, including targeted actions and investments in the formulation and implementation of all financial, economic, environmental and social policies.

13.4. Sustainable development in the LDCs is being hampered by the lack of qualified, skilled human resources. While much progress has been made towards achieving education for all at the primary and secondary level, much more remains to be done to ensure that the over 24 million children of primary age not in school and the over 22 million adolescents of lower secondary age also out-of-school in the LDCs have access to quality education. Strengthened efforts are also needed to ensure that education is of good quality and that it provides all learners with the skills needed to access employment and decent work.

#### **14. Financing for development:**

14.1. Both the Program of Action of Istanbul and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, including the Addis Ababa Action Agenda acknowledge the centrality of domestic resource mobilization and private investment for the sustainability of development gains in the LDCs. As a result of cooperation between the United Nations, G20, the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development, the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund, there has been significant international progress in identifying and addressing the Base Erosion and Profit Shifting challenges for developing countries and ensuring that all countries, including the LDCs, can take full advantage of increases in tax transparency and exchange of information, including by implementing the new international standard of Automatic Exchange of Information. The capacity challenges faced by the LDCs have been recognized by the G20, which endorsed a Call to Action for Strengthening Tax Capacity in Developing Countries and a new innovative partnership, the Addis Tax Initiative, was launched in order to double global support for domestic resources mobilization capacity building by 2020.

14.2. While the LDCs have made considerable efforts to mobilize domestic resources and attract private investment, further progress is needed. International public finance plays an important role in complementing the efforts of countries to mobilize public resources domestically. For the LDCs as a group, Official Development Assistance remains the largest source of external financing. The decline in Official Development Assistance going to the LDCs during the last years is a worrisome trend and the level of 0.09 per cent of GNI attained in 2014 remained below the relevant 0.15-0.20 per cent target to which many developed countries have committed. In that context, we welcome the commitment by the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development at his High Level Meeting in 2016 to



reverse the declining trend of Official Development Assistance to the LDCs. Other financial flows, foreign direct investment and remittances in particular, are swiftly growing in importance, but are concentrated in a few countries and sectors.

14.3. We recognize that the long-term sustainability of debt in LDCs depends on, inter alia, economic growth, the mobilization of domestic and international resources, the export prospects of debtor countries, sustainable debt management, sound macroeconomic policies that also support job creation, transparent and effective regulatory frameworks and success in overcoming structural development problems, and hence on the creation of an enabling international environment that is conducive to development. We welcome the recent decision by the IMF Board to increase access to its concessional resources by 50% for the poorest and most vulnerable countries.

15. **Science, technology and innovation:** The Program of Action of Istanbul recommends that the LDCs and development partners make concerted efforts to build science, technology and innovation capacity so the LDCs can find and harness innovative solutions development challenges and promoting indigenous capacity for research and development to overcome the structural impediments the LDCs face achieving sustainable development. Despite the importance of access to critical technologies for promoting positive development outcomes, the LDCs have made scant progress in this field since the adoption of the Program of Action of Istanbul, as evidenced by, inter alia, the small number of patents filed and scholarly or technical articles published by the LDCs authors. In addition, fewer than seven percent of households in the LDCs have access to the Internet.

16. **Resilience building:**

16.1. We recognize that the LDCs are disproportionately affected by the adverse impacts of climate change, including persistent drought and extreme weather events, sea-level rise, coastal erosion, glacial lake outburst floods and ocean acidification, which further threaten food security and efforts to eradicate poverty and achieve sustainable development. We are deeply worried that increase in global temperature, sea level rise, ocean acidification and other climate change impacts are seriously affecting coastal areas and low-lying coastal LDCs.

16.2. The Program of Action of Istanbul highlights the LDCs' vulnerability to a variety of environmental and economic shocks and emphasizes that these vulnerabilities threaten to undermine many of the development gains the LDCs have made over the last decade. We welcome that many LDCs have designed Intended Nationally Determined Contributions for the new climate regime and designed and implemented national disaster risk reduction strategies and embedded them in national development plans with focus on preventive measures and multi-stakeholder approach. However, their efforts have limited success so far given their capacity and resource constraints, including at the subnational level. Although most LDCs have developed some forms of social protection programmes, coverage tends to be very limited. Similarly, the mechanisms to mitigate and manage risk associated with the volatility of commodity prices are still lacking. Development partners have acknowledged the importance of addressing these vulnerabilities and are taking steps in various multilateral forums to build resilience to many of the "multiple crises

and other emerging challenges” described in the Program of Action of Istanbul, such as the International Development Assistance Crisis Response Window from the World Bank, which helps countries respond to natural disasters and other crisis, the LDCs Fund replenished by donors contributions during the 21<sup>st</sup> session of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change Conference of Parties, or initiatives at the IMF such as the temporary waiver of interest rates on Poverty Reduction and Growth Trust loans and the provision of grants for debt relief under the Catastrophe Containment and Relief Trust also play an important role building the LDCs resilience. The Sendai Framework for Disaster Reduction acknowledged that LDCs warrant particular attention in view of their higher vulnerability and risk levels.

16.3. We recognize that LDCs in conflict or post-conflict situations and those experiencing political instability, or which have a state unable to deliver basic services, have specific and considerable challenges in meeting the sustainable development goals. We also recognize the diverse, dynamic and sub-national nature of fragility that requires context-specific approaches to address poverty, security and governance in an integrated manner. Targeted national policies and assistance and international support measures are required for LDCs affected by conflict to address the challenges and to support activities aimed at tackling root causes of instability and fragility.

## **II. Looking forward and recommendations**

### **17. General recommendations:**

17.1. We reiterate that the ownership of and the leadership and primary responsibility for their own development lie with the LDCs. LDCs have the right and responsibility to formulate and execute their own national priorities, including striking a balance in the allocation of resources between economic, social and environmental sectors. Development partners should support LDCs in the design and the implementation of their development strategies.

17.2. We welcome that the Agenda 2030, the Addis Ababa Action Agenda, the Paris Agreement on Climate Change and the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction reiterate that the most vulnerable countries, including LDCs, deserve special attention and reflect the concerns and aspirations of LDCs and we recall the decision contained in the Agenda 2030 for Sustainable Development that effective linkages will be made with the follow-up and review arrangements of all relevant UN Conferences and processes, including on LDCs. We therefore underline the need for strong synergy in the implementation of SDGs, the Paris Agreement and the Program of Action of Istanbul at the national and sub-national levels and ensuring coordination and coherence in the follow-up of the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals, the Paris Agreement and the Istanbul Programme of Action at the national, regional and international levels.

17.3. We also call to strengthen the national statistical capacities in LDCs to increase significantly and use high-quality, timely and reliable disaggregated data,

which are necessary for an efficient policy making and effective follow-up and review.

17.4. We recognize that full and productive formal employment and decent work for all remains a primary mechanism for domestic resource mobilization by generating a virtuous cycle of income which boosts consumption and increases the tax base in order to finance investments and further development. We commit to ensure that decent work for all is considered a central objective of macroeconomic and fiscal policies so that the benefits of growth reach all people, especially the poor, with a focus on mutually supportive strategies that lead to the rapid expansion of productive employment through the formalization of labour markets.

17.5. We recognize that genuine, effective and durable multi-stakeholder partnerships can play an important role in advancing sustainable development. We will encourage knowledge-sharing and the promotion of cooperation and partnerships between stakeholders, including between Governments, firms, academia and civil society, in sectors contributing to the achievement of the sustainable development goals and in support of country-driven priorities and strategies. At the same time, we commit to pursue an international enabling environment for sustainable development at all levels and by all actors to make the global partnership for sustainable development more effective.

17.6. We urge that national statistical capacities be strengthened in order to increase significantly the availability of high quality, timely and reliable disaggregated data by sex, and other characteristics relevant in national contexts, which are necessary for an efficient policy making and an effective follow-up and review.

18. **Productive Capacity Building:** We recognize that a significant amount of investment and technology development is essential, including through appropriate institutions and regulation, public-private partnerships, innovative financing and regional integration, to bridge the gap in the field of productive capacity building. It is equally important to strengthen the underlying investment climate, including by improving predictability, governance and transparency, as well as in procurement practices and policies. Development partners should continue to provide financial and technical support to LDCs for their infrastructure development and management, at the national and subnational levels. We note with appreciation that International Financial Institutions like the IMF and the World Bank already provide capacity development at no cost to the poorest countries through direct technical assistance and training for country authorities and call on them to enhance such support, responding to the demands and needs of the LDCs.

19. **Graduation:**

19.1. We urge both LDCs and their development partners to undertake more concerted efforts to achieve the Program of Action of Istanbul's aim of enabling half the LDCs to meet the criteria for graduation by 2020. It is also important that graduation be seen, not as a cut-off point, but as a resolute move towards better and sustained economic development and virtuous and inclusive structural transformation. The development and trading partners, including the United Nations

system should continue to support the implementation of LDC transition strategies and avoid any abrupt reductions in financial and technical assistance. Partners should also consider extending trade preferences to the graduated country, on a bilateral basis.

19.2. We recall UNGA resolutions 59/209 of 20 December 2004 and resolution 67/221 of 21 December 2012 on a smooth transition for countries graduating from the category of least developed countries. We underscore that LDCs' efforts towards graduation are underpinned by their ownership and leadership, as the primary responsibility for development lies with the countries themselves, but they need to be supported by concrete and substantial international partnership measures in a spirit mutual accountability for development results.

20. **Infrastructure and energy:** We recognise that financing for infrastructure and universal access to modern energy, including at sub-national level, remains a major challenge for LDCs. To address these challenges, we call upon LDCs and development partners to imbed resilient and quality infrastructure investment plans in their national sustainable development strategies, while also strengthening domestic enabling environments. We also call upon development partners to provide technical and financial support for countries to translate plans into concrete project pipelines, as well as for individual implementable projects, including for feasibility studies, negotiation of complex contracts, and project management, with a view to ensuring universal access to sustainable energy by LDCs. We will enhance international cooperation to provide adequate support and facilitate access to clean energy research and technology, expand infrastructure and upgrade technology for supplying modern and sustainable energy services to all developing countries, in particular LDCs. Advances in the use of sustainable energy can be accelerated by cooperation, capacity building and exchange of experiences. Increased funding and technology transfer are also of essence. All forms of finance, tools and mechanisms-domestic resources, ODA grants, public-private partnerships, concessional, non-concessional loans, blended finance, special-purpose vehicles, non-recourse project financing, risk mitigation instruments, pooled funding structures and other innovative approaches-need to be utilized. Projects involving blended finance, including Public-Private Partnerships, should share risks and reward fairly, include clear accountability mechanisms and meet social and environmental standards. We call on the Development Finance Institutions and the development partners to play a larger and more coordinated role in investing in infrastructure projects, mitigating and sharing risks and ensuring guarantees. We also stress that special attention should be given to LDCs throughout the United Nations Decade of Sustainable Energy for All (2014-2024), as well as within the framework of the Secretary-General's Sustainable Energy for All initiative, and the recently held Sustainable Energy for All Forum, the Global Infrastructure Forum with a view to ensuring the realization of the objective of access to affordable, reliable, sustainable and modern energy for all by 2030 and to addressing the infrastructure needs of LDCs.

21. **Agriculture, food security and rural development:**

21.1. We support Secretary-General's zero hunger initiative and reaffirm the commitment to increase sustainable and responsible investment in agriculture and food security, property rights, including through international public and private

cooperation in rural and urban infrastructure, nutrition, land tenure security, agricultural research and extension services, access to markets and to finance, building irrigation facilities, technology development, the promotion of sustainable agricultural practices and reducing food loss and waste. We commit to conserve and sustainably use the oceans, seas and marine resources to increase the economic benefits to LDCs that are Small Island developing States and Coastal Countries from the sustainable use of marine resources, including through sustainable management of fisheries, aquaculture and tourism.

21.2. We furthermore commit to supporting strong economic, social and environmental links between urban, peri-urban and rural areas by strengthening national, regional and local development planning, including equal tenure and user rights, and through an integrated approach to sustainable water management. We also commit to increase investments for effective interventions and actions to improve people's diets and nutrition, including in emergency situations. Recognizing the important role of women in agriculture in LDCs, we commit to take action to increase women's empowerment in agriculture and to increase women's access to and control over land and other productive assets. We recognize that commodity diversification and value addition as well as effective participation of LDCs in regional and global value chains and in international trade in agricultural products is a critical aspect of the efforts of these countries in reversing their marginalization, building productive capacities, accelerating structural transformation and generating full and productive employment and decent work for all with quick and sustainable impact on poverty eradication.

21.3. Protecting, restoring and sustainability using terrestrial ecosystems, sustainably managing forests, halting biodiversity loss, and tackling land and soil degradation and desertification, which are significant impediments to sustainable development of LDCs, many of which are heavily dependent on land for agriculture and growth, would generate multiple benefits including food security, improving living conditions of affected population, eradicating poverty and contributing to peace and security while enabling LDCs to effectively mitigate and adapt to the adverse impact of climate change.

## **22. Trade and investment:**

22.1. We reaffirm our commitment to significantly increase the share of LDCs' trade in global trade with the aim of doubling the share of LDCs' exports in global exports by 2020, including by broadening LDCs' export base.

22.2. We encourage LDCs and development partners to make use of initiatives and programs with proven track records of expanding trade opportunities such as aid for trade and to use existing programs like the Generalized System of Preferences, where rate lines are already eligible for duty-free treatment. We will strive to allocate an increasing proportion of aid for trade going to LDCs, provided according to development cooperation effectiveness principles and therefore encourage LDCs to mainstream trade in their national development plans. With this in mind, we welcome the extension of Enhanced Integrated Framework (EIF) into Phase Two and urge members to, as the EIF implements the reforms agreed as

necessary for its continuation, contribute to the timely replenishment for effective implementation without any disruption of EIF between 2016 and 2023.

22.3. We urge WTO members to commit to continuing efforts to facilitate the accession of all least-developed countries engaged in negotiations for WTO membership and welcome the 2012 guidelines for the accession of LDCs to the WTO.

22.4. We call upon all partners who are WTO members to implement all of their recent agreements, especially those that benefit the LDCs. We also call upon development partners to provide concrete support to the LDCs for the diversification of their export base, including into dynamic sectors of world trade to assist them to rapidly increase their share in world trade and improve domestic value added from exports.

22.5. We reaffirm our joint commitment to promote strategic and regulatory frameworks for foreign direct investment and other resource flows in this sector that include vital policy areas such as infrastructure development, trade and trade facilitation, research and development and the mutually agreed transfer of technology.

22.6. To further investment promotion, we also recommend to establish national regulatory and policy frameworks that allow businesses to innovate, invest, and transform technology into employment and inclusive economic growth. We also call for greater LDCs commitment and scaled-up international support for regional integration in order to expand markets, to promote trade facilitation by implementing the WTO trade facilitation agreement, cross border infrastructure development, regional value chains and regional cooperation, all of which will contribute to regional stability and progress. Effective partnerships between and among governments, the private sector and civil society are particularly useful in addressing complex and inter-related challenges.

22.7. We recall the decision contained in the Istanbul Programme of Action and reaffirmed in General Assembly resolution 67/220 to adopt, expand and implement investment promotion regimes for the LDCs. We welcome the decision contained in the Addis Ababa Action Agenda to adopt and implement investment promotion regimes for LDCs and the offer to provide financial and technical support for project preparation and contract negotiation, advisory support in investment-related dispute resolution, access to information on investment facilities and risk insurance and guarantees such as through the Multilateral Investment Guarantee Agency.

22.8. LDCs are also encouraged to utilize existing trade and investment support mechanisms. The World Bank, the UN Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD), and the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) offer several such programs that address risk insurance and guarantees as well as technical and advisory support for investment-related negotiations and dispute resolution.

## **23. Good governance at all levels:**

23.1. We recommend the implementation by the LDCs of the necessary domestic legislation consistent with the 2030 Sustainable Development Goal Agenda, which constitutes an universal recognition of the critical importance of accountable and effective institutions and the rule of law as fundamental contributors to peace, poverty reduction and sustainable development, and with relevant international agreements such as the Busan Partnership on Effective Development Cooperation, the United Nations Convention against Corruption (UNCAC), for LDCs who are UNCAC members, the Extractive Industry and Transparency Initiative (EITI), and the Open Government Partnership, among others. Rule of law, land governance, sound legal frameworks, effective audit systems, digital payments, transparency and accountability at all levels, the fight against illicit financial flows, anti-fraud and anti-corruption measures are also important for sustainable development. Furthering participation, empowering civil society and strengthening collective actions towards enabling LDCs' young populations and women will more effectively contribute to equitable and inclusive development, poverty eradication, job creation and social justice.

23.2. We recognize that sustainable development cannot be realized without peace and security, and that peace and security will at risk without sustainable development. In this regard, we acknowledge that the development challenges posed by conflict not only impede, but can reverse decades of development gains. We thus further call on the international community to provide particular attention and support to LDCs in conflict and post-conflict situations and in particular those suffering from the threats coming from violent extremism and international terrorism, with the view of achieving the realization of peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development.

#### **24. Human development, Gender equality and child, youth and women empowerment:**

24.1. We acknowledge that education and skills development provide the foundation for lifelong learning and broader human development. We therefore support the global commitment to provide quality education to all, including the poorest and most vulnerable, through to the end of secondary school and reaffirm the commitment to enhance technical, vocational and tertiary education and training, ensuring equal access to boys and girls. We also reaffirm that investment in human resources and institutional capacities are required to ensure a diversified economy, based on a wide range of sectors, to reduce country's economic volatility. Technical, vocational and skills development programmes need to take into account the needs of local firms and generate skilled human resources which can also help them to invest in the necessary technologies so as to advance in the value chain. We also resolve to address the persistent gender gap in secondary and tertiary enrolment. In this regard, we reiterate our call to development partners to provide and encourage their high-tech education institutions to allocate and provide places and scholarships for students and trainees from LDCs, in particular in the fields of science, technology, business management and economics.

24.2. We reaffirm the essential role of gender equality, the empowerment of women and girls and the realization of their human rights in achieving peace, prosperity and sustainable development. Women and girls must enjoy equal access to quality education, health, including sexual and reproductive health, access to finance and economic resources and political participation as well as equal opportunities with men and boys for employment, leadership and decision-making at

all levels. We will work for a significant increase in the investments to close the gender gap and strengthen support for institutions, including criminal and civil justice systems, in relation to gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls at all levels. We support the elimination of all forms of discrimination and violence against women and girls, including through the engagement of men and boys. The systematic mainstreaming of a gender perspective throughout the implementation of the Programme of Action of Istanbul will be crucial to its success.

24.3. We recognize that today's generation of people under the age of 25 is the largest even in history. Girls and boys, young women and young men, are key agents of change in creating a better future, and when empowered, they have great potential to advocate on behalf of themselves and their communities. We will promote and protect the rights of children and youth, ensure more opportunities for their meaningful participation and work towards ending all forms of violence and abuse against children and youth, including exploitation, trafficking, torture and other harmful practices such as female genital mutilation and child, early and forced marriage. We call upon all countries to ensure that children and youth become active members of the global community, now and later in life, and that no one is left behind.

## **25. Financing for development:**

25.1. We stress that the domestic resource base is critical for rapid and sustained progress and long term sustainable development. Significant additional domestic public resources, through the strengthening of the capacities of national, sub-national and local governments in their efforts to mobilize revenues, supplemented by international assistance as appropriate, will be critical to realizing sustainable development and achieving the SDGs. While recognising the efforts for the gradual enhancement of the domestic resource generation in LDCs, we commit to enhance revenue administration by promoting economic development, bringing the informal economy into the formal economy and through modernized, progressive tax systems, improved tax policy and more efficient tax collection. We also emphasize the need for stronger commitments to prudent public financial management, including on financial data transparency. We are committed to use Official Development Assistance (ODA) catalytically to mobilize domestic and private sector resources for development, including at the subnational level. Innovative programmes and partnerships for sustainable development finance such as the Addis Tax Initiative endorsed by the G20, that use ODA as a tool to help LDCs better mobilize and effectively use and invest their domestic resources and leverage private and blended investment to finance development efforts should be promoted.

25.2. In line with the Addis Ababa Action Agenda, we welcome the decision by the European Union which reaffirms its collective commitment to achieve the 0.7 per cent of Official Development Assistance/Gross National Income (ODA/GNI) target within the time frame of the post-2015 agenda, and undertakes to meet collectively the target of 0.15 to 0.20 per cent of ODA/GNI to LDCs in the short-term, and to reach 0.20 per cent of ODA/GNI to LDCs within the time frame of the post-2015 agenda. We encourage ODA providers to consider setting a target to provide at least 0.20 per cent of ODA/GNI to LDCs. We are encouraged by those who are allocating at least 50 per cent of their official development assistance to LDCs.



25.3. *We recognizes* that the long-term sustainability of debt depends on, inter alia, economic growth, the mobilization of domestic and international resources, the export prospects of debtor countries, sustainable debt management, sound macroeconomic policies that also support job creation, transparent and effective regulatory frameworks and success in overcoming structural development problems, and hence on the creation of an enabling international environment that is conducive to development. We reiterate our commitment to working through existing programmes such as the Debt relief under the Heavily Indebted Poor Countries (HIPC) and the Multilateral Debt Relief Initiative that already provide comprehensive and effective frameworks to deal with issues relating to debt relief.

25.4. We recognize the importance of ensuring access of poor and excluded households and localities to adapted technologies that can facilitate entry to new markets and provide renewable energy sources, waste management, and clean water.

25.5. We encourage LDCs to develop their capacities to track financial transactions, administer taxation, regulate customs, investigate and prosecute offences to contribute for the success of efforts to deal with illicit financial flows. We also encourage the United Nations and other relevant international bodies to strengthen tax systems as well as address gaps in areas such as illicit financial flows, capital flight and tax evasion at international level to tackle them collectively.

25.6. We encourage the use of innovative tools, including mobile banking payment platforms and digital payments, and recognize the role that they can have in promoting financial inclusion as well as in reducing costs, increasing transparency, improving the speed and security of payments, and opening up new markets.

25.7. Therefore we call for support for those partnerships and global alliances, such as the Better than Cash Alliance and its institutional secretariat, the United Nations Capital Development Fund (UNCDF), that expand the reach and adoption of such tools in support of the 2030 Agenda and the Istanbul Programme of Action.

25.8. We welcome continued efforts to improve the quality, impact and effectiveness of development cooperation and other international efforts in public finance, including adherence to agreed development cooperation effectiveness principles and the alignment of activities with national priorities of the LDCs, promoting country ownership, results orientation, strengthen country systems and partnerships for development, reduce transaction costs and increase transparency and mutual accountability.

25.9. We recall that South-South Cooperation, and triangular Cooperation, as a complement to North-South Cooperation, remain vital to LDCs, given the importance of such cooperation to promote, inter alia, technical assistance, and the sharing of best practices in terms of their development, especially in areas of human and productive capacity-building, agriculture, health, education, professional training, environment, science and technology, trade and investment. We emphasize the need to accelerate and scale up recent initiatives, and we call upon the countries of the South to further strengthen their support to the LDCs in all of these areas and to

further improve its development effectiveness in accordance with the provisions of the Nairobi outcome document of the UN Conference on South-South cooperation.

## **26. Migration and Remittances:**

26.1. We recognize the positive contribution of migrants for inclusive growth and sustainable development. We also recognize that international migration is a multi-dimensional reality of major relevance for the development of countries of origin, transit and destination, which requires coherent and comprehensive responses. We will enhance our cooperation to facilitate orderly, safe, regular and responsible migration, involving full respect for human rights and the humane treatment of migrants, regardless of migration status, refugees and displaced persons at their countries of origin, transit and destination, including through the implementation of planned and well-managed migration policies. Such cooperation should also strengthen the resilience of communities hosting refugees, particularly in developing countries. We underline the right of migrants to return to their own country of citizenship, and recall that States must ensure that their returning nationals are duly received.

26.2. We will work towards reducing to less than three per cent the transaction costs of migrant remittances and eliminating remittance corridors with costs higher than five per cent by 2030.

26.3. We recognize that remittances from migrant workers are typically wages transferred to families, primarily to meet part of the needs of the recipient households and cannot be equated to other international financial flows. We will work to ensure that adequate and affordable financial services are available to migrants and their families in both home and host countries. Combining remittance receipts with broader access to other financial services can increase the impact of remittances on growth by facilitating savings and investments. We will take measures to promote productive investment of remittances, such as in micro-, small- and medium-sized enterprises, ensuring to engage women and men as equal partners and beneficiaries.

## **27. Science, technology and innovation:**

27.1. We reaffirm our commitment to address and to propose concrete measures to improve LDCs' capacity to access and utilize critical technologies with international support of development partners. Such measures should be prioritized in policies and budgets priorities of the LDCs and include improvements in rule of law, governance, enabling environments and specific legal frameworks for intellectual property (IP) protection and an effective IP rights framework that will give firms confidence to invest in advanced technologies and establish research partnerships in LDCs. This framework will also provide incentives for local firms to develop or adapt their own technologies. LDCs need enhanced international support for acquiring new technologies and building domestic capacity and a knowledge base to be able to access to information and communication technology development, and fully utilize acquired technologies and promoting indigenous capacity on a sustainable basis for research and development are needed to enhance productive capacities in LDCs.

27.2. We reaffirm our commitment to fully operationalize the Technology Bank for LDCs, in view of its potential to foster productive capacity, structural transformation, poverty eradication and sustainable development. In this regard we take note of GA Resolution 70/216, which outlined the necessary steps to launch and operationalize the Technology Bank, funded by voluntary contributions, by 2017, and to ensure continued support for the LDC Technology Bank from all relevant stakeholders. We will promote synergies between the Bank and the Technology Facilitation Mechanism launched at Addis Ababa and close cooperation on both technical and administrative matters with the UN Inter-agency Task team on Science, technology and Innovation for the Sustainable Development Goals. We welcome with appreciation the offer by Turkey to host the Technology Bank for LDCs in Gebze and call upon the Government of Turkey to continue its support to the Bank. We urge the Secretary-General of the United Nations to appoint the members of the Governing Council of the Technology Bank and to create and implement a Trust Fund with the flexibility necessary to attract voluntary funding from Member States and other stakeholders. We emphasize the need for development partners, as well as international organizations, foundations and the private sector to provide voluntary generous financial and technical assistance to the Technology Bank to ensure its effective operations. We also emphasize that voluntary assistance is unlikely to materialize until additional details are made available about, inter-alia, the specific activities the Technology Bank will undertake, how these activities will be evaluated, and the members of the Technology Bank's Governing Council. We mandate the Governing Council to draft the legal text and detailed operational and policy documents, in consultation with the Member States, to be adopted by the General Assembly of the United Nations, as appropriate, before the end of 2016.

## **28. Resilience building:**

28.1. Building resilience at the national level as well as the subnational, community and individual levels is critical in sustaining hard-won development gains and accelerating progress towards achieving the development aspirations set in the Program of Action of Istanbul. More investment in the capacities and institutions of local authorities, building livelihoods, inclusive and rapid growth, disaster preparedness, application of ICTs and Science and Technology, social protection and good governance will contribute to strengthening resilience in an effective manner.

28.2. We welcome the fact that the Paris Agreement on Climate Change will transform our economies to low-carbon and resilient economies and especially to build the resilience of the poor and those in vulnerable situations and to reduce their exposure and vulnerability to climate-related extreme events and other economic, social and environmental shocks and disasters. The Paris Agreement underwrites support to developing countries, in particular the LDCs, and establishes a global goal to significantly strengthen adaptation to climate change through support and international cooperation.

28.3. We encourage LDCs to adopt national plans towards adopting a low-carbon and climate resilient economic growth path and stress the importance of implementing the Intended Nationally Determined Contributions (INDCs). In line with the Paris agreement, we further welcome the opportunity of communicating long-term low greenhouse gas emission development strategies. We call for effective

delivery on climate finance commitments and simplified and prioritised access for LDCs to all climate change-related funds, as applicable.

28.4. We welcome the decisions of the Green Climate Fund Board to ensure a 50:50 balance between mitigation and adaptation over time on a grant equivalent basis and a floor of fifty per cent of the adaptation allocation for particularly vulnerable countries including LDCs.

28.5. We stress the importance of developing and implementing holistic disaster risk management integrated at all levels in line with the Sendai Framework and to support national and local capacity for disaster prevention, preparedness, mitigation, response, recovery and rehabilitation and, in this respect, call for continuing the work in relevant institutions to support efforts by LDCs to build their national capacity to respond to various kinds of shocks including through funds and other tools.

28.6. We urge both development partners and LDCs to make full use of various programs that are already in place, like country-level multi-donor trust funds (MDTFs) for pooling funds to support an overarching strategic theme such as resilience building, sometimes managed by the multilateral development banks and sometimes by UN agencies (notably UNDP), that have in some instances demonstrated their value in reducing transaction costs to countries undergoing or emerging from a crisis. There is therefore potential value in supporting country-specific MDTFs for resilience building purposes. In some instances resilience programs may require a country-level pooled funding mechanisms that provides assistance and reduces transaction costs to a particular LDC.

28.7. We stress the importance to work on conflict prevention and peacebuilding to promote social cohesion and empowering LDCs to become inclusive and resilient to external and internal shocks, by supporting and strengthening of key governance institutions, developing capacities for conflict prevention and management of ongoing tensions, with civil society and marginalized communities, including women, facilitating dialogue and consensus building and mainstreaming of conflict prevention in development within the UN system through conflict analysis and assessments.

28.8. We note that women and girls, especially those belonging to the poorest segments of the society, are among those who are impacted disproportionately during and in the aftermath of crises and disasters. We reaffirm our commitment to put in place gender-responsive policies and actions to address crises and disasters, including through ensuring women's full, equal and effective participation and leadership in decision-making, building their capacity for preparedness and resilient livelihoods through awareness-raising, education and skills development.

## **29. Advocacy, and UN System support:**

29.1. We request OHRLLS to continue to advocate for the interests and concerns of LDCs at the global level. We reiterate our invitation to the governing bodies of the United Nations funds and programs and other multilateral organizations, and international financial institutions, to contribute to implement the Programme of Action and to integrate it into their work programs, as appropriate and in accordance

with their respective mandates. These organizations are invited to participate fully in reviews of the Programme of Action at the national, sub-regional, regional and global levels. We invite the governing bodies of the organizations of the United Nations development system and other multilateral organizations to prioritize allocations to LDCs, as appropriate and in accordance with their respective mandates.

29.2. We recognize that the income-based classification of countries does not allow for taking into account large pockets of poverty, under-nutrition and vulnerabilities including fragility and other structural constraints that persist in many LDCs.

29.3. We further welcome the entry into force of the Proposed Amendment of the Articles of Agreement on Reform on the Executive Board of the IMF and 2010 Quota Increase, as an important step to broaden and strengthen the voice and participation of developing countries in international economic decision-making and norm-setting and global economic governance. We invite the Basel Committee on Banking Supervision and other main international regulatory standard-setting bodies to continue efforts to increase the voice of LDCs in norm-setting processes to ensure that their concerns are fully taken into account.

30. **Fifth UN Conference on LDCs:** We encourage the General Assembly to consider holding the 5<sup>th</sup> UN Conference on LDCs in 2021.