

Programme of Action for the Least Developed Countries for the Decade 2001-2010

(brief summary)

Framework for partnership: The Programme of Action for the Least Developed Countries (LDCs) for the Decade 2001-2010 adopted on 20 May 2001 in Brussels provides a comprehensive framework for partnership between LDCs and their development partners “to accelerate sustained economic growth and sustainable development in LDCs, to end marginalization by eradicating poverty, inequality and deprivation in these countries, and to enable them to integrate beneficially into the global economy”.

Goals and targets: The overarching goal of the Programme of Action for the Least Developed Countries (BPOA) is “to make substantial progress toward halving the proportion of people living in extreme poverty and suffering from hunger by 2015 and promote the sustainable development of the LDCs”. The Programme of Action is based on the international development goals and targets, including those contained in the Millennium Declaration and known as Millennium Development Goals (MDGs).

Commitments: The Programme is based on shared but differentiated responsibilities or commitments of the LDCs and their development partners and articulates their policies and measures by the LDCs in seven interlinked areas: 1) fostering a people-centered policy framework; 2) good governance at national and international levels; 3) building human and institutional capacities; 4) building productive capacities to make globalization work for LDCs; 5) enhancing the role of trade in development; 6) reducing vulnerability and protecting the environment and 7) mobilizing financial resources.

Cross-cutting issues: The following issues are cross-cutting priority issues in the Programme: poverty eradication, gender equality, employment, governance at national and international levels, capacity-building, sustainable development, special problems of landlocked and small island LDCs, and challenges faced by LDCs affected by conflict.

Guiding principles: The implementation of the Programme of Action is guided by the following principles:

1. An integrated approach: The development process should be viewed in a comprehensive, coherent and long-term manner by LDCs and their partners, including the multilateral agencies within and outside the United Nations system. When addressing economic development and poverty eradication, there should be a balance between economic and other objectives of development. The implementation of the Programme of Action should be integrated into all international processes of concern to the LDCs.

2. Genuine partnership: With greater alignment between national policies and strategies in LDCs and the external assistance strategies of their partners, the scope for more effective dialogue between them has expanded. Open and transparent development

cooperation, underpinned by strong political will, can help bring about rapid transformations in LDCs.

3. *Country ownership*: All efforts should be made by LDCs and their partners to ensure genuinely country-led development. This will be aided by the joint identification of development priorities by LDCs and their development partners. Also, LDCs will need to be effectively involved in areas such as aid coordination and debt relief.

4. *Market considerations*: While acknowledging the importance of market forces in the sustained process of economic growth and poverty reduction, there is a need to ensure an appropriate mix of public-private participation. However, this cannot be achieved without adequate attention to market weaknesses as well as government weaknesses, and consideration of the preparedness of the private sector. It is necessary to work towards a good balance between public action and private initiative. To be fully productive, however, a market must operate within a stable legal and economic framework.

5) *Result orientation*: Only positive concrete processes and outcomes can sustain public confidence in the development partnership between LDCs and their development partners. The process of identifying, assessing and monitoring progress on processes and concrete outcomes will be a key aspect of the implementation of the Programme of Action and its success will be judged by its contribution to progress of LDCs towards achieving international development targets, as well as their graduation from the list of LDCs.

Three track approach: The Programme recognizes that success in attaining its objectives will depend critically on the effective follow-up, implementation, monitoring and review at the national, regional and global levels. It further emphasizes that “the implementation and the follow-up at the national level are of primary importance”.

National level: Follow-up and implementation of the BPOA at the national level includes mainstreaming the BPOA “in the national development framework and poverty eradication strategy , including where they exist, PRSPs, CCAs and UNDAF, and with the involvement of civil society, including the private sector, on the basis of a broad-based inclusive dialogue”, establishment of National Forums and ensuring linkages between them and exiting country review mechanisms such as the World Bank’s consultative group and UNDP round-table meetings that “should continue as principal coordination forums for development cooperation, as well as for mobilizing external development resources for LDCs”.

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