

UN LDC IV CONFERENCE CIVIL SOCIETY FORUM

Istanbul, Turkey

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Civil Society Forum Secretariat

LDC Watch

Kathmandu, Nepal

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1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background

The history of providing special development attention to the Least Developed Countries (LDCs) started with the recognition of LDCs as the most vulnerable group by the United Nations (UN) in the late 1960s. A special measure in favor of LDCs was incorporated in the International Development Strategy for the second United Nations Development Decade soon afterwards. In 1971, the UN identified 24 countries of the world as LDCs based on their Gross Domestic Product (GDP), share of manufacturing in GDP and adult literacy rate. The current criteria of defining LDCs are based on Gross National Income (GNI), human assets and economic vulnerability.

1.2 Past UN LDC Summits

There has been three United Nations Conferences on the LDCs in the last three decades with three specific programme of Actions for the LDCs. The first two Conferences (LDC-I and II) were held in Paris in 1981 and 1990 respectively while the LDC-III was held in Brussels in 2001. The LDC III consequently adopted the Brussels Programme of Action (BPoA) for the Decade 2001-2010. An NGO Forum parallel to the UN LDC-III was held for the first time in recognition to the role and contributions of civil society actors.

However, after three decades of special development attention, the numbers of LDCs have doubled from 24 to 48 with the original 24 still remaining and many more joining the group.

Today, there are 33 LDCs in Africa, 14 in the Asia-Pacific and 1 in the Caribbean. Recently a Report "Rethinking Poverty: Report on the World Social Situation 2010" highlighted the unacceptably high level of poverty in sub-Saharan Africa and in South Asia -- home to all of the 33 African LDCs and 14 Asian LDCs. Only 3 countries have graduated so far from LDC status: Botswana in December 1994, Cape Verde in December 2007 and Maldives in January 2011.

1.3 UN LDC IV Conference

The Fourth United Nations Conference on the Least Developed Countries (UN LDC-IV) was organised from 9-13 May 2011 in Istanbul, Turkey, which adopted the next-generation Istanbul Programme of Action for the LDCs for the decade 2011-2020 (IPoA). Four parallel tracks led by different players was the attraction of the LDC IV Conference.

- **Inter-governmental track** involving the governments of LDCs and their development partners: The track worked towards the adoption of multi-year strategy designed to address the needs of LDCs based on the draft outcome document that was subject to substantial negotiations since the beginning of the year. The participants in the intergovernmental track were high level government officials, ministers, and heads of government/state, as well as UN officials.
- **Parliamentary track** involving members of the legislatures from LDCs and their development partners, organized in collaboration with the Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU)
- **Civil society track** with activities by civil society organisations, including NGOs, academia, media and foundations, organized in cooperation with the United Nations.
- **Private sector track** involving activities by private sector actors organized in cooperation with the United Nations. It also included an Investment and Partnership Summit on LDCs Development, as well as a Business Forum/ Expo – Trade Fair

In addition to the above four different specific tracks, number of Thematic Round Tables involving the participation of government representatives, UN agencies, academics, parliamentarians, the private sector and civil society were organised during the conference. Similarly, series of special side events were organised by UN agencies, governments and other organisations on issues relating to the agenda of the conference.

1.4 Civil Society Forum: Global Culmination of Civil Society Initiative

The Civil Society Forum (CSF) at the UN LDC IV held in Istanbul is the continuation of the trend initiated a decade ago. The rationale for the CSF culminated from the realisation of the important role civil society played to bring the experiences, concerns and priorities of ordinary citizens to the UN LDC IV process. Therefore, involving a wide range of civil societies in the Conference as well as in the preparatory processes was felt critical to promote LDC interests. The CSF was supported by the UN Secretary General's Note of August 2008 (A/63/284) and the General Assembly Resolution 63/227.

Against this backdrop civil society was recognized as a strategic partner of LDC governments and UN-OHRLLS for the UN LDC IV Conference and beyond. The primary purpose of the Conference was to assess the results of the Programme of Action adopted in May 2001 at the last UN LDC Conference in Brussels, Belgium and

agree on common strategies, adopt new measures and the next-generation Programme of Action for the sustainable development of the LDCs leading to 2020.

The Civil Society Forum at the UN LDC IV represented the culmination of the civil society track of the conference which aimed to ensure that civil society organizations and their concerns are reflected in the outcome document of the Conference as well as in its follow-up. The civil society forum was attended by about 1,500 civil society representatives from around the world. The Forum started on 7 May, two days before the official conference opened, and continued through the duration of the conference finishing on 13 May, the final day of the official conference.

The main objectives of the Civil Society Forum were:

- to provide a focus for the civil society presence at UN LDC IV
- to promote views of civil society organisations – particularly from LDCs
- to strengthen the bottom-up character of the process, and
- to work towards influencing the outcome of the official conference on the basis of experiences and perspectives of civil society.
- to devise civil society strategies for the implementation and follow up of Istanbul Programme of Action (IPoA)

The Forum also pursued interaction with the Parliamentary and Private Sector tracks, in addition to the intergovernmental process.

Before the global culmination of civil society in Istanbul at the Civil Society Forum, different preparatory activities in the LDCs, regions, UN headquarters and LDCs development partner countries were organised. The civil society steering committee together with the LDC Watch had organised national consultations in LDCs. They also convened regional consultations, and participated in the intergovernmental preparatory process and UN GA's informal interactive civil society hearing. Similarly, policy dialogue forums were also organised in the strategic development partner countries of the north.

2. PROCESSES AND PROCEEDINGS OF THE CIVIL SOCIETY FORUM

2.1 Promoters/partners of the CS initiative

Several organisations particularly the UN agencies and civil society organisations collaborated in partnership to make the Civil Society Forum a success. The following paragraph provides a glimpse of their roles and responsibilities:

2.1.1 OHRLLS, NGLS and other UN agencies

The initiative to convene the Fourth United Nations conference on the Least Developed Countries (UN LDC IV) in 2011 was taken by the General Assembly in its resolution 63/227 of 2009. It designated the Office of the High Representatives for the Least Developed Countries, Landlocked Developing Countries and Small Island Developing States (OHRLLS) as the focal point to ensure effective, efficient and timely preparations for the Conference. Together with the OHRLLS the United Nations Non-Governmental Liaison Service (UN-NGLS), an inter-agency programme of the United Nations mandated to promote and develop constructive relations between the United Nations and civil society organizations, played a constructive role in facilitating the successful LDC IV civil society forum.

Additionally, UN General Assembly, UNDP, UNCTAD, the UNESCAP and UNECA also played instrumental role in facilitating the civil society contributions to the LDC IV process.

2.1.2 LDC Watch and CSF Secretariat

LDC Watch, an international alliance of civil society organisations, had played an instrumental role in mobilizing the civil society contributions to the LDC IV process and outcomes. This global network of civil society organizations is led by civil society actors from the LDCs and supported by civil society from development partner countries. It acts as a coordinating group for LDC civil society to advocate, lobby, campaign and network to put the focus on the development in LDCs within the broader development debates including Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) and international development cooperation.

In planning for the UN LDC IV, OHRLLS mandated LDC Watch to take the lead role in preparation for and organizing civil society forum to be held during the LDC IV. So, LDC Watch had also served as the civil society forum secretariat for the LDC IV conference.

2.1.3 CSF Steering Committee

An international steering committee of the Civil Society Forum to facilitate the preparatory activities as well as organize the Civil Society Forum at the UNLDC IV Conference was formally launched by the Secretary General of the UN LDC IV and the Under Secretary General and High Representative of UN OHRLLS Mr. Cheick Sidi Diarra in October 2010 at the UN Headquarters. The Steering Committee consisted of seven members spread over the developed, developing and least developed countries. LDC Watch, the CSF Secretariat, facilitated/managed the pre-conference processes and activities as well as organization of the Civil Society Forum with the general guidance of the Steering Committee and in close coordination with UN OHRLLS.

Overall the SC met four times during the preparatory processes in addition to the ad-hoc Skype conferences and regular e-mail communications. Two SC meetings were scheduled to coincide with the PrepCom meeting in New York while the final one was held in Istanbul two days before the official opening of the CSF.

2.1.4 Host Country CS Focal Point

Doctors Worldwide-Turkey, a branch of the UK based charity Doctors Worldwide (DWW), was established in Istanbul, Turkey in 2004. It is a humanitarian non-governmental organization that provides medical relief and aid to those who are in need without any access or means to basic medical care.

In January 2011 DWW was nominated as the host country civil society focal point to work alongside with the LDC Watch (CSF Secretariat) toward organising the UN LDC IV Civil Society Forum in Istanbul. In its short partnership with LDC Watch, Doctors Worldwide proved good services as host country focal point and was instrumental in smoothing the way for successful LDC IV CSF commissioning in Istanbul, Turkey.

2.2 Civil Society Initiatives

A series of civil society initiatives comprised of different activities and process based events were commissioned over the years leading up to the LDC IV civil society forum. Some of these were initiated a few years well before the LDC IV conference while others were undertaken during the course of the year. Many of these preparatory activities were joint efforts of the UN agencies and the Civil Society Steering Committee, while some were the sole responsibilities of the Steering Committee.

2.2.1 Preparatory Activities

Civil society steering committee under the leadership of LDC Watch was engaged in coordination of various preparatory activities involving civil society actors at national, regional and global levels as well as enabling them to interact with and give inputs to the intergovernmental and UN pre-conference activities. In the process, it successfully articulated civil society perspectives in a multi-stakeholder framework, engaging with the UN, LDC governments and their development partners, both, as a partner and a pressure group. It also networked and built alliances with like-minded coalitions and platforms, such as, the Social Watch, Jubilee South, Eurostep, BOND, South Asia Alliance for Poverty Eradication (SAAPE) and the World Social Forum. The preparatory activities that were undertaken during the course of a year or so can be bundled into national consultations, regional consultation meetings, policy dialogue in development partners countries, participation in the intergovernmental preparatory processes and UN information civil society interactive hearing.

National Consultations

LDC Watch facilitated a series of national consultations in over 15 LDCs spread over Asia, the Pacific, Africa and Caribbean to create awareness about internationally agreed development targets and Brussels Programme of Actions among the national stakeholders, and assess implementation of the BPoA including other internationally agreed development goals towards achieving the overarching objective of poverty reduction and sustainable development in the LDCs. The national consultations also provided opportunity for the local CSOs to engage with their government and development partners both in preparation of and participation in the UN LDC IV Conference.

The consultations were inclusive processes involving participation of various stakeholders, including civil societies, governments, parliamentarians, international organisations, academia, media and the private sector. In the process, LDC Watch also aimed to build a strong network of LDC civil society to advance the issues and concerns of the LDCs citizens in the global development agenda urging LDC governments and their development partners to uphold their political commitments for a people-centered sustainable development in the LDCs.

The specific objectives of the national multi-stakeholder consultations were:

- **Awareness-raising** on the LDCs and the BPoA process among all stakeholders, namely, representatives from the government, CSOs including NGOs, the UN system, development partner organisations, the Bretton

Woods institutions, other multilateral organizations such as the European Commission, media and the private sector.

- **Reviewing** the activities of the government, CSOs including NGOs, the UN system and other stakeholders along the lines of the 7 commitments of the BPoA.
- **Sharing** of issues and constraints confronting all stakeholders towards the effective implementation of the BPoA, along the lines of the 7 commitments.
- **Strategy planning** on effective monitoring, evaluation and implementation of the BPoA, including, follow-up to the BPoA with the UN LDCIV in 2011
- **Networking, campaigning and advocacy** on the LDCs and the BPoA process with all stakeholders at all levels
- **Alliance-building** from national to regional to global levels on the LDCs and the BPoA process
- **Expanding Civil Society Alliances**

Media sensitization work was also undertaken in some countries during the national consultation meetings.

Regional Assemblies

Multi-stakeholder regional assemblies were organized in partnership with the UN OHRLLS and other relevant UN agencies such as ECA in Africa and ESCAP in Asia and the Pacific and in collaboration with the LDC governments. The representatives of different governments, civil society organizations and the local donors including the concerned UN agencies were the main participants of regional workshops.

The main purposes of these assemblies were to assess the implementation and outcome of the BPoA including other internationally agreed development goals from the point of view of regional achievements raise awareness and mobilize civil societies in their respective constituencies. The civil society steering committee and the LDC Watch also aimed to build up a strong LDC civil society network out of the national and regional processes that would further engage in international processes to advance the issues and concerns of the LDCs in the lead up to LDC IV conference and beyond. Furthermore, the network was envisaged to own up the process and urge LDC governments and their development partners to uphold their political commitments for a people-centered sustainable development in the LDCs.

The following three regional consultative meetings were commissioned:

- Africa– Africa LDC Civil Society Assembly was organized in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia on 4 - 5 March 2010
- Pacific– Pacific LDC Civil Society Assembly was convened on 3 - 6 August 2010 in Port Villa, Vanuatu in parallel to the forty-first official Pacific Island Forum
- Asia - Asia LDC Civil Society Assembly was commissioned on 22 - 23 November 2010 in Bangkok, Thailand

The regional assemblies provided opportunities to the participants to share experiences, discuss common challenges and opportunities, and identify regional mechanisms, including regional institutions, to respond to them. It also facilitated the dialogue between the CSOs and the country/regional delegates. The outcome of the regional-level preparations fed into global preparations, including two inter-governmental preparatory committee meetings and civil society intervention in the lead up to the UN LDC IV conference in Istanbul.

Pre-Conference Thematic Meetings

Series of pre-conference thematic meetings were organised by various UN agencies including the World Bank. The LDC CS Forum Steering Committee members along with LDC Watch members participated in the following thematic conferences:

- Governance, organized by UNDP in Geneva,
- Financial Resource Mobilisation, organized by OHRLLS and the Government of Portugal in Portugal
- South- South cooperation organized by the Government of India in Delhi, and
- Climate Change and MDGs, organize in New York.

The thematic conferences provided good opportunities for the CSF team to understand the views of the other key stakeholders' as well as share the civil society perspective on the thematic issues of the conferences. This also presented an opportunity to the team to further the network and lobby.

Policy Dialogues

The limited progress towards BPoA achievements observed during national and regional consultations raised doubts on the ability of the dominant development paradigm to address the issues of the most marginalized and vulnerable countries. In recognition of their important strategic role in shaping a new agenda towards the LDC IV Conference and beyond, LDC Watch, with the support of UN OHRLLS, proactively engaged in policy dialogues with high level representatives of selected strategic partner countries of the developed world such as US, UK, Australia, New

Zealand and South Korea. The dialogue was an opportunity for LDC Watch to bring the civil society perspective to the notice of these countries. The main purpose of the dialogue was to motivate and mobilize the interest of development partners in addressing the LDCs development challenges

Objectives of the policy dialogue meeting included:

- Awareness raising and sharing information on LDCs issues and the implementation of BPoA
- Understanding the country position of key strategic development partners
- Renew strategic support in favor of LDCs and engage in dialogue to foster broader ownership by strategic development partner countries
- Uphold their commitments for a people centered developments in the LDCs

Civil Society Forum Steering Committee representatives also participated in a strategic meeting with the United Nations Secretary General 'Eminent Persons, a group tasked with assisting the United Nations in its efforts to build political will and mobilize global action in the interest of LDCs for the next decade. Given the group's high international stature, expertise and strong commitment to development issues they were likely to influence the outcome of the LDC IV conference.

Intergovernmental Preparatory Committee Meetings

Selected representatives of the civil society organizations from the LDCs, civil society steering committee members and CSF secretariat including experts on LDC issues had participated in the two Intergovernmental Preparatory Committee meetings of LDC IV in New York. The meetings were commissioned in January and April 2011, respectively. On behalf of the CSF, the President and spokesperson of the civil society steering committee delivered statements to both the preparatory committees.

The meetings provided the civil society team with an opportunity to lobby the LDC governments, their development partners, UN agencies, and other key stakeholders present on the occasion. The meeting helped the CSOs to strategize networking, lobbying and campaigning on LDC issues and concerns.

UN General Assembly Civil Society Informal Interactive Hearing

Prior to the second PrepCom meeting, an informal interactive hearing with the members of the civil society was organized by the UN General Assembly. The civil society participants included members of the steering committee, CSF secretariat, CSO representatives of the selected LDCs and resource persons and experts on thematic issues including members of the strategic partners of civil society

campaign and advocacy. The CSO participants presented statements on three key topics, Harnessing Financial and Resources Mobilization for the Sustainable Development in LDCs; LDCs Productive Capacity and Resilience for the Impact of Global Crises, and Promoting Good Governance and Effective Monitoring Mechanisms for Development.

2.3 Civil Society Forum Activities at the UN LDC IV Conference

The CSF activities were organized from 07 to 13 May around a variety of activities such as thematic plenary, strategy meetings and side events which included workshops, panel discussions, films and exhibits in addition to the civil society strategy plenary, official CSF opening and closing ceremonies and interactions with the official forums and round tables. The global convergence of civil society actors created a platform where civil society organizations and grassroots movements including women, youth, trade unions, peasant federations, human rights defenders and media from all over the world including Turkey – in particular from the LDCs could exchange, discuss and share their perspectives and let their voices be heard to influence the outcome of the conference. It also played an important role to demonstrate civil society as a formidable force and as the voice of the ordinary people of the LDCs.

2.3.1 Civil Society Global Strategy Sharing Plenary

This informal plenary meeting in the morning of 7 May marked the start of the Civil Society Forum. Approximately 1,000 participants including those from 48 LDCs attended this plenary. The purpose of this session was to update the status of the political processes and to provide the overview of the week's activities to the civil society representatives from all over the world. The meeting was chaired by Dr. Arjun Karki, Chair of the Civil Society Steering Committee for LDC-IV.

The Participants were greeted by Dr. Ihsan M. Karaman, the Head of the Host Country Civil society representative and Chairman of Doctors Worldwide Turkey and Ms. Azeb Girmai, Country Coordinator of Environmental Development Action – Ethiopia (ENDA). USG Mr. Cheick Sidi Diarra, Secretary General of the UN LDC-IV welcomed the participants and provided a brief



update on the status of the political process. The meeting was also addressed by

the Permanent Representative of Nepal to the United Nations in New York, H.E. Mr. Gyan C. Acharya. H.E. Acharya also briefed the participants on the intergovernmental negotiations on draft IPoA during the occasion.

Civil Society Forum (CSF) Briefing and Orientation

Session I: The aim of this session was to bring coherence to the civil society group, and bring everyone towards a common understanding and purpose. It was co-chaired by Demba Mousa Dembele and Thida Khus. The co-chairs outlined the programme and highlighted the processes of the conference and the issues at stake. The session consisted of orientation on the UN processes, logistics arrangements, host country services and facilities and an overview of the CSF programme for the week.

Mr. Zachary Bleicher of UN NGLS briefed the participants on the UN processes. He also explained the overall logistics relating to the conference as well as the participants sponsored through the UN. Mr. Mustafa Tutkun of Doctors Worldwide presented on the host country preparations and facilities made available for the participants through the city of Istanbul. He also explained about the free public transportation (not private) made available to the delegates during the conference period within Istanbul. Ms. Rajju Malla Dhakal of the CSF secretariat made brief presentation on the overall Civil Society Forum Programmes for the week. She informed about the four thematic plenaries -- one every day from 9 to 12 May (afternoon), the daily strategy sessions in the morning, self organized workshops/panels on issues important to LDCs, films/documentaries from the LDCs and the civil society exhibits. The session concluded with a brief questions and answers.

Session II: This session focused more on the substantial issues important to the LDCs. It aimed to inform and organize the participants to enable them to participate in the conference more meaningfully in terms of monitoring the process (including official negotiations), learning from and contributing to the outcome of the conference.

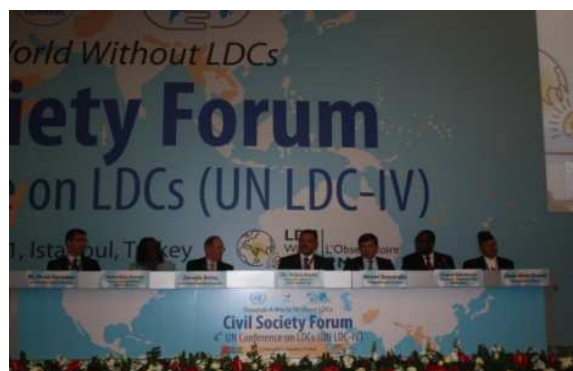
The session started with the introduction of Mr. Charles Gore of UNCTAD by Mr. Hamish Jenkins of UN NGLS. Mr. Gore briefed the participants about the key issues important for LDCs and the Conference. Mr. Alexios Mantzarlis/UN NGLS followed with a brief presentation on the status of the official negotiations and outcome document. The presentation of Ms. Barbara Adams/Social



Watch on the challenges from the LDC process and links to other processes (e.g. Rio 2012) was very useful. The meeting was marked with a lively questions and answers. The session ended with a discussion on how to make the strategy sessions more useful and gain substantially.

2.3.2 CSF Opening Ceremony

The CSF was formally opened on 8 May, a day before the official opening of the LDC IV conference, in the presence of the Secretary General of the United Nations, Ban Ki-Moon, Prime Minister of Nepal and the Foreign Minister of Turkey among others. The event was chaired by Dr. Arjun Karki, Chairperson of the LDC IV Civil Society Steering Committee. The presence of over 1,500 civil society representatives from all over the world including 48 LDCs and the host country Turkey was symbolic in terms of strong civil society solidarity on LDC interests and issues.



At the outset of the meeting Dr. Karki launched the global civil society report "Towards a World without LDCs". The report presents a candid assessment of the Brussels Programme of Action, advocates change of the development paradigm and seeks to craft an ambitious yet deliverable plan of action to lift the LDCs out of poverty and vulnerability trap. He also presented copies of the report to the Secretary General and all the dignitaries on the dais.

During the occasion the UN Secretary General Mr. Ban Ki-Moon acknowledged civil society as the expert partner and ally and stressed "governments cannot win the battle against poverty alone". He further underlined that investment in the LDCs' development is not a charity but an investment for global prosperity and security. He also felt the civil society can raise awareness of the development partners on the needs of the LDCs and encourage them to honour their promises ... The Prime Minister of Nepal who is also the chair of the LDC Bureau hoped that the civil society would contribute to promote advocacy of LDC issues in a vigorous manner. Likewise, Ahmet Davutoglu, Foreign Minister of Turkey, agreed with the civil society call and upheld that "development paradigm must change as the dominant approaches to development failed the world's poorest citizens".



The CSF opening was a successful prelude to begin the week-long events on a positive footing. It was full of powerful speeches. Dr. Ihsan Karaman described LDC IV conference bringing the development partners, the “northern elites” and the residents of “southern ghettos”, together. The event was also addressed by the United Nations President of General Assembly and Ms Azeb Germai, member of the CSF Steering committee. The event was webcasted live as well as widely covered by the media, domestic and international.

The CSF opening was also marked with a Turkish cultural presentation. (Agenda included as annex 1)

2.3.3 Civil Society Strategy Meetings

Strategy meetings were scheduled to take place each morning during the LDC IV civil society Forum from 7 to 12 May with following aims:

- working to finalise a consensus position from CS towards the conference
- establishing roles within the CSO group to engage with the conference, including strategy and monitoring groups
- Establishing thematic working groups to follow specific areas of the negotiations
- Establish Regional Groups



Soon the strategy meeting became one of the key highlights of the forum. From the day one it evolved into an interesting event with spontaneous participation of CSO representatives with diverse skills, depth of experience and background. Given the interest of participants to be involved and contribute across a wide range of issues the meeting was structured into 12 different thematic groups:

- Food Security, Food Sovereignty and Agriculture
- Climate Change, Environment and Sustainable Development
- Gender and Inclusion
- Migration
- Trade and Finance
- Debt
- Aid Effectiveness



- Negotiation and New Programme of Action
- Awareness Raising on LDC Issues
- Follow up

People were free to join the group they were interested in and to select their coordinator. In the first part of the morning every day the groups met in larger meetings and later dispersed for specific group work. The larger group meeting provided focus for gathering intelligence on what is happening in the negotiations, and develop strategies for ongoing engagement with the official conference among other things. The thematic groups provided the focus for influencing the outcome document on the specific themes they focused around. The general focus of the group meeting included:

- Reports from the inter-governmental meetings
- Exchanges with representatives from the official conference
- Reports from the working groups
- Discussions on strategy and engaging with the official process

The strategy meetings continued through the final day and contributed to the production of the final statement on the outcome of the official meeting including an assessment of the outcome document.

2.3.4 Thematic Plenaries (9 May to 12 May)

Thematic plenaries were one of the highlights of the civil society forum. A total of four events on pre-determined themes that encompassed the key concerns of LDCs and mirrored the issues discussed during the preparatory processes were organised by the Steering Committee of the Civil Society Forum. The specific themes of the plenaries were:

- Equitable models for LDC development in a new era
- Broadening ownership of LDC development and fostering accountability
- LDC responses to the crises and building resilience for an uncertain future
- Monitoring mechanisms for LDC development

The outcomes of the thematic plenary workshops (representative of larger CSO views) aimed to contribute to the official conference outcome document on the specific themes they focused around. The workshops sought to involve experts, representatives from the official conference and civil society representatives from LDCs including the Turkish civil society and academics. The plenaries were commissioned every day from 9 to 12 May at the same time from 13:30 to 15:30 hours.

Equitable Models for LDC Development in a New Era

Date: 9 May 2011. **Time:** 13:30-15:30. **Venue:** Uskudar 1/2

Speakers:

Dr. Sarba Raj Khadka (Rural Reconstruction Nepal, Nepal)

Mr. Amadou S. O. Taal (World View, Gambia)

Dr. Emine Nur Gunay (Bogazici University, Turkey)

Prof. Masaaki Ohashi (Keisen University, Japan)

Ms. Huguette Bokpe Gnacadsa (Social Watch, Benin)

Mr. Rashed Al-Mahmud Titumir (Unnayan Onneshon, Bangladesh)

Moderator Mr. Mohiuddin Ahmad (Nabodhara, Bangladesh)

The moderator introduced the panelists and explained the theme of the workshop at the outset. He said, the world is unequal -- it is divided into rich, developing and least developed countries (LDCs). Many people are impoverished, not merely because of their fault, but because of various global and local processes. In a pluralistic society, equity is perceived as the other face of democracy, and corresponds to various aspects that include, among others, the following:

- Uniform law for all: no discrimination, equal access to justice;
- Gender justice: gender equality in all spheres;
- Sustainable development: inter-generational equity that guarantees protection and survival of the future generations;
- Participation: participation of all stakeholders in decision-making.

Democracy is meaningful if these aspects are acknowledged in a society and there are attempts to ensure these. The absence of one or more of these phenomena is common in most cases as development does not often deliver to those who need it the most. The moderator posed few questions to guide the speakers' presentation and the discussion to follow.

- Are there examples (small or big, local or national, international) of initiatives and experiences that ensure equity and justice? If there are small and local examples of successful models, can those be replicated in a wider spectrum?
- What are the real constraints that impede the process of equitable development processes? How the people try to overcome those constraints?

The presentations of the panelists ranged from general to sectorial and more specific situation related. Some also touched on the topical issues both from national and international perspectives.

Dr. Sarba Raj Khadka, the first presenter, started with a pertinent question, why we have to have a concern for equitable development models for LDCs at this point? He opined the dominant development model/paradigm, though claimed to be equitable, is far from being equitable. He argued that the dominance of financial capital has contributed to widen the wealth gap between and within countries and has undermined the social and ethical development agenda fattening a handful of

elites at the cost of the marginalized in the name of economic growth. The unnaturally high level of consumerism has challenged environment and ecosystems on which the lives and livelihoods are based. Moreover, financial institutions has reigned over people's sovereignty and has induced numerous crises --financial crisis, ecological and climate crisis, energy/fuel crisis, food crisis, and more importantly, crisis of confidence (beyond the capacity of the existing systems to handle).

Khadka agreed that equitable models for LDCs development is essential to promote genuine democracy that allows people to set their own agenda for development, promote and protect inter-community and intra-generational justice and protect and promote ecological integrity and environmental conservation. Khadka, shared a Nepalese example of community resource management groups, Community Forest Users Group (CFUG), that respects and promotes equity and justice at local level. He asked, can we learn from local examples?

The second panelist Amadou Taal focused his presentation on LDCs in general while relating it with global context. He is of the view that LDCs must strive to strengthen their democratic systems and institutions to allow genuine and sustainable development particularly in the face of current multiple crises. These crises are manifestations of deeper and long term structural crises that are interrelated and therefore, must be tackled in a holistic manner. Taal feels there is an urgent need to change the power relations and a paradigm shift to democratic power structures, economies and policies in LDCs which equitably serve the people and the nature. He advocated promoting policies and actions that actively support small holder, peasant based production, artisanal fisheries and local markets and protecting productive resources and basic services from privatization and corporate control. He said that price regulation, subsidies and marketing boards must guarantee small scale food producers decent prices for their produce and affordable prices for the consumers and maintain buffer stocks in order to stabilize markets in situation of shortages.

Taal further opined, government efforts should be supported by international institutions such as FAO, IFAD, WFP, WTO, the World Bank, IMF, etc. They should support national policies on food security/food sovereignty in order to eradicate hunger and malnutrition and stop transnational corporations from invading LDCs and grabbing peasant land for agro-fuel production. He felt international institutions must devise new international trade rules based on the right for each country to decide on the level of protection and support for sustainable food production. The ongoing WTO negotiations on the agreement on agriculture must be given a new direction to create a new trade regime based on the diverse needs of societies and the preservation of the environment. He strongly emphasized that the preservation of the natural environment is a *sine qua non* for achieving food security/food sovereignty.

Taal strongly asked international institutions to address the issue of debt to promote equitable development in LDCs. Most LDCs are caught up in a vicious trap of debt servicing that restricts them to direct resources towards building self-sufficient domestic economies, food and agricultural systems, manufacturing and services industries. From equity perspective, the external debts of LDCs have been repaid several times through interest payments and expropriation of natural resources, he added, what remains unpaid is the huge ecological debt that the northern countries owe to LDCs. The ecological debt includes the extraction and export of natural resources from LDCs to the north, such as petroleum, minerals, and forests, marine and genetic resources.

Prof. Massaki Ohashi presented on the issue of "equitable nuclear energy development for LDCs" and asked at the outset "is it desirable or avoidable"? Based on the recent devastating experience of Japan, he said, challenge is not only for equitable but also a qualitatively sustainable common future. He briefly described the impact of enormous earthquake and Tsunami on Japan's Honshu Island that killed 14,785 people with 10, 271 still missing.

Ohashi rightly said that the accident has not only added to the current global crises by contaminating food (marine and land), water, air and posed health threats, it has raised a serious question about the nuclear energy at a time of energy crises. No Nukes appeal is less than persuasive despite the bitter experience of Japan, he admitted, the reality is too complicated as modern life depends on nuclear energy. He also considered that, to put an end to this dependency we need to make choices -- massive development of alternatives energy or fundamentally change the life style and limit economic development -- probably both.

Although the Fukushima accident proves there is no absolutely safe nuclear reactor, the reality is developing countries need more energy for further development, and the nuclear energy is preferred to other forms of energy. The current surge of nuclear reactors, he feared, are here to stay and will inevitably invade some LDCs in near future. What is desirable is a substantial slow down of competing sales promotions of nuclear power generations by the northern countries (including Japan). He thought, developing countries and their people should be given full information and time to rethink their choice, energy or safety, as the most likely victims of a nuclear accident is almost invariably the poorest people in any countries. The speaker concluded with a plea for "Equitable No Nuke Development", NOT "Equitable Nuke Development".

Dr. Emine Nur Gunay made a presentation on "Challenges to Opportunities: Bridging the Gaps Towards a more Equitable World". The focus of her presentation was on MDG 8 -- develop a global partnership for development for equitable development of LDCs. She reminded that Goal 8 requires development partners to

develop an open, rule-based, predictable, non-discriminatory trading and financial system; and deal with the debt problems through national and international measures in order to make debt sustainable in the long run while addressing the special needs of LDCs.

She also raised questions that are contextual and deserves attention -- what are the real constraints that block the process of equitable development processes? What can be done in coming years to establish a fairer and more sustainable economic system?

She felt that technological spillovers from ODA and FDI incline to occur more frequently if the social capabilities and the absorptive capacity of the firms of the recipient countries are high. Therefore, she suggested LDCs to invest in human capital, educational institutions, information and communication technologies (ICT) to bridge the gap while strengthening domestic financial and knowledge systems and developing rural, national and cross-border infrastructure. She concluded that the solution lies in self-sustained growth to achieve economic development.

Floor Discussion:

A rich discussion followed the presentations by the panelists. Participants started the discussion with a pertinent question, development of equity or equitable development, what's in a word?

Speakers from the floor unanimously agreed that sustainable development is not compatible with inequity. There was broad consensus that equity is a better base for development policy than the economic growth paradigm which is on the rise again in international circles despite the bitter lessons of the financial crisis and the threat of climate change. Some participants expressed optimism about the mention of the "equitable development" in the LDC IV outcome document. They felt it may signal the revival of the concept of equality and the recognition of its importance for development. However, others pointed out that the dominant definition of inequality is more unequal as it seemed to focus exclusively on LDCs, largely on corruption. Participants argued, the fight against corruption is important, but is only part of the reality. They stressed that growing inequity and inequality at international level including the international mechanisms has further widen the gap between the developed countries and the LDCs. Some listed the examples of current practices of debt repayments even after paying several times through interests; unfair distribution of revenue from extraction of natural resources; capital flight fueled by internal corruption but made possible by internationally used tax havens, etc. as inducing inequality at national and international level. Participants demanded such mechanisms be reviewed and corrected urgently.

The session concluded with a shared agreement that there is no equity at the global level and there is no democracy in global governance. Equitable development at national and international level is a cherished goal and we have to strive for equity in all spheres of our life. The moderator said, there are examples of equitable development efforts. There are models with negative implications as well. We need to learn from those experiences, and thereby develop our knowledge base and wisdom, so that we can be more effective in our struggles for a better future that ensures both economic progress and social justice at national and international level.

Broadening Ownership of LDC Development and Fostering Accountability

Date: 10 May 2011. **Time:** 13:30-15:30. **Venue:** Uskudar 1 / 2

Speakers:

Prof. Babu Mathew, National Law University, India, and SAAPE Deligate

Prof. Camille Chalmers, University of Haiti

Prof. Jung Ok Lee, Catholic University of Daegu, Korea

Mr. Demba Mousa Dembele, LDC Watch, CSF Steering Committee, Senegal

Rudy de Meyer, 11.11.11 Coalition, Belgium

Moderator: Dr. Sarba Raj Khadka, LDC Watch and JSAPMDD

The moderator welcomed the attendees and the panelists of the plenary. He highlighted the concept of the plenary and said ownership and accountability is the two sides of the same coin. Ownership and accountability at both national and international level is essential for achieving targets of focused programmes of actions, MDGs and any other development outcomes in the LDCs. Sadly, he said, the dominant economies of the world continue to shift the burden of responsibility only on the most vulnerable LDCs. There is no doubt that the country ownership and leadership is critical, he added, but the development process in LDCs should be viewed in a more comprehensive and holistic manner given the increasing global interdependence. He also felt the development partners should also take the responsibility of their past wrong doings.

He urged all to have firm position on the topic so as to draw clear message from the session to inform the official LDC IV outcome.

Babu Mathew, the first panelist of the session, stated at the outset of his presentation that the LDCs next generation sustainable development programme needs to be developed on the basis of political economy analysis of the LDCs. He thought it should not be just the "old wine in a new bottle". His presentation dwelled on the ills of current model of development and said business as usual' and 'one size fits all' mentality is no more accepted. He felt the neo-liberal model has

already collapsed, and the new programme must not augment Washington Consensus but give acceptable alternatives, he added.

Mathew is of the view that accountability needs to have a broader perspective. He feels that a narrow view of accountability may jeopardize the very essence of accountability itself. The financial sector reform should not be allowed to plunder the natural resources. He feels the act of land grabbing for the market (it is in the context that the western model of capitalism requires markets on new places to flourish) has already met a setback, although the process (of land grabbing) is yet not defeated.

As per Mathew, the current model of industrialization has failed to address the problems being faced by the lower economic strata of the societies. He thought, it has destroyed (and continue to do so) their main livelihood base –the agriculture. Therefore, he strongly suggested ensuring ownership by the people to any policies and programmes and rejecting the neo-liberal model of development. He also posed a question 'how to make the elites of our societies accountable to our people?' He thought fostering alliances of the marginalized and organizing them for a common purpose should be the way forward. He also felt alternative democratic institutions that go beyond the current parliamentary model is the need of the time.

Another speaker Camille Chalmers touched on the issues of globalization and international framework in the context of broadening ownership of LDC development and fostering accountability. He felt globalization is weakening the system of national ownership and accountability. There is no territorial boundary of globalisation, he explained, it is encroaching into our societies and is increasing the number of poor and vulnerable people in the LDCs.

Chalmers related the recent multiple crisis (food, fuel, financial and climate) to neo-liberalism and globalization and concluded that the market based neo-liberalism is not serving the interests of LDCs. He thought the situation for the LDCs worsened not just because of the immediate and obvious consequences of recession but also because of "collateral damage" created by the anti-crisis measures. The LDCs were forced to bear the impact of newly induced unfavorable conditions for migrants, cuts in the aid budgets and a return to tied aid. Furthermore, the subsidies to industries and services in the North that are "too big to fail" without a corresponding compensation for those that are "too poor to fail" hit the LDC economies hard triggering multiple crisis. Women in LDCs suffered the crisis the most in their effort to substitute the absence or deterioration of social services with unpaid work. Likewise, children deprived of adequate nourishment are never likely to recover completely in their adult years. Chalmers feels the proponents of these policies must take this responsibility.

Chalmers expressed concern about the international framework as he feels there is the widest gap between “what should be done and what will be done”. He pointed out that most LDCs have no say in the governing body that steers the international machinery even though they (LDCs) are often the first in line to be hit by its decisions or lack of it. He urged the civil society to raise the issue strongly and unanimously at the LDC IV official conference.

To Rudy Myers, ownership means owning the decision making process, and (ownership) is related to power. He said shifting power in a way is giving ownership. Therefore, he explained, countries of the South do not have both political and economic ownership. It is not just the issue of South, he added, there is a growing problem of ownership in the economies of North including the World Bank and EU. Myers thinks a lot can be learnt from the events of the last few months in the Middle East regarding the importance and the urgency of genuine ownership of development objectives and processes. He said donors and governments cannot achieve real equitable development against the wish of the people and their organisations.

It is important for LDCs to plan and implement their own reform in governance as experience has shown that the countries with good governance had best development and those that lacked the governance did not grow. However, it is not easy for LDCs to gain policy space to plan their own governance reform and achieve equitable development in a not so friendly international context. Likewise, it is equally critical to ensure policy space for people and their organisations to protect and ensure their rights. In the end that is what ensures both equitable development and social justice.

Myers shared an example of how national and international ownership and development delivery is interrelated. In the last decade of the 20th century 31 out of 40 LDCs for which there are data available did better in reducing infant mortality than in the first ten years of the new millennium in spite of the high prices for the commodities (including agricultural) exported by the LDCs and targeted programmes like MDGs and the BPoA. The favorable circumstances of the first nine years before the crises did not translate into development because the development partners did not meet their commitment made as part of MDG 8 that called for enabling international trade system, technology transfer, long term solutions to the debt problems and more and better aid.

Although the CSOs are gradually facing a shrinking space, Myers feels, they can play a key role in holding governments to account for the delivery of their commitments. He explained “this means all governments -- good governance and accountability is an issue for all -- donor governments, major developing countries

and LDCs themselves, as well as international agencies". To be able to do this there is a need to build solidarity between the north and south – CS level at least, he suggested, pressurizing the elites to change the rule of the game, and give the power back to the south.

Myers appreciated the opportunities such as this to be able to remind LDC IV delegates of the reality and the urgency of tangible actions that will make a difference to the lives of women, men and children who live in poverty, marginalization and vulnerability. He further called on them to work with civil society as full partners.

Jong Ok Lee echoed the views of other speakers and expressed concern over the increasing influence of private sector over the public decisions. The decision making process in public private relationship is not only a LDC issue but the whole lots of countries in North and South, and asked 'who decides for whom?' and who is influencing our lives?

She blamed the unequal power relationships between the LDCs and developed countries for the imbalance in rights and accountabilities. She advocated defining and calculating the old social costs of the current wrong doings.

Demba Dembele thought it paradoxical for the dominant development paradigm to define the ownership and accountability. He felt, if they are allowed to do so again the LDCs will continue facing the problems as always and the implementation of these ideas will always be contested. He asked not to impose development from outside, and added, ownership means sovereignty over our rights – the right to define our own political agenda and the rights. The LDC parliaments as the representative of LDC people should play crucial role in garnering ownership, he quipped.

Dembele is of the view that the state should be the main instruments of formulating policies to define the concepts of national ownership. But, he mused, the states are already destroyed by the Structural Adjustment Programmes (SAPs) 30-35 years back. Good governance is crucial for improving the human and social rights for all, gender equality, social inclusion and democracy, but the dominant players are promoting corrupt governments out of their own vested interests. The state, the people and the agencies of the LDCs must be united for rightly exercising the notion of ownership and accountability -- accountability of the state (including parliament) to the people, Dembele advocated.

Dembele said, accountability and good governance is also to be demanded of the powerful countries and the international institutions. The ease with which trillions of dollars were mobilized to rescue the financial sector after it ignited the global crisis

with irresponsible behavior contrasts with the thrift and sluggishness in assisting the vulnerable, he noted.

Floor Discussion:

An open question-answer forum was entertained at the end of the presentations. The level of participation was very high both in terms of quality and quantity. One of the participants from the LDC questioned the validity of the international benchmarks and indicators. She gave an example of the recent Tunisian crisis where people were out in the streets demanding justice while both the Human Development Report 2010 and the Doing Business Report of the World Bank ranked Tunisia among the best in Africa! Participants agreed we need a development paradigm that does not exclude good governance backed with proper monitoring if we are not to make a fetish of the wrong indicators.

Participants asked to be careful while suggesting the development model to broaden ownership and foster accountability. A speaker from the LDC stressed that women's contributions must be accounted for LDCs development, and they must be part of the decision making process. She opined women are the untapped resources in most of the LDCs and thought this is indicative of lack of inclusiveness and accountability in the governance of those countries. Therefore, we need to be clear about the new kind of order that we are talking about, she said.

Unlike the dominant debate that emphasizes the burden of good governance only at the national level, the general agreement among the speakers was the need for good governance and accountability at both national and international level, if LDCs are to graduate. They demanded the international community to learn from the existing approach which failed to deliver and move on more proactively with full accountability and ownership to support the LDCs with their equitable development efforts. They further reminded that a prosperous "world without LDCs" is a much safer world.

Speakers also raised the issue of migration and brain drain from the floor. Many felt migration and brain drain is a cause and effect of unaccountable governance. While the short term gain is the remittance that helps the LDC economy, they noted, it can have long term development implications. It is not possible to reverse the brain-drain, they concluded, LDCs need to understand it and manage suitably.

Finally the session concluded with the suggestion that the Istanbul conference is an opportunity for the States and international community including the World Bank and IMF to reaffirm the responsibility over those issues where the markets failed to correct themselves and made the problems worse for the countries and their people that did the least to create them.

LDC Responses to Crises and Building Resilience for an Uncertain Future

Date: 11 May 2011. **Time:** 13:30-15:30. **Venue:** Uskudar 1 / 2

Speakers:

Mr. Demba Dembele – Chair of LDC Watch – Senegal

Mr. Camille Chalmers – Haitian Advocacy Platform for an alternative Development - Haiti

Ms. Rajju Malla Dhakal – LDC Watch, CSF Secretariat - Nepal

Ms. Huguette BOKPE - Social Watch - Benin

Mr. Sameer Dossani, Asia Regional Policy Coordinator

Moderator Ms. Azeb Girmai, ENDA, Ethiopia

The moderator welcomed the participants and opened the session by introducing the panelist. She also gave a brief overview of the workshop. New challenges are emerging. The LDCs are challenged by the severe impacts of multiple, interrelated global crises, such as increased food insecurity, volatile energy and commodity prices, climate change and a global financial crisis, as well as the lack of results so far in the multilateral trade negotiations and a loss of confidence in the international economic system. Without an effective international response, these challenges will increase the vulnerability of LDCs and prevent them from undertaking effective adaptation measures to these new challenges. They might also have long-term effects on LDCs development through increasing debt levels, and increased vulnerability.

She further added, securing and sustaining economic growth and development in these countries requires building the LDC's resilience to withstand shocks. In reality LDC's capacity to respond to shocks is the most critical challenge and as a result most of the LDCs are always in unending cyclical development regress. What are the possible measures that LDCs themselves can take to face up and reduce their vulnerability in this uncertain future; but also what is the international community's specific responsibility at this time to accompany LDCs to build their resilience?

The moderator introduced the five panelists and said that the panelists are highly experienced individuals to discuss the current crisis challenging LDCs and to suggest mechanisms that build resilience of LDCs. She informed that the first four panelists will present on the specific dimensions of the crisis while the fifth one will present a bigger picture on resilience.

Demba Dembele, the first panelist of the session presented on the financial crisis and its impact on the LDCs. He said that one of the trends since the last LDC conference has been an increase in the vulnerability of LDCs whether because of natural disasters, food and fuel price rises or the growing impact of global warming. Dembele thought the neo-liberalism and globalization are to be blamed for the multiple crises including the impact of global financial and climate crises in the LDCs. He insisted that the LDC situation worsened not just because of the immediate consequences of recession but because of the corrective measures followed deliberately by the dominant economies of the world. For example, aid

budgets reduction and a return to tied aid as well as cut or ban on migration jeopardized/stagnated the hard earned progresses in the LDCs. Likewise, he pointed out that many countries of the North resumed and/or initiated subsidies to agricultural produce, industries and services as anti-crisis measures which adversely affected the LDC economies. As a consequence women and children in LDC suffered the most, and are likely to have long-term implication.

Dembele further informed that as a result of the volatile world financial situation many LDCs are compelled to make difficult choices at the cost of basic services to the most marginalized communities of the world. Dembele recited an experience of a LDC which had accumulated (after much sacrifice) 1.5 billion dollars in reserves to defend themselves from potential speculative attacks, a risk because of the volatile world finances. That means, he explained, the fund accumulated through the sacrifice of low paid workers and the devastation of natural resources, instead of resulting in investments or social services, is piled up in unused reserves.

Usually the poorest countries accumulate treasury bonds of the richest countries, which, Dembele said, is a form of providing them with soft loans that in turn create the financial bubbles that might lead to the next crisis. Dembele also blamed the unsustainable consumption patterns in the countries of the North for disrupting the global climate. He said reducing volatility and unpredictability in financial markets and addressing climate change with responsibility and a sense of historic justice will simultaneously free domestic resources, reduce risks and allow to mobilize new energies in such a way that no country and no vulnerable person needs to be left behind. It will take the concerted efforts of both LDCs and its development partners.

Camille Chalmers focused his presentation on the climate change crisis culminating into natural disasters threatening lives and properties in LDCs. He illustrated his presentation with examples of Haiti where appropriate. He said despite the growing understanding and acceptance of the importance of disaster risk reduction and increased disaster response capacities, the management and reduction of disasters risk continue to pose huge challenge in all LDCs and Small Islands and developing states, today.

Chalmers stressed that the disaster loss is on the rise with grave consequences for the survival, dignity and livelihood of individuals, particularly the poor in the LDCs. Chalmers said events of hydro-meteorological origin constitute the large majority of disasters. He cited a study that found more than 200 million people (on an average) being affected every year by disasters in the past two decades. Chalmers also explained that disaster risk arises when hazards interact with physical vulnerabilities compounded by increasing risks related to changing demographics, technological and socio-economic conditions, unplanned urbanization, development within high-risk zones, underdevelopment, environmental degradation, climate

variability, climate change, geological hazards, and the impact of epidemics such as HIV/AIDS.

Chalmers highlighted that countries of the North with their lifestyle, economic activities and political actions contribute greatly to the South's vulnerability and thus owe a huge climate debt, particularly to the exploited and marginalized classes with women among the most vulnerable. He stressed that reparations should be paid to all countries and peoples of the South who have been deprived of their right to fair share of atmospheric space and bear the brunt of the consequences of climate crisis.

He called for immediate attention of the North to make the millions of poor farming households in LDCs, who make up over 80% of the labor force and produce the bulk of agricultural output, risk-resilient and increase their adaptability by increasing investment on infrastructure, market, technology, research and development. In this context, he felt, urgent attention to the agricultural sector is crucial to ensure local food security and sovereignty. He concluded demanding acknowledgment of severe vulnerability of LDCs to the impacts of climate change, climate justice, predictable, adequate, new and additional climate financing for LDCs in order to build LDC's resilience to unpredicted consequences of climate crisis.

Rajju Malla Dhakal's presentation on Community Based Adaptation to Climate Change added a different dimension to Chalmers' presentation on climate change crisis. She presented a case study that illustrated how some local communities in Nepal, particularly the farmers are coping with the aftermath of climate change with local innovations.

Dhakal's presentation emphasized that small holding farmers of Nepal are the worst hit by the changing climatic pattern directly affecting their food security and livelihood. Her presentation was based on the efforts of local civil society to study and document local innovation. She said that the study found local farming communities using innovative climate friendly techniques including use of modified traditional knowledge and agro-biodiversity to deal with the issues of agriculture, slope land management and food security. Likewise, farming communities were also using inter-cropping, changing the cropping pattern and the cultivation timing to deal with the varying temperature and rainfall, she shared.

Contrary to the advocacy of the agricultural extension services for using high yielding modern varieties, Dhakal said most small farmers in hills and flat land preferred to plant local landraces lately as they found the local variety more resilient to climate change. Seed is central to such practices and women farmers played key role in preserving and exchanging seeds and thus in coping with the climate change.

Dhakal said the expanding global regulatory measure is posing a grave threat to this local adaptation practice and thus threatening the food security and livelihood of these communities. She explained that the local seed exchange practice is banned by the latest policies of UPOV, an international body established for the protection of the new varieties of the plant by an intellectual property right. She stressed that such global regulations are seldom in the interest of small holding farmers but are aimed to protect the commercial interest of the farmers of developed countries. Furthermore, she pointed out the fact that the governing bodies of UPOV and the likes are heavily dominated by the farmers of the North with little or no representation of farmers from LDCs. Dhakal is of the view that such international regulatory bodies should be pressured to review and correct all policies that adversely affect the food security and livelihood of small farmers of LDCs. She underscored that they should also make room for permanent representation of small farmers of LDCs in the governing bodies of UPOV and the likes to protect the interests of LDC farmers.

Dhakal suggested LDC governments and concerned international agencies to consider local knowledge as the basis for developing agricultural adaptation techniques to cope with the climate change. She urged the international development agencies against the replication of climate adaptation practices of developed countries in the name of technology transfer and technical assistance as they are not likely to be user friendly and suitable to the context. She strongly advocated the development agencies to help LDCs with local adaptation knowledge management and link it with national adaptation policies to build the local capacity to cope with the climate crisis.

Huguette Bokpe, the third panelist of the session, presented on food crisis, agriculture and gender perspective adding yet another dimension to the workshop. She said productive capacity and resilience for ensuring food security can only be built when necessary resources are managed to address the underlying causes of poverty, vulnerability and environmental degradation, among others. She also added that LDCs are aware of the fact that the multiple crises are not the creation of the LDCs, but they remain in the forefront of bearing the brunt.

Bopke highlighted the gender dimension to the crisis and said women are and will continue to be the primary caretakers of families in most LDCs. She informed that there are more female entrepreneurs in Africa than in the USA as per the statistics. Women in most LDCs play a key role in using and managing natural resources, she stressed, therefore, it is important to make sure they participate in every process of risk prevention and resilience building, right from the early phase of consultation up to the implementation, monitoring and assessment stages.

Bopke further said that we have ample reasons to re-think now through gender lenses when we assess what has been achieved and see where we still are. She emphasized her support to the conviction of the CEDAW Committee that "policies that support gender equality in access use and control over science and technology,

formal and informal education and training will enhance a nation's capability on disaster reduction, mitigation and adaptation to climate change". She also reiterated her support to the call of the Commission on the Status of Women upon Governments "to support and empower rural women, who are backbones of agricultural production and play a vital role in providing food security threatened by climate change and land degradation, including land tenure and other property rights, by enhancing their access to and control of resources, particularly land-based resources".

Bopke raised the issue of climate funding and supported the experts' view that the cost of adaptation to climate change has been significantly underestimated. She also raised concern that the Adaptation Fund, established since 2007, did not include any gender approach in its process and the Fund comprised only one woman among the 16 members on its board.

Bopke expressed positive note regarding the creation of UN WOMEN. She also expressed optimism regarding MDGs as every MDG carries a gender dimension. She suggested mainstreaming gender in the new programme of action for a better investment in gender equality and women empowerment will carry much weight, not only in reaching agricultural development, or in reshaping macroeconomics, but also in building resilience to climate change. That said, she mused, it is yet to see how it will translate into gender outcome in the days to come.

Following the four presentations the moderator gave the floor to Sameer Dossani. As per Dossani economic growth strategies of most LDCs often neglect small businesses, perhaps because their contribution to GDP is not apparent. He said, small businesses accounted for approximately 80% of non-farm employment in most LDCs and provide 60% of income for poor households in Bangladesh (in other LDCs this figure is higher). He stressed that small businesses provided a safety net to the majority of poor people who were not reached by formal safety nets when the economic crisis hit. They also provided dignity, self-determination and a sense of well-being to the most disadvantaged. Dossani believed, small enterprises are central to resilience in LDCs. Therefore, he suggested that the new programme of action should correct spending bias and policy blindspot with regards to small businesses.

Trade as a tool for financial resilience is not a bright option although the expert analysis indicated the relative importance of trade income in LDCs in the medium term (compared to other sources of financing for development) is set to go up, Dossani explained. Unfortunately, this comes at a time when demand from traditional markets is projected to be depressed, he added, as developed countries that traditionally imported continue to deal with slow growth and slashed spending. According to Dossani, many developed countries are pressed to reduce trade

deficits or even build their own trade surpluses (e.g. the US government's push to double exports in 5 years) as part of the financial recovery measures.

Dossani said LDCs need international community's support to be able to make the most out of their trade at a time when trade is likely to enhance the taxation, exchange rate, investment and aid policies that can allow countries to gradually ensure a greater share of the value of trade remains in the domestic economy. Dossani stressed the need to represent the voice of LDCs at the G20. He explained there is little purpose in LDCs working in partnership with major donors and economic actors if they are to take decisions about the economic future of LDCs behind closed doors in the context of the G20.

Floor Discussion:

A lively floor discussion followed the presentations. Most participants echoed the panelists on Trade issues. They suggested demanding support of developed countries to reorient the LDCs' production to sources of regional and domestic demand, wherever this transition is feasible. They also advised to seek help with diversifying the export base across the sectors. Speakers from LDCs felt it important to secure equitable trade agreements for LDCs (target to ensure the "5 Special and Differential Provisions" for LDCs e.g. Duty-Free and Quota-Free access) in order to ensure meaningful earnings and income that will accelerate and transform LDC's development.

Debt was another issues heatedly discussed on the floor. Some participants felt securing immediate and unconditional debt relief for LDCs should be the target of the civil society. They suggested debt servicing to be directed towards building LDCs resilient capacity allowing LDCs to focus on their development effort.

A common issue stressed by participants was the need for climate finance. They expressed outrage on the apathy of many developed countries of the world who plundered and destroyed the global environment jeopardizing the safety and wellbeing of life and property of the people of South. They also called on those who owe climate debt (countries, corporations, IFIs and elites of the North) to pay reparation to the countries of the South and their people.

There was also strong endorsement of the LDCs demand for taking full responsibility for cutting greenhouse gas emission drastically by the developed countries. Moreover, participants supported the idea of climate finance for enabling the countries and people of the South to deal with both immediate and future impacts of climate change through adaptation and building resilience.

The moderator stressed that translatable commitments sincerely implemented in a timely manner that addresses the underlying causes of global crises, would strengthen the food security situation and reduce poverty and vulnerability in the LDCs. Furthermore, she underlined that addressing economic crisis, debt crisis, energy crisis, food price crisis, climate crisis and increasing resiliency of LDCs requires basic transformation of global system, economic, political and socio-cultural. Given the urgent irreversible consequences of the crises, she said, civil society must work harder and use the LDC IV platform to hasten the process of transformation.

Monitoring Mechanisms for LDC Development

Date: 12 May 2011. **Time:** 13:30-15:30. **Venue:** Uskudar 1 / 2

Speakers:

Prof. Mohiuddin Ahmad, Nabodhara, Bangladesh

Ms. Azeb Girmai, ENDA, Ethiopia

After the welcome and the introduction of the panelists the moderator spoke briefly about the workshop issue, its purpose and expected outcome. She explained that the topic “monitoring mechanism for LDC Development” though has a bigger connotation, the workshop discussion will focus more on LDC plans of actions, particularly the BPoA and the new programme of action from Istanbul conference.

She added there was an ‘accountability gap’ owing to the absence of concrete and effective monitoring mechanisms to measure progress of BPoA. Therefore, there is an urgent need for more holistic and inclusive approach to implementation and monitoring of the new Istanbul programme of action. She felt effective monitoring of MDGs and other development policies and programmes are equally important to determine their cost effectiveness in terms of outcome in the interest of LDCs. In this context, she said, determining an appropriate monitoring mechanism is crucial for LDC development. She expressed her expectation from the workshop to help the LDC IV with this important issue.

Mohiuddin Ahmad, the first speaker reiterated the importance of effective and functional monitoring mechanism for the success of any programme of action. He added such a mechanism should be in place, both at the national and at the global level, with clear objectives and terms of reference, ensuring meaningful participation of all stakeholders including the civil society.

Ahmad said the international community including the UN system and other multilateral bodies are increasingly acknowledging the worth of effective civil society participation and there is a demand to provide them sufficient space so that

it can play its due role. Token participation as observers often does not bring meaningful results. The relationship between the multilaterals and the civil society should be based on mutual responsibility, confidence and respect.

Ahmad called on the international community to work with the civil society as full partners. He added, "We want to play a crucial role in building support for the Program of Action and ensuring that it is implemented". He thinks governments can do three key things to honor this spirit of partnership:

- In follow up processes, involve civil society meaningfully; not just in formal consultations but also in policy formulation and evaluation. This should be a part of broader policy of allowing the political space for an independent civil society and building its capacity.
- Commit to enhance openness and transparency in the follow up actions, publishing government plans and progress reports; and inviting input from civil society and through parliamentary processes.
- Strengthen process of public accountability and integrity, including independent processes for ensuring compliance with international obligations, including that on corruption and human rights, adherence with clauses enshrined in national Constitutions and fair treatment of citizens.

Ahmad advocated capacity building programs and activities in order to foster the vital role of civil society, and to ensure civil society has the increased technical capacity, financial resources, access to information, and secured political space necessary to carry out its implementation and advocacy functions.

Ahmad agreed implementation of the program of action demands rigorous monitoring. He felt national governments should be instrumental in the process with a positive and supportive international community. The governance aspects of the implementation process must be inclusive to the highest extent. Although multi-stakeholder dialogue is increasingly being acknowledged as an instrument of consensus building, he is of the view that this is still being used as tokenism. He also expressed frustration that the space for civil society participation is being restricted in many countries under different pretexts, and demanded annual review of the program of action, and not merely annual reporting, at the national and the global level involving all stakeholders including effective and meaningful participation of the civil society.

He suggested full disclosure of all information on all projects including the MoU between the IFIs, bilateral donors and the LDC governments if monitoring is to be effective. He added, to ensure that there is full accountability and transparency of the international community and the LDC governments, it is necessary that peoples and communities that are affected by interventions are consulted and their opinions are taken into cognizance in all possible manners. He called on the governments

and the lenders to remain fully accountable for impacts of their interventions on human rights, equity and sustainability.

Azeb Girmai, the second panelist, is of the view that a broader and more active role for civil society is appropriate in monitoring LDC programme of actions both at national and global level. She agrees with Ahmad on the importance of enhancing CSOs capacity to monitor to ensure people's voices are heard in the development processes. In order for CSOs to effectively monitor the LDC development a lot needs to be done by themselves, their respective governments the UN and other relevant institutions, she said. She took the opportunity to voice the CSOs call upon the UN and the national governments to:

- Provide legally binding spaces for engagement at all levels and in all the relevant development related processes. Specifically at the national level governments should include CSOs in the BPOA processes.
- Put in place monitoring mechanisms for these processes
- Enhance the capacities of CSOs especially in areas of data generation, gender analysis, budget planning and monitoring , policy analysis and advocacy - Provide up to date and relevant information to CSOs
- Provide financial and technical capacity, resources for CSOs' participation in the BPoA and MDG processes in particular and all development processes in general.

She reminded that the Programme of Action does not belong to governments alone. It belongs to all the people of all the LDCs. Therefore, ownership must be theirs including civil society organizations as well as governments. She cited examples of successful civil society campaigns that built strong international movements for debt cancellation, climate justice, equitable trade rules and control of arms trafficking to name a few. She said civil society are capable and can play key role in holding governments to account for the delivery of their commitments. This means all governments of the North and the South. She stressed good governance and accountability is an issue for all, not just for LDCs. She further added civil society would not hesitate to hold donor governments to account, major developing countries and LDCs themselves, as well as international agencies.

Floor discussion:

Most participants voiced that implementation of the new program of action demands rigorous monitoring. They also felt that civil society as independent entity can do better monitoring in the interest of vulnerable and marginalized communities in the LDCs. They also suggested that the governance aspects of the implementation process of new PoA must be inclusive to the highest extent. They expressed concern that multi-stakeholder dialogue, though acknowledged as an

instrument of consensus building, unfortunately, is still being used as a token. Many participants suggested commissioning public hearing at the country level around selected projects, so that the people are aware of their costs and benefits and likely impacts on their lives and livelihoods.

Many participants were of the view that civil society should be entrusted with the responsibility of monitoring all national programs, those initiated by the World Bank, IMF and the Regional Banks as well as all poverty reduction programmes. Speakers highlighted the merit of CSO involvement in monitoring new programme of actions including the policies of global institutions and developed countries to ensure that their policies do not undermine the development efforts of LDCs; and that they fulfill the promises and commitments made. They felt the CSOs have the necessary skill and capacity for objective monitoring in the interest of the LDCs and the marginalised communities in the LDCs. To illustrate the point they cited instances of CSOs' active participation in regional and global programmes and processes.

Some speakers pointed out that although CSOs have fully demanded accountability from the duty bearers they have had limited success as a result of a number of factors, including, inter alia, limited policy spaces for CSOs engagement. The conceptual shift at global level towards more holistic approaches is not occurring in practice at the country level, where entry points for civil society involvement in monitoring remain limited or nonexistent in some cases. In some countries the structures themselves are not in place. Therefore CSOs need to be active in rectifying such problems both at national and global level.

Many participants felt progress towards achieving the BPoA was hampered by factors both within the LDCs themselves and externally including limited participation of Civil Society in the monitoring of the BPoA. Some participants also expressed concern that the Istanbul Programme of Action was not moving in the interest of LDCs. However, all agreed that civil society should take the lead to monitor both the implementation process as well as the outcome of whatever PoA will be agreed upon in Istanbul.

2.3.5 Self-Organised Workshop/Conference Events

The self organized events served as a forum to renew and reinvigorate the partnership among the civil society representatives of LDCs, developing countries as well as developed countries of the world. The events were scheduled as integral part of the CSF programme to give opportunities for participating organisations, networks and movements to organise workshops, panels, exhibition and documentary/films on the issues of their interest.

In response to the secretariat's call for application overwhelming number of requests for self organized events were received. The requests included over 55 for workshops, many for exhibits and some for documentaries/films including a few requests for multi session events -- youth forum, intellectual forum and symposium on trade and development.

It was quite challenging for the secretariat to allocate time and space and do justice to all requests without overlapping the similar themes. The average number of events ranged from 12 to 16 sessions per day involving 5 conference halls from 9 am to 8 pm. The requests for workshops were roughly categorised into the following:

- food security and agriculture
- vulnerability and climate change
- trade, aid and development
- debt and finance
- gender justice
- democratic governance
- mobilisation of financial resources
- Building productive capacity, MDG and sustainable development, etc.

It was heartening to see the interests for organising workshops from a wide range of organizations including CSOs from LDCs, developing as well as developed countries including various UN agencies. Over 20 out of 50 workshops were organized with the direct involvement of CSOs from LDCs, and about 14 with the host country CSOs on the lead, followed by international NGOs and UN agencies in partnership with the LDC NGOs including a few panels organised by the government agencies. Overall, most workshops and panels were well attended except for few, particularly ones immediately after the lunch break. The lesson drawn from these events fed into the CSF thematic issues as well as other LDC IV programme tracks as appropriate.

There were only five "no shows". Three out of five "no shows" involved Southern NGOs that could not attend the forum because of the problems related to visas, flights and funding. The other two were unable to organise because the international panellists were prevented from travelling to Istanbul due to the similar problems.

Arrangements were made to live webcast all CSF formal events, panels and workshops including opening and closing ceremonies as well as ensuring simultaneous translations of the presentation in English, French and Turkish. While the conference related logistics was provided by the CSF organizers, the proponents

were responsible for specific preparations of their events such as identifying speakers, publicity of the event to ensure participations and conducting sessions.

Civil society exhibitions

Civil Society Organisations had participated in displaying and disseminating their work during the LDC IV civil society forum. Approximately 15 NGOs displayed their work at the Uskudar Foyer which included books, reports, brochures, digitised information and posters among others. The stalls were well visited by participants. A good majority of the exhibitions were from Turkish NGOs and CSOs involved in development activity, particularly in relation to LDCs.

Films/documentary on the issues of LDCs

Civil Society Organisations from all around the world had participated to air their performances in the forms of documentaries and videos relevant to the LDCs issues and concerns. More than a dozen of documentary films from the LDCs were screened. A few short video films were also shown as part of the workshop.

2.3.6 Media coordination at the Civil Society Forum

The CS Forum included a full-fledged press office headed by a media coordinator supported by two professionals, a journalist from BBC World Service and a Turkish press officer. The office had the capacity to project the messages and positions of CSOs to a broad range of actors, including the participants in the official conference, the media and to a broader audience beyond the conference. The CSF media work consisted of two main threads:



- a) Coordinating a team of journalists from LDCs
- b) Media outreach to the international media

Coordination of team of journalists from LDCS

The Civil Society Forum (CSF) assembled a team of six journalists from LDCs – Nepal, Bangladesh, Senegal, Malawi, the Gambia and Ethiopia, representing the print – newspapers and magazines – and radio media with the financial assistance of the UN and the Turkish government. Part of the team's remit was to ensure civil society activities, in particular from LDCs were covered in the media.

These journalists were located in the CSF press office, and worked in close coordination with the media coordinator. They covered CSF and other events which they wrote up for their national media or wire services, broadcasted interviews on their radio channels and contributed articles to the CSF Bulletin. They have, so far, published 4 stories in the IPS and 2 in the BBC Radio service. The conference and CSF was also covered extensively in La Gazettee (Senegal), New National (Bangladesh) and BBC World Service Radio including some stories in the Ethiopian media. In addition, the radio journalist from the Gambia recently introduced a weekly programme on Least Developed Countries as a result of his participation at the CSF.

Media Outreach to the International Media

International media representatives that attended the Conference were contacted individually and some of those from the wire services were contacted by email and telephone.

Pre conference press releases, media advisories and reception

A number of press releases and media advisories were issued to highlight events leading up to the Istanbul meeting – two were issued exclusively to the Turkish media, one to the UK media and one to the international media.

During Civil Society Forum press releases were issued to the international media, the Turkish media, and LDC media attending the Conference on a daily basis from 7 to 13 May via the press kits, at the press conferences and e-mail. The press kit contained UN background materials, details of spokespeople and media activities, a leaflet about the CSF, the CSF Global Report, and an additional press release each day. Post-conference research has shown that the contents of these were used in media stories by a number of journalists in LDCs – e.g. Haiti and Yemen.

A media reception was held in Istanbul at the Congress Centre on 9 May (opening evening of the official conference) aimed at journalists from Least Developed Countries for them to meet civil society participants. It was attended by 40 people and these contacts were useful for press work during the subsequent week as it enabled participants to meet media from their own countries.

CSF bulletin - conference newspaper

A daily 4-to-6 page Bulletin was produced during the five days of the official conference: 9-13 May. This bulletin provided an overview of civil society activities, interviews with participants, comments on conference negotiations and the Istanbul

Programme of Action, and other relevant topics. It was distributed throughout the CSO Forum as well as at the intergovernmental track, and published online.

Press conferences

Three press conferences were held during the official conference in the UN Press Room with simultaneous interpretation in English/Turkish/French. The press conference on 10 June was used to launch the CSF Global Report and was well-attended by Turkish and international media. At the press conference on 12 June members of the CSF Steering Committee presented their views on the likely outcomes of the conference, and at the CSF closing press conference on 13 June (which was particularly well-attended) members of the CSF Steering Committee presented the CSF Declaration on the Istanbul Programme of Action. All press conferences received good coverage in the international media. The press conferences were also filmed and broadcast online, ensuring international coverage. This was possible because of the good cooperation with the United Nations Department of Public Information (UNDPI) and the UN Non-governmental liaison service (NGLS)).

The CSF also promoted messaging through social networking tools. The LDCIstanbul.org website had a twitter account that ran for 7 days, during which time it issued 233 tweets and had 53 followers. Likewise Extensive use of email was made during the conference and was used to advertise daily events and press conferences and to distribute press releases and details of the CSF Global Report.

TV coverage and press interviews

Overall, the CSF events, particularly the opening ceremony on Sunday, 8 May was well-covered by the Turkish TV and print media including other international media. Likewise, members of the Civil Society Steering Group and other stakeholders were interviewed extensively by the media during the CSF from 7 to 13 May.

Overall the CSF media team worked in close coordination with the CSF secretariat in terms of the consistent messaging and highlighting the main thematic issues of the civil society forum. The team did a wonderful job in providing due publicity to the civil society forum as well as getting the key thematic messages across.

Outcomes of the CSF Media Work

As a result of their participation in the CSF media team at LDC-IV, the LDC journalists are now committed to encouraging a more integrated approach to news about LDCs, and ensuring that civil society initiatives in development are given

broader coverage. They propose setting up a LDC news service focusing on LDC news that will:

- a) Bring together articles, features and radio broadcasts about LDCs and from LDC journalists;
- b) Create a network of journalists with an interest in promoting the interests of LDCs;
- c) Offer mutual support/advice/leads on stories about LDCs;
- d) Commission articles/features etc. from experts and senior journalists for syndication.

A proposal to get this underway has been prepared by the international media coordinator and the BBC World Service journalist, and there are plans to get this rolling by the beginning of the autumn.

2.3.7 Participation in the Official Conference

Opening of the UN LDC IV Official Conference (9 May)

The official UN LDC IV conference was opened amidst fanfare in the Lufti Kirdar Convention and Exhibition Centre in Istanbul on 9 May 2011. The opening was addressed by various dignitaries that included President of Turkey and the Secretary General of the United Nations among others.

The Chair and the spokesperson of the Civil Society Steering Committee Dr. Arjun Karki were also invited to deliver a statement during the occasion. He called on the leaders to embody the spirit of partnership and urged them to come together around a shared political vision so that no nation would be left as "least developed".

CSF organizers tried not to schedule workshops at the same time as the official Opening of the Conference. The predetermined CSF program rolled out from the afternoon of May 9 and continued through the close of business on May 12.

The High-Level Interactive Thematic Debates

Selected civil society representatives presented statements at the high-level thematic debate that brought together heads of state/governments, heads of the UN agencies, the World Bank and IMF, the private sector and the civil society organizations. This multi-stakeholder discussion was focused on the issues of international support measures and actions in favor of LDCs, and included the following:

- Enhancing productive capacities and the role of the private sector in LDCs

- Resource Mobilisation for LDCs' development and global partnership
- Harnessing trade for LDCs' development and transformation
- Good governance at all levels
- Reducing vulnerabilities, responding to emerging challenges, and enhancing food security in LDCs
- Human and social development, gender equality and empowerment of women

2.3.8 Civil Society Forum Closing Session (Friday 13 May)

The CSF was formally closed in the morning of 13 May with closing addresses by H.E. Mr. Cheick Sidi Diarra, Secretary General of the UN LDC-IV; Hon. Prof. Ahmet Davutoglu, the Foreign Minister of Turkey; and Hon. Mr. Upendra Yadav, the Deputy Prime Minister of Nepal. Participants were provided an update



of the week's activities as well as the political process by Dr. Arjun Karki, Chair of the Civil Society Steering Committee for LDC-IV, Ms. Azeb Girmai, member of the CSF Steering Committee, and Mr. Mustafa Tutkun, Doctors Worldwide Turkey. The session was chaired by Ms. Thida Khus, Executive Director of SILAKA.

In his closing address Mr. Diarra thanked the civil society organisations for their commitment and support to the success of the UN LDC IV, particularly the CSF which, he said, was very useful in terms of providing opportunity for dialogue between member states and the civil society community. The Turkish Foreign Minister Ahmet Davutoglu remarked upon the no pledging of additional aid for the LDCs. He assured continued Turkish interest on and support to the LDC cause beyond the LDC conference.

Most of the civil society speakers including the Chair of the CS steering Committee expressed disappointment on the lukewarm support of the development partners to the LDC issues with slightly modified policies, which nevertheless constituted a "business-as-usual" approach even at the face of the dismal performance of the BPoA that proved "business-as-usual" does not work.



Dr. Karki took the opportunity to thank all stakeholders specifically, the government of Turkey, the UN SG, the SG of the conference, LDC Bureau and all civil society community for their phenomenal support to make the CSF a huge success.

The CSF closing was attended by record number of civil society representatives from all over the world including 48 LDCs and the host country Turkey. The session was webcasted live and was extensively covered by the Media from Turkey and abroad. The meeting concluded with the presentation of the Civil Society Declaration by Mr. Mustafa Tutkum on behalf of the CSF steering committee.

Civil Society Declaration

The civil society declaration presented towards the end of the closing session represented the climax of the 7 day long LDC IV CSF events from 7 to 13 May in Istanbul. The declaration was informed by the inputs from the thematic groups, outcome of the thematic plenaries, self-organised workshops as well as formal and informal interaction with and observation of the UN LDC IV



process in Istanbul. It also drew from the lessons gathered from continuous monitoring of the LDC processes over the years leading up to the Istanbul process, and represented the sentiments of civil society organisations including the women's movements, youth movements, trade unions, peasant federations and human rights defenders.

The declaration expressed disappointment on the outcome of the LDC IV Conference for falling far short in assisting the LDCs and mentioned the conference failed to meet its expectations as well as the UN General Assembly mandate for LDC-IV. It also expressed frustration that, "having caused massive costs in the LDCs through financial and food speculation, unjust trade rules, illegitimate loans with onerous conditionality, and ecological damage, including climate change, the developed countries have not even committed to provide more aid to LDCs".

"Many donors are either reducing their aid or diverting it to pay for climate change damage, despite their commitments in UNFCCC negotiations to provide new and additional funding for climate finance. Current levels of aid are dwarfed by the mounting costs of the damage done to LDC economies and their people", the declaration questioned the donors' aid commitment.

The declaration, read by Mr. Mustafa Tutkun, the host country civil society representative, was the compendium of civil society voices and demands at the closing ceremony of the Civil Society Forum. It received massive attention from the

press and interest groups, national and international alike. It also was availed to all concerned people that could not make it to Istanbul through live webcast.

3. CONCLUSION

The newly adopted Istanbul Programme of Action (IPoA) for the decade 2011-2020 conducted in the historic Turkish city of Istanbul represented the enhanced commitments of the least developed countries, which have the ownership and primary responsibility for their own development and their development partners to a renewed and strengthened global partnership. It is believed that, guided by the spirit of solidarity with the least developed countries, the developing countries will provide support for the effective implementation of the Programme of Action in mutually agreed areas of cooperation within the framework of South-South cooperation. The private sector, civil society and multi-stakeholders will be encouraged to contribute to the implementation of the Programme of Action in their respective areas of competence along with national priorities of least developed countries.

Similarly, the Civil Society Forum organised in Istanbul demonstrated the art of possibility and surprised many, though they were unhappy and frustrated with their expectations not being met. With a record of high attendance and strong Southern participation, they engaged in monitoring and implementation of IPoA sending a strong message called "exceptionally productive and meaningful CSF".

Looking back at the overall CSF processes in Istanbul many positive things can be mentioned in different connections. Most importantly, it provided a space where civil society organizations could engage in lively discussions resulting into collectively owned decisions/messages to assist the official conference. Apart from the civil society declaration, following are some of the key messages emanating loud and clear from the forum:

- Learn from the failings in the design and implementation of the Brussels Programme of Action to reflect on the Istanbul Programme of Action.
 - ✓ Civil society called for a decisive change in the development paradigm pointing to the shortcomings of the current aid architecture promoted by dominant players with little or no ownership of the LDCs.
 - ✓ Neoliberal globalization has exposed the most vulnerable populations to the vagaries of the international market and rising commodity prices -- move away from market-driven policies and implement people-centered development policies that require governments to ensure sustainable livelihoods and uphold human rights and gender equality.

- ✓ Trade reforms in agriculture are urgent as a high proportion of the poor in LDCs are dependent directly or indirectly on agricultural production. Strengthening agricultural production in LDCs often means improving local markets and limiting cheap exports from developed countries where agricultural production is subsidised.

Civil society group concluded that the challenges facing LDCs have grown since 2001, with fragile progress at the start of the decade reversed by factors such as the global financial crisis and the rising cost of food and fuel including the increasing frequency and intensity of natural disasters due to climate change. The group called for urgent reform on the following:

- Real reform in global governance by setting up a global economic council under the auspices of the UN including massive overhaul of international institutions. This will set the LDCs free from the dominion of international institutions that are too concerned with influencing the decisions and strategies of LDCs – a trend that needs to change on systemic level.
- Developed countries of the world that plundered and destroyed the global environment jeopardizing the safety and wellbeing of life and property of the people of South must pay reparation to them.
- The poorest countries pay 90 million dollars daily in debt payments. Write off LDCs' debt (rather than debt relief) and ensure fair trade.

Civil society organizations expressed deep disappointment and concern with the outcomes of the Fourth UN Conference on the LDCs (Istanbul Programme of Action). Nonetheless, emphasis was put on the importance of civil society to come together and engage in the monitoring of the implementation of the Istanbul Programme of action so that it will not follow the BPoA path.

In this context, all key development actors seemed to put high expectations of the civil society organizations. They pointed out that progress towards achieving the BPoA was hampered due to the lack of rigorous independent monitoring of the BPoA, among other factors. They strongly suggested greater systemic involvement (as opposed to voluntary involvement) of the civil society organizations in the advocacy and objective oversight of the implementation of the IPoA. They felt the UN should spell this role clearly and mandate the civil society as the independent watch dog of IPoA to ensure the outcomes in the interest of vulnerable and marginalized communities in the LDCs.

Despite the disappointing outcomes of the official conference, the civil society forum stood out as the major highlight of the LDC IV conference. The success of the CSF lay with each participant, from LDCs and non-LDCs alike. The CSF would not

have succeeded without the true commitment of all, including the Secretary General of the United Nations, the Secretary General of the LDC IV Conference, LDC Bureau, Civil Society Organizations, and most of all, the political support of Turkey for the struggle of LDCs' people.