

OFFICE OF THE HIGH REPRESENTATIVE FOR THE LEAST DEVELOPED COUNTRIES, LANDLOCKED DEVELOPING COUNTRIES AND SMALL ISLAND DEVELOPING STATES

Fourth UN Conference on the Least Developed Countries

General Guidelines for Country-Level Preparations

Background

The United Nations General Assembly in its resolution 63/227 decided to convene the Fourth United Nations Conference on Least Developed Countries (LDC IV) as called for in paragraph 114 of the Brussels Programme of Action for LDCs for the decade 2001-2010. This is contained in its resolution 63/227. The conference is expected to last not more than five days. The venue and date for the conference are yet to be agreed upon by the General Assembly.

The Fourth UN Conference would provide the international community with an opportunity to undertake a comprehensive appraisal of the implementation of the Programme of Action for the Least Developed Countries for the Decade 2001-2010. The comprehensive appraisal is expected to shed light on key accomplishments and critical constraints in delivering the goals of the current programme, and suggest new strategies to address the gaps identified at national, regional and global levels. Given the current international environment, the preparatory process should also assist LDCs in addressing the impact of the global financial and economic crisis, including the identification of broad policy areas to facilitate long term growth potential, mitigate adverse impacts on the most vulnerable populations to ensure sustained poverty reduction, and improve overall capacities to manage exogenous shocks.

More specifically, the objectives of the conference are inter alia:

- i. To undertake a comprehensive appraisal of the implementation of the Programme of Action for the Decade 2001-2010 by the least developed countries and their development partners, share best practices and lessons learned, and identify obstacles and constraints encountered as well as actions and initiatives needed to overcome them;
- ii. To identify effective international and domestic policies in the light of the outcome of the appraisal as well as new and emerging challenges and opportunities and the means to address them;
- iii. To reaffirm the global commitment to address the special needs of the least developed countries made at the major United Nations conferences and summits, including the Millennium Summit and the 2005 World Summit, in particular the needs related to sustainable development in its economic, social and

environmental dimensions and to support the least developed countries to eradicate poverty and to integrate beneficially into the global economy;

iv. To mobilize additional international support measures and action in favour of the least developed countries and, in this regard, formulate and adopt a renewed partnership between the least developed countries and their development partners.

The Fourth United Nations Conference on LDCs would take place at three interlinked levels: country, regional and global.

Country-level Preparations

A key principle underpinning the preparations of the Conference at all levels is effective ownership and leadership by LDC governments with involvement of major stakeholders in the country level preparation. Effective national strategies and efforts have been essential elements for the implementation of the Brussels Programme of Action. As outlined in para 14 of the Programme, the LDCs assume ownership of designing and formulating appropriate national policies of their own will and choice, and have the primary responsibility for effective implementation of those policies and measures. Therefore, any future programme should build on a strong national level appraisal of the implementation of the current programme and the identification of priorities for sustained economic growth and sustainable development for the LDCs in the next decade. Country-level review is key in this regard.

The primary function of country-level preparations is for national governments to bring together country-level development stakeholders to engage in a forward-looking comprehensive appraisal with the assistance of relevant UN systems partners.

Country level preparations should be broad-based and participatory to include civil society, the private sector, media, development partners, etc. To the extent possible, country level preparations should build on the existing country review processes to avoid duplication and ensure United Nations system coordination at the country level. Some LDCs have instituted national arrangements for broad-based consultation on development policies. In this regard, as called for by paragraph 100 of the Brussels Declaration and Programme of Action for the Least Developed Countries for the Decade 2001-2010, these arrangements should also be used for country-level preparation for the Fourth UN LDC conference. This is key to a successful national review of the BPOA.

Country level preparations should be a synergistic effort that builds on the review of the implementation of the United Nations Development Assistance Framework (UNDAF) and the poverty reduction strategy paper (PRSP), as well as between existing country review mechanisms, such as the UNDP round-tables, the World Bank Consultative Groups, and others. Also, the existing consultation and review processes in the context of the Millennium Development Goals-based national development strategies, undertaken by most of the least developed countries, with the support of the United Nations resident coordinators should be broadly used.

To assist national governments, and as requested by the General Assembly, it is expected that the UNDG and the UN Development Operations Coordination Office (DOCO)

would take active involvement and leadership in mobilizing resident coordinators of the United Nations to support national governments of LDCs in their national reviews.

The national review would culminate in a result-oriented analytical national report, appraising the implementation of the Brussels Programme of Action against its objectives, goals and commitments. It is to be recalled that the Brussels Declaration and the Programme of Action for the Least Developed Countries for the decade 2001 – 2010 adopted at the Third United Nations Conference for Least Developed Countries, in Brussels on 20th of May, 2001, constitute a framework for partnership for poverty eradication articulated around seven interlinked commitments: (a) fostering a people-centred policy framework; (b) good governance at the national and international levels; (c) building human and institutional capacities; (d) building productive capacities to make globalization work for the least developed countries; (e) enhancing the role of trade in development; (f) reducing vulnerability and protecting the environment; (g) mobilizing financial resources.

LDC governments and development stakeholders should assess progress made and identify gaps against the Programme's overarching goal "to make substantial progress towards halving the proportion of people living in extreme poverty and suffering from hunger by 2015 and promote the sustainable development" of the least developed countries.

As such the national reports would be a comprehensive appraisal of progress in all seven areas of the BPOA against targets contained therein. The report should be concise and succinct (20-25 pages), yet informative.

More specifically the country report would include the following elements:

- (i) A comprehensive assessment of the social, economic and environmental development of each country;
- (ii) Evaluation of the progress made by the country and its development partners on the achievement of the goals, targets and commitments contained in the Brussels Programme of Action, including international support measures, particularly in the areas of ODA, debt, investment and trade, as well as national good governance commitments;
- (iii) Identification of the gaps, constraints and obstacles in the implementation of the Programme, as well as the country-specific needs in development;
- (iv) Innovative strategies and best practices to be emulated and shared with other LDCs;
- (v) Impact of emerging challenges of food, climate change and global financial and economic crisis on LDCs and policy responses
- (vi) Additional policies and measures at national and international levels to eradicate poverty and achieve sustainable development.

These reports will be considered at regional review meeting in the context of country/sub-region specific round tables that are to be organized during the regional

review meetings. LDCs' delegates will also get an opportunity to present their national reports at the regional review meetings. The country reports will be compiled and circulated as conference documents at the global Conference. The regional review meeting for Africa (plus Haiti) will be organized by the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa (UNECA) in consultation with OHRLLS in 2010 and by the United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and Pacific (UNESCAP) for the Asia and Pacific Region (plus Yemen). The country reports will also serve as a basis for formulating outcomes of the regional review meetings. Both country reports and regional review meetings will serve as important contributions to the outcome of the Fourth UN Conference on LDCs.

In this regard, it is important that national reports are submitted to the Conference secretariat by 30 January 2010, in time for the convening of regional review meetings. LDCs that fail to submit their reports in time, will forfeit the opportunity of presenting their reports at regional reviews.

Annotated Outline for the report

I. Introduction

II. The national development planning process, including key economic, social, political and environmental trends.

This section should introduce key actions undertaken in national development strategy. It should present salient features of core policy frameworks to facilitate sustainable development, including PRSPs and MDG-consistent national development strategies during the decade 2001-2010. It should further highlight salient economic, social, political and environmental developments impacting the implementation of the BPOA.

III. Assessment of the progress and challenges in the implementation of the Commitments of the Programme of Action for LDCs for the Decade 2001-2010.

This section should start by reviewing overall progress made against the principal target of the Brussels Programme to attain a GDP growth rate of at least 7 per cent per annum and to increase the ratio of investment to GDP to 25 per cent per annum (para 6).

It should further review the extent to which national policies of LDCs and external support measures fulfilled the following priorities set out in para 7 of the Programme:

1. A significant reduction in extreme poverty (MDG 1)
2. Developing human and institutional resources to support sustained growth and sustainable development (MDG 2-6)
3. Removing supply-side constraints and enhancing productive capacity and promoting the expansion of domestic markets to accelerate growth, income and employment generation;

4. Accelerating LDC growth with the aim of enhancing LDC share in world trade and global financial investment flows;
5. Environmental protection, accepting that LDCs and industrialized countries have common but differentiated responsibilities
6. Attaining food security and reducing malnutrition

Based on the overall analysis related to the core objectives of the Programme, the report should identify critical accomplishments and outstanding challenges in each of the seven commitments (see below). To the extent possible, it should also highlight best practices and innovative strategies that have yielded positive development results. Similarly, it should highlight strategic priorities under each commitment over the next 5-10 years.

Commitment 1: Fostering people-centred policy framework

The section will review trends in GDP growth rates, investment levels as well as investment GDP ratios (public and private investment). It will also assess progress towards eradicating extreme poverty and hunger. The focus should be on identifying key factors that facilitated, or not, the translation of economic growth into poverty reduction.

Commitment 2: Good governance at national and international levels

This section should refer to institutional development processes and key governance issues and reforms. Where possible, the report should address national rankings and reports on core governance issues (eg. World Governance Indicators, Corruption Perception Index, APRM, the Extractive Industry Transparency Initiative and the Kimberly Process) to assess progress made and challenges ahead. Regional and international conventions ratified aimed at improving governance, human right and rule of law can be included. Gender equality, especially progress in increasing women's representation in political decision-making structure should be addressed.

Commitment 3: Building human and institutional capacities

This section will assess progress in the achievement of MDG, based on existing country stocktaking and review mechanisms. It should highlight key lessons learned on national strategies policies pursued in promoting human development.

Commitment 4: Building productive capacities to make globalization work for the least developed countries

This section assesses progress around key policy environments in the domain of: (i) Infrastructure development, (ii) Technology and R&D investments, (iii) improving the business environment, promoting enterprise development, especially Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs) and measures to support SMEs development, (iv) Energy, (v) Agriculture and agro-industries, (vi) Manufacturing and mining, (vii) Rural development and food security, (viii) Sustainable tourism.

Commitment 5: Enhancing the role of trade in development

The section will examine trends, major initiatives and challenges in current policies and capacities in the areas of: (i) Trade negotiations, commodities and regional trading arrangements, (ii) Duty-free market access, (iii) Export diversification, (iv) Accession to the WTO, (v) Support for trade capacity building.

Commitment 6: Reducing vulnerability and protecting the environment

This section assesses trends and progress in major initiatives and challenges in current policies, capacities and resources of LDCs to alleviate vulnerability to natural shocks and respond to the challenges of climate change. This includes progress made in delivering National Adaptation Programmes of Action (NAPAs), UNFCCC negotiations, as well as implementation of the Clean Development Mechanism.

Commitment 7: Mobilizing financial resources

This section will assess progress LDCs are making in mobilizing financial resources for their development, including through revenue mobilization (Tax revenue as well as Revenue GDP ratios). Measures introduced to increase revenue as well as enhancing the efficiency in the utilization of revenue should be highlighted.

The financial sector also plays an important role in mobilizing resources for development. The section should also highlight initiatives put in place to strengthen financial sector development (financial deepening), capital market development and micro-finance institutions as well as reducing capital flight. It should also review trends in savings levels and savings GDP ratios (public and private savings).

The section will also discuss the contribution of external support from donors to their development through ODA, Debt relief and private flows, and review progress made in the implementation of the Monterrey Consensus on Financing for Development, Paris Declaration on Aid Effectiveness as well as the Accra Agenda for Action.

IV. Impact of global financial and economic crisis on LDCs and policy responses

This section will highlight the impact of the current global financial and economic crisis on LDCs and discuss measures put in place to mitigate its effect, especially in regard on their economies as well as on the most vulnerable segments of their population.

V. Conclusion and Way Forward

This section, apart from reinforcing salient messages emerging from the analysis, should also, against the backdrop of outstanding challenges and emerging crises, propose additional measures and policies at national and international levels to eradicate poverty and achieve sustainable development.

It should draw on lessons learnt and best practices identified in the preceding sections to shed light on national priorities for sustainable development and poverty eradication over the next 10 years. Where possible, it should identify concrete actions and measures to be undertaken by national development stakeholders and their development partners at national, regional and global levels. It is expected that the report will provide recommendations on priority areas of action that the Fourth UN Conference on the LDCs should address to support and facilitate sustainable development and poverty eradication at the national level. Especially policy measures in following areas should be briefly highlighted here: role of trade, including market access, export diversification, aid-for-trade, regional integration; financing development and mitigating the impact of the global

financial and economic crisis, including ODA, aid enhancing the effectiveness of aid debt relief and trade finance; climate change, including mainstreaming adaptation into national development frameworks, financing adaptation and capacity building and technology transfer; enhancing long term agricultural productivity to ensure food security and access to food and nutrition; enhancing productive capacities.