



ORGANIZATION OF THE BLACK SEA ECONOMIC COOPERATION

Permanent International Secretariat

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**STATEMENT BY
AMBASSADOR LEONIDAS CHRYSANTHOPOULOS,
SECRETARY GENERAL OF THE
ORGANIZATION OF THE
BLACK SEA ECONOMIC COOPERATION (BSEC)**

**AT THE
FOURTH UN CONFERENCE ON THE LEAST DEVELOPED
COUNTRIES**

(Istanbul, 9-13 May 2011)

Mr. President/Chairman,
Excellencies,
Distinguished Participants,

As a regional intergovernmental economic cooperation organization, BSEC is fully committed to the global strategy to improve the situation of the Least Developed Countries (LDCs). At the heart of this strategy lies the need to support the sustainable development efforts of the LDCs.

The global financial and economic crisis, a result of human greed, has been a setback in the sustainable economic growth of the LDCs. Therefore, a major responsibility rests with the developed countries in the world to reverse the dynamics that negatively affect the LDCs in their pursuit for sustainable development.

Trade can be a strong catalyst for economic growth and poverty reduction and should be integrated into the national development plans of all LDCs. Market access alone is not enough to improve the conditions in the LDCs and for their successful integration into world trade. This requires increased development, finance for trade and productive capacities, combined with domestic reforms and improved international trade rules.

Strengthening and expanding the productive capacities and infrastructure of the LDCs is necessary for regional integration, increased internal and international trade and economic growth and development.

Despite some economic growth, deprivation remains high in most of the LDCs. There are different reasons for this. Today's threats and challenges differ from those of the past when the concept of security meant the prevention of conflict and war between states. Today, the international community is faced with the new security threats and challenges which not only threaten the security of states, but also human security, therefore requiring urgent action. To cite a few, these include poverty, contagious diseases such as HIV/AIDS, environmental degradation, climate change, internal violence and conflicts, the proliferation of nuclear and chemical weapons, terrorism, transnational organized crimes, human trafficking and corruption.

This underlines the need to support improved overall governance, the fight against corruption, the rule of law and social equality not only in the LDCs but also in the developed countries.

Corruption endangers economic and social development, justice, democracy and the rule of law. It also diminishes the efficiency of development by 5 to 30%. The joint efforts of the international community against this menace have led to the creation of international conventions, instruments and mechanisms to prevent and fight corruption. Effective, transparent and accountable governance, uncompromising to corruption, is what is needed everywhere.

We are pleased to note that the Ministers of Interior of the BSEC Member States in their meeting last month in Bucharest adopted a Joint Declaration on Regional Efforts on Preventing and Combating Corruption. This document envisages the elaboration of a BSEC Action Plan to prevent and combat corruption, increase public awareness and promote ethical behaviour. The Action Plan will facilitate the development of a network among the national bodies mandated to enforce anti-corruption measures, with a view to exchanging information and sharing best practices.

Developed countries, who have their own share of corruption, can surely share expertise and best-practices and also help with capacity building to support the efforts of the LDCs in fighting this menace.

Another area of great significance for achieving sustainable development is gender equality. The LDCs should fully mainstream gender into all dimensions of their development plans. It is a fact that women are still not as widely present as men in economic activities. This is a sad reality for almost everywhere in the world.

One of the possible ways of assisting women in this respect is to promote their participation in the economic life of the societies in which they live. Let's not forget that women account for half of the world population. They are an important untapped source of economic growth and their involvement in economic activities contributes to the economic development in their countries.

I participated yesterday in Bucharest at the official Launching of the UN Decade of Action for Road Safety. The implementation of its Global Plan of Action could also assist the LDCs.

Mr. President/Chairman,

Since the developed countries are mainly responsible for polluting the planet, they should assist the LDC's in reducing their vulnerabilities and managing their environment sustainably while not impeding development. An important responsibility rests with all members of the international community to effectively implement multilateral environmental agreements on climate change, biodiversity, desertification and chemicals and to strengthen the current system of international environmental governance.

Learning to live with climate change is an absolute priority for humanity. The BSEC Council of Ministers of Foreign Affairs, in its meeting in Thessaloniki in November 2010, adopted a Joint Declaration on Combating Climate Change in the wider Black Sea Area. This was the contribution of BSEC to the Cancun Conference in December 2010. This Joint Declaration, if implemented, will be a small step towards saving the planet and its passengers, the human race and all other living species. Also, a project on introducing climate change in the environmental strategy for the protection of the Black Sea will be soon launched, jointly with the UNDP.

We need to ensure that not only future generations will survive on this planet, but the earth itself will survive to offer a place for living to these generations. The planet can survive without humanity, but not vice versa. By imposing pollution taxes, pollution will not disappear. The planet does not function according to our economic strategies. Earth does not accept money to clean itself. It is us the passengers who must do it, without taking into account economic considerations.

Green energy is interrelated with planetary environmental protection. In this context, supporting projects that promote sustainable energy development is also a priority for BSEC. It constitutes also a means for enhancing development of the LDC's.

Human greed has exhausted in a split second of astronomical history, the energy savings of billions of years of energy conservation made by the planet. Consequently, we must immediately start reducing this exploitation in a significant way if we are to survive. Operating on our vast daily energy income from the sun, wind, tide and water is considered to be the best solution. Since we are currently not in the position to produce solar cells and high-tech turbines

without oil, it is imperative to give emphasis on research for new technologies. After many nuclear disasters, it is necessary that we reassess our nuclear energy policy urgently, since we cannot provide effective safety measures to protect us when disaster strikes.

Mr. President/Chairman,

We cannot turn a blind eye on the difficulties, poverty or sufferings of others. We are all citizens of this world and every single one of us should do his/her share to make this world a better place. BSEC will surely continue to play its part with determination in the efforts to strengthen multilateral cooperation to meet the global challenges of this millennium, including those faced by the LDCs. We hope that the Istanbul Program of Action, should at least be able to make a significant difference in the lives of the one billion human beings living in the LDC's.

Thank you.
