

Honorable Secretary-General,  
Honorable Vice President of Gambia,  
Honorable Prime Minister of Nepal,  
Dr. Karaman,  
Dr. Karki,  
Excellencies,  
Ladies and Gentlemen,

It is my pleasure to welcome you to İstanbul for a “once a decade” event, the Fourth United Nations Conference on LDCs.

The Civil Society and non-governmental organizations are crucial partners for LDCs in their development endeavours. Taking the importance of our gathering into account, I would like to express that I feel honored to be given the opportunity to address you on this Forum.

I would also like to acknowledge the hard work being carried out by the coordinators of the Civil Society Forum. I am grateful for their efforts to create a Forum, full of participants who are dedicated to advocate the LDCs’ development agenda.

Having said that I wish to welcome the launch of the “Global Civil Society Report and Recommendations” to the Fourth United Nations Conference on the Least Developed Countries. I thoroughly agree with the report that “development paradigm must change as the dominant approaches to development has failed the world’s poorest citizens. A genuine partnership is needed.”

I have full confidence that your deliberations during the coming week will be a significant input for the development agenda of LDCs for the upcoming decade.

Excellencies,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

NGOs are key partners in our quest to achieve peace and prosperity for all nations and countries, regardless of their circumstances, region, ethnicity or religion.

Their specialized knowledge and understanding of local populations, regional issues and implications for policy often help enable governments and UN agencies and programmes to deliver aid to those who need it.

On the other hand, NGOs have a key role to play not only in helping the needed but also in shaping a new model of development and green growth. Without involving the entire societies, including NGOs, local governments and the private sector, in development efforts, our success in reaching the MDGs and climate change goals will be elusive.

We must admit that the track record of civil society and NGOs has been very impressive: they often work in areas that central governments cannot reach, such as the poor and socially excluded, in providing humanitarian assistance, in mobilizing community support for development, and in the areas of human rights and gender equality, among others.

Excellencies,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

On the policy and advocacy side, NGOs inspire the public to lobby on behalf of developing countries. NGOs have been instrumental in advocating for policy innovation, presenting the evidence and new ideas and approaches to Governments and the United Nations. Campaigning on UN related issues, for example, on poverty and health issues such as HIV/AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria has not only increased international awareness to these problems but has also helped raise funding and move forward in the international health, economic and social agendas.

NGOs can form an invaluable catalytic role in support of UN work on social and economic issues, raising points that others would choose not to raise, advocating fresh ideas and perspectives, new ways of looking at the world.

In other words, the work of the NGOs helps ensure that governments and the international community are aware of the realities on the ground.

It is therefore understandable and a welcome development that NGOs have grown considerably in number and importance in the last decades. They have become an unavoidable and inseparable part of international relations, by connecting governments and civil society but also by promoting their own agenda.

Excellencies,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Turkey attaches great importance to the participation of NGOs in international relations and especially in the work of the UN. Our country has long been a member of the NGO Committee of ECOSOC and is currently chairing this Committee.

We believe that a strong civil society can only improve and complement the action of governments and international organizations and as such we fully support the increased participation of NGOs in international relations.

Having said this I would like to reiterate the importance of the ownership of the post-Conference phase by all stakeholders including civil society organizations. I believe that it is essential in monitoring the delivery of the commitments on the ground.

Thank you.

