



THE PRESIDENT
OF THE
GENERAL ASSEMBLY

18 February, 2016

Excellency,

I have the pleasure to transmit herewith a Summary of the key messages and recommendations from the special thematic event on "Building Synergy and Coherence in the Implementation of the Istanbul Programme of Action (IPoA) in the context of the 2030 Sustainable Development Agenda", which I convened on 11 February, 2016.

Please accept, Excellency, the assurances of my highest consideration.

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read 'Mogens Lykketoft', written in a cursive style.

Mogens Lykketoft

To all Permanent Representatives
And Permanent Observers to the United Nations
New York

SUMMARY REPORT

Special Thematic Event

**"Building Synergy and Coherence in the implementation of
the Istanbul Programme of Action in the context of the 2030
Sustainable Development Agenda"**

11 February 2016

Trusteeship Council Chamber

Introduction

The General Assembly decided to hold a comprehensive high-level mid-term review of the implementation of the Istanbul Programme of Action (IPoA) in Antalya, Turkey in May 2016. The mid-term review will undertake a comprehensive assessment of the status of implementation of the IPoA by LDCs and their development partners; share best practices and lessons learned; identify obstacles and constraints encountered, and actions and initiatives needed to overcome them, as well as new challenges and emerging issues. The review will also reaffirm the global commitment to address the special needs of LDCs made at the Fourth United Nations Conference on LDCs. It will, additionally, further strengthen the global partnership for the development of LDCs in all priority areas of the IPoA, in order to ensure the timely, effective and full implementation of the Programme of Action during the remainder of the decade, while building synergies with the 2030 Agenda for sustainable development.

General Assembly resolution 69/231 articulated the organizational structure of the mid-term review process of the implementation of the IPoA. As per the resolution, a number of preparatory processes will culminate into an intergovernmentally negotiated and agreed outcome in the form of a political declaration. As part of the preparatory process, the General Assembly has requested the President of the General Assembly to organize, early in 2016, a one-day special thematic event, with the participation of Member States, non-governmental organizations, civil society, the private sector and academic institutions, in order to provide input to the comprehensive high-level midterm review.

The primary objective of the special thematic event held on 11 February 2016 was to build common ground on how the implementation of the IPoA can be enhanced during the remainder of the decade by building synergies and coherence in the implementation of the Istanbul Programme of Action and the 2030 Agenda. The event also aimed to discuss how to strengthen global partnerships for sustainable development, with a view to ensuring full implementation of the IPoA during the remainder of the decade and thereby realizing its ambitious objective of enabling half the number of the LDCs to attaining the graduation threshold. Participants were invited to make specific expressions of support to LDCs.

The one-day special thematic event consisted of an opening plenary session, two interactive panel discussions and a closing plenary session. At the panel discussions presentations were made by renowned experts, government representatives and other stakeholders as well as development practitioners. These were followed by an interactive dialogue among all meeting participants.

The meeting resulted in three main deliverables. First was the political momentum in support of the Midterm Review of the IPoA. Large attendance from LDCs and their development partners provided good visibility to the above issues and agenda. Second, on

the policy level, deliberations at the event gave rise to a broad corpus of knowledge on experiences, lessons learnt and ideas for the way forward in the implementation of the IPoA. Third, on a more programmatic level, participants made a number of specific proposals aimed at accelerating the pace of IPoA implementation.

Opening session

The opening session featured remarks by Mr. Mogens Lykketoft, President of the 70th Session of the General Assembly and Mr. Gyan Chandra Acharya, Under Secretary-General and High Representative, OHRLLS. **Mr. Lykketoft** discussed the IPoA in the context of the international agendas agreed in 2015, and noted that while parallel processes of follow-up and review could create significant additional reporting and administrative burdens on countries that are already stretched to the fullest extent, it is crucial that the IPoA and similar agreements are not marginalized. **USG Acharya** delivered a statement on behalf of the Secretary-General, noting that LDCs will be a litmus test of our new approach to sustainability and our common responsibilities to the planet, and it would thus be vital to build synergy and coherence among them. The SG's message also highlighted the importance of building resilience against shocks and crises for Least Developed Countries, which will be a theme of the first World Humanitarian Summit which will be convened on May 23-24 in Istanbul, Turkey.

Following these remarks, two keynote addresses were made by H.E. Mr. Md. Shahriar Alam, MP, State Minister for Foreign Affairs of Bangladesh, and Mr. Erik Solheim, Chair of the Development Assistance Committee, OECD. **Minister Alam** noted that the first 5 years of the SDGs overlapped with the last 5 years of the IPoA, and suggested that we undertake in-depth studies for each LDC resulting in recommendations to enable graduation, take stock of poverty situation in LDCs and come up with solutions. He pointed out that international support is crucial to meeting both IPoA and SDG goals, as are productive capacity, healthy, educated populations, and a clear road map for the MTR. The minister highlighted the importance of infrastructure for both agendas, and emphasized that the operationalization of the Technology Bank needs to be implemented in time. He also noted that trade was an engine for development, and that the MTR can be the right platform for full Duty-Free Quota Free market access for all products from all LDCs. Finally, the Minister mentioned investment promotion regimes in the context of the AAAA as a platform to build on, as well as resilience building, an area where a lot needs to be done, from environmental, health, financial risks etc., and where a breakthrough is needed.

Mr. Solheim of OECD/DAC discussed the need for LDCs to create jobs on a large scale and for high-level political buy-in in order to push development further. He noted the enormous progress made in LDCs, including longer lives, the eradication of polio and steep decline of malaria. He also highlighted the facts that 7 million children surviving today would have died

in 1990, equal to 17,000 a day (not all in LDCs), and that more children (especially girls) are attending school. In order to build on these successes and do more, Mr. Solheim suggested four important lessons from the first five years of IPoA implementation. The first lesson was the crucial role of leadership in development, and Mr. Solheim noted that Korea, Singapore and China were at income levels of LDCs before their development took off, but had a strong focus from the top political levels. The second lesson revolved around pragmatism in politics, embracing both a strong state and a market-based economy, as well as getting the legal framework right for private companies to invest in LDCs. Furthermore, the global community needed to use aid better and blend with private investment. The third issue was the need for much more action on tax (based on the principle that taxes had to be paid where profits are made), such as curbing illicit flows which are undermining development, building on the Addis Ababa tax initiative to help countries, and spend more aid on tax systems. The fourth lesson was that LDCs are much more dependent on aid than other developing countries (comprising 70% of their development finance), and thus need more aid going to LDCs. Furthermore they must spend aid more wisely on areas that cannot be done by the private sector (e.g. education). Finally, Mr. Solheim reiterated that eradicating poverty is the biggest issue facing LDCs in implementing the 2030 Agenda.

Panel I: “Building synergy and coherence in national and international policies for implementation and follow-up of the Istanbul Programme of Action (IPoA) and the 2030 Sustainable Development Agenda”

The first panel session was moderated by H.E. Mr. *Jean-Francis Zinsou*, Permanent Representative of Benin to the United Nations and cofacilitator of the MTR of the IPoA. The ambassador reiterated the importance of implementing the IPoA and LDCs’ crucial place in 2030 Agenda, and also introduced the panellists. The featured Speaker was Ms. Helen Clark, Administrator of the UNDP. *Ms. Clark* pointed out that the implementation of all agreements adopted in 2015 would enable the LDCs to speed up their development and graduate from the LDC category. She noted that LDCs made much progress in the MDG, and also registered the fastest improvement in human development (an increase of 26% in average HDI for LDCs vs. 11% for the global increase between 2000 and 2014). Ms. Clark mentioned common priorities between the SDGs and the IPoA - productive capacity, social and human development, increasing resilience and strengthening governance – as well as common means of implementation – new and existing partnerships, technical assistance, improving data collection and monitoring as well as greater international support. She also urged the harmonization of reporting systems for both agendas. Finally, the Administrator pointed out that 74% of UNDP core resources were dedicated to LDCs (which also contributed to mainstreaming the IPoA and UNDP’s MAPS initiative (mainstreaming and accelerating policy support) will help LDCs to integrate SDGs into national development programmes.

H.E. Mr. **Macharia Kamau**, Permanent Representative of Kenya to the UN and co-chair of the OWG/SDGs and the 2030 Sustainable Development Agenda spoke next. He began by stressing the power of national ownership, national priorities and national action, which are at the core of 'leadership PLUS', pointing out that the overall goal of accelerated development must be to fight poverty, and that growth should be inclusive, equitable and sustainable for structural transformation for productive capacity. He added that focus was also needed on gender equality and empowerment of women, reducing vulnerability to economic and environmental shocks (to which LDCs are most vulnerable), enhancing financial resources and their effective use, and good governance – institutions, the promotion of human rights and rule of law – all were crucial to give confidence to citizens and investors. Next Mr. Kamau discussed the power of deliberate and guided action to drive efficiency and impact and that the SDGs have to be mainstreamed in national development frameworks (helped by partners). LDCs would also have to increase their investments in data in order to have a much better impact and effective outcomes, noting that data is the tool that allows societies not to waste money and time because one can target what is done more precisely. Finally the Ambassador highlighted the power of targeted and leveraged financing and the need for ODA to LDCs. He noted that the limited resources of LDCs are not sufficient and that domestic resources will be key in delivering transformation.

Ms. **Sakiko Fukuda-Parr**, Vice Chair of the Committee for Development Policy (CDP) and Professor of International Affairs, The New School, discussed the last CDP report on ODA allocations and noted that there has been an increase of total ODA, but the levels had somewhat plateaued and allocations to LDCs still fall short on the global commitments. Only 9 countries have met the targets in 2013. Prof. Fukuda-Parr noted the need to look more closely at aid effectiveness and coordination, as well as aid dependency and its corrosive effect on national policies (as well as its impacts at the global level). She pointed out that structural transformation was needed through productive capacity building and this was the core challenge for LDCs. She stressed the fact that the LDC group was a heterogeneous group, that the structural characteristics of LDCs were diverse, and that these countries were also facing new challenges. Thus, business as usual will not be enough to deliver on the new transformative agenda, and there is a need to change direction in some areas and think whether some of the support measures to LDCs need to be changed. As mentioned by earlier speakers, targeted and leveraged financing and the need to draw lessons from existing success stories will be key. Prof. Fukuda-Parr noted that the approach in the past has focused largely on human development. However, there was a need to invest both in people and productive capacities (investments are needed also in economic infrastructure, economic institutions, agriculture etc.) and what becomes important is the balance between the two. More lessons could be drawn from South-South cooperation experiences and how to use different types of financing modalities. One example was Japan's very unique 'trinity' approach revolving around ODA, FDI, and trade relationship building. Finally, she emphasized the need to rethink North-South cooperation based on South-South examples,

as well as looking at the historical context and think out of the box, as the 2030 Agenda has set a much broader vision for the years to come.

Mr. **Finn Tarp**, Director, United Nations University-World Institute for Development Economic Research (UNU-WIDER) in Helsinki was the next speaker. Surveying a very large body of research by UNU-WIDER, he outlined five sets of concerns arising from their research programmes. The growth and poverty programme shows that there was a lot to celebrate, and in particular LDCs which succeeded in taking agriculture and economic transformation seriously. However, by 2013 per capita GDP was only 7.7% higher than in 1974 – so growth remained indispensable. He also noted that aid to LDCs was falling, risking leaving behind those most in need. The programme on research and communication on foreign aid demonstrate that aid was effective and had respectable rates of return, even in places with weak institutions. But to improve, aid fragmentation – which remains high and very costly – would need to be addressed. The programme on learning to compete has shown that business as usual was not enough. Structural transformation in LDCs was very slow, with employment creation severely lagging. Only a more strategic approach to industrial policy, the role of the state and the private sector, and a strong commitment of political leadership could help LDCs industrialize. The programme on development under climate change suggested that long term planning accounting was critical for adaptation, whereas implementation and deepening of COP21 was crucial for mitigation. LDCs have intrinsic advantages in renewable energy production, e.g. hydropower potential could be linked with substantial wind and solar resources to generate clean reliable power at low cost. Finally, on data to support the SDGs, Mr. Tarp noted that technical assistance and capacity building were critical in developing the necessary data systems, but beyond technical issues, political sensitivities exist, and the lack of data disaggregated by gender was striking.

The final panellist was Mr. **Gauri Pradhan**, International Coordinator of LDC Watch. Mr. Pradhan appreciated the recognition of civil society partners in the implementation of the IPoA and to the preparations for the high-level Midterm Review of the IPoA. He noted that LDC Watch has been one of the key stakeholders actively advocating for the implementation of the IPoA as well as the preparation of the SDGs and has constantly highlighted the importance of synergy and coherence. In this regard, the campaign “No SDGs without Development of LDCs” was carried out. He pointed out that there was a dire need to properly review a number of policies including trade and climate change, as progress in LDCs remained limited. Mr. Pradhan invited all partners to work together to create an enabling environment for LDC civil society participation, in an inclusive and recognized manner. More resources were needed to enhance the capacities of civil society to monitor the implementation of the IPoA as well as the 2030 Agenda. In the context of the upcoming MTR, LDC Watch would organise an African civil society review during the upcoming AU meeting, and was also preparing for a civil society track and civil society declaration for the High-level MTR. Furthermore, civil society engagement in preparing the outcome document

was needed, and LDC Watch would like to have civil society representatives participating in the outcome document discussions in March.

The presentations of the panellists were followed by an interactive discussion. It was highlighted that the IPoA addresses a comprehensive scale of issues, and it was therefore important to ensure that the broader goals of the IPoA will not get lost in the SDGs implementation, as well as ensuring that LDCs get priority in development discussions (given that LDCs are increasingly in competition with other categories of countries), and that more core resources need to be directed to support LDCs. Some delegates mentioned that international action can only support domestic vision, as highlighted in Addis Ababa (e.g. progressive tax systems that underpin transformation, private sector attractive environment, emphasis on gender and girls in education). It was also pointed out that sustainable development in LDCs cannot be achieved without robust agricultural development and building up value chains. It was also highlighted that often IPoA was not a priority for countries, especially nationally, and UNDP was requested to do more nationally.

Some delegates emphasized the need to encourage partners to invest in the rural areas of LDCs to create more opportunities. Allocation of resources within the UN system was also raised, indicating that more core resources need to be directed to support LDCs, and increased country presence was identified as critical. It was suggested that the High level political Forum (HLPF) should allocate appropriate time to discuss the progress in LDCs, and they should be the first recipients of international aid. Another remark was that sustainable development of LDCs was important not only for poverty eradication, but also for a more secure, peaceful world, and a greener future. Several delegates reiterated the importance of a timely implementation of the Technology Bank and a science, technology and innovation-supporting mechanism dedicated to the LDCs.

It was mentioned that the implementation of development programmes needed to be dealt with at the institutional level and also take into account environmental considerations. It was pointed out that graduation is not an end goal, and will not eliminate the obstacles and challenges LDCs face (especially SIDS). The importance of the agricultural sector when discussing structural transformation and industrialisation was highlighted, as agricultural transformation is also linked to food security, nutrition, environmental sustainability, and poverty eradication (especially rural poverty). Several delegates also stressed the need for coherence between ODA, trade, debt and investment. Finally, some delegates expressed concern that some of the development funds were going to settling refugees in Europe.

Panel II: “Forging strengthened multi-stakeholder partnerships for timely implementation of the IPoA and the 2030 Sustainable Development Agenda”

The second half of the meeting was moderated by H.E. Ms. Bénédicte Frankinet, Permanent Representative of Belgium to the United Nations and co-facilitator of the Mid-term Review of the IPoA.

The first speaker, **Mr. Stefan Koeberle**, Director, Operations Policy and Country Services at the World Bank pointed out that both the IPoA and the 2030 Agenda are central to achieving the Bank’s twin goals of ending extreme poverty by 2030 and promoting shared prosperity. He noted that growing fiscal pressures present a challenge for LDCs. He added that the average GDP growth of 4.5 % in 2015 and 5.5% forecast for 2016 remains short of the target of minimum annual growth of 7% in the LDCs. Stressing that LDCs require support to rebuild their fiscal space, Mr. Koeberle underscored the role of domestic resource mobilisation through efficiency gains in the tax system. He pointed out that improving tax systems and stopping illicit flows would entail much larger revenue windfall than ODA. He added that 2-4% of GDP could be raised by just improving the tax system. Mr. Koeberle also highlighted the data constraints in LDCs, noting that 20 of the 48 LDCs have no poverty data or only 1 data point from 2002 to 2011. He mentioned that the World Bank has committed more than US\$ 300 million each year to ensure the availability of household, income and expenditure data in the poorest countries. He also underlined that the World Bank is supporting SDG data in partnership with the UN, technology companies, governments and private foundations. The Bank is also working to launch a US\$ 100 million trust fund to support innovation in data technology. On Climate Change, he stressed that increased concessional aid flows through revised bilateral and multilateral allocation, better mechanisms for access to financial markets, including through provisions of partial guarantees is needed. Mr. Koelerle ended his presentation by emphasizing the important role of partnerships at the global, regional and country levels. He stressed that the Bank will continue its efforts to ensure the ongoing work on IDA-18 replenishments to make similar progress on meeting the special needs of LDCs.

In his statement, **Mr. Taffere Tesfachew**, Director, Division for Africa, Least Developed Countries and Special Programmes at UNCTAD first gave a brief assessment of the progress made by LDCs during the implementation of the MDGs. His assessment was based on the 2014 UNCTAD report, which reviewed LDCs’ performance against seven MDG targets. He highlighted that only one LDC – Laos PDR – was on track to meet all the seven MDGs. Outside Asia, only four LDCs were on track even for half the targets. He also noted that since 2011 and in real terms, ODA to LDCs has fallen. He stressed that LDCs are the battleground on which the 2030 Agenda will be won or lost. Mr. Tesfachew noted that speeding up the rate of poverty reduction in LDCs would require two essential requirements. The first requirement is that of structural transformation of LDCs' economies, which should be accompanied by increasing productive employment. This should also encompass rural economies through harnessing synergies between agriculture and non-farm economies, he added. Second, there is need for a dramatic reversal of the reduction in ODA to LDCs. He stressed the need to meet the 0.15-0.2% of GNI target for ODA to LDCs, as recognised in both the IPoA and the 2030 Agenda. He also pointed out that the 2030 Agenda includes a

commitment by donors to increase their ODA to 0.7% of GNI. He noted that since LDCs' domestic resource constraints are much greater than for most other developing countries, a target of at least half the overall level of ODA for LDCs would seem an absolute minimum. In the context of the 0.7% target, this would suggest a target for ODA to the LDCs of at least 0.35% of GNI, he underlined.

The next panellist, **Mr. Chandra Prashad Dhakal**, Chairman of the Global IME Bank Ltd., noted that Nepal is looking forward to graduating in 2022, which he stressed was by no means an easy task given the recent devastating earthquake and the current economic and political climate in the country. He noted that in the face of the crisis, the international community has committed about \$4 billion for reconstruction efforts. He also underscored that remittances are important in Nepal and is the only means of access to finance for the rural areas where commercial banks have not reached. He noted that remittances form about a third of the GDP of Nepal and over half of the households in the country receive remittances. He pointed out that in 2001, IME pioneered the mechanism for transferring remittances to Nepal and that it has taken over 10 years to institutionalize this mechanism as a formal channel for remittances in the country. Since then, many private firms for remittances have been established, opening up opportunities for micro financing in rural communities. He highlighted that the volume of remittances reached US\$ 6 billion in 2015. He underlined that IME is now looking forward to investing profits from remittances into development projects, such as infrastructure projects. He further stressed that LDCs should recognise the role of the private sector as an engine of economic growth to fund the investment gap, create jobs and advance social welfare. Mr. Dhakal concluded his remarks by stating that a conducive economic environment to attract private investment and strengthen the role of PPPs will be critical for LDCs.

Mr. David Jackson, Director for Local Development Finance Programme Area, UN Capital Development Fund focused his presentation on three elements relevant for the synergies between the IPoA and the 2030 Agenda: domestic resource mobilisation, transformation and resilience. He underlined that domestic resource mobilization is fundamental for LDCs. He noted that LDCs are highly dependent on commodity exports and that FDI tends to focus on those areas, which limits the breadth and depth of their domestic resource mobilisation potential. He further noted that there is a fiscal squeeze driven by the slowing down of commodity exports and that Africa's trade with China fell by 40% in 2015. It was underscored that LDCs can generate internal growth to complement foreign sources of capital through multi-dimensional financial inclusion (that is, through access to a range of financial services, including savings, micro-insurance, and value chains finance). He noted that pension funds and domestic banks are very important examples of financial inclusion. The important role of local government at sub-national level as a source of domestic resource mobilisation was also emphasised. Some of the elements of transformation highlighted by Mr. Jackson included the role of secondary cities (characterised with a population between 200,000 and 600,000 people), which are linked with rural transformation and increase in agricultural productivity. He underscored the need for investment in these secondary cities and transforming them into modern cities with services and economic opportunities that can retain populations. Regarding resilience, he emphasised that climate change is a reality and affects LDCs in significant ways that are not properly understood. He noted that 50% of the green climate fund will be allocated to LDCs

and SIDS. He further highlighted that there is a 50-50(%) split between mitigation and adaptation. The importance for LDCs to not only graduate but also remain resilient to climate change was underlined. He highlighted that UNCDF has been working with the government of Cambodia, which is seeking direct access to climate fund to build its' resilience. He noted that direct access by LDCs to entities like the Global Climate Fund is the most efficient way to build their resilience through local investment. Mr. Jackson ended his presentation by highlighting that as the world is now interconnected, remittances from the diaspora are another source of domestic resource mobilization.

The last presenter, **Mr. Patrick Guillaumont**, President, Fondation pour les Etudes et Recherches sur le Développement International (FERDI) highlighted that ODA is only a small part of development finance and has to be combined with other sources of finance, including domestic finance and FDI. Mr. Guillaumont proposed using the LDCs identification criteria for aid allocation, which he discussed, would make it easier for scaling up ODA to LDCs. He underlined that GA/RES/67/221 also invites development partners to consider LDC indicators, GNI per capita, HAI and EVI as part of their criteria for allocating ODA. Furthermore, he highlighted the advantages of using the criteria, including its potential to channel ODA not only towards the LDCs, but also towards the poorest LDCs that need aid the most. He also acknowledged that using the LDCs identification criteria for aid allocation may need a refinement of these criteria to make them more relevant, in particular to vulnerability to climate change. He concluded his presentation by highlighting the need to improve not only the quantity but also the quality of concessional inflows to LDCs.

During the interactive discussion, some delegates noted that given the importance of the IPoA, its' timely and effective implementation was critical. The importance of multi-stakeholder partnerships (including through South-South cooperation) in achieving the IPoA goals was emphasised by many delegates. Some delegates stressed that partnerships should focus on drivers of the economy, including investing in renewable energy, enhancing trade and technology transfer, among others. Other delegates highlighted that skills development plays a crucial role for LDCs to seize opportunities to develop markets for new technologies, attract investments, increase productivity and create decent jobs for a growing labour force. Delegates stressed that it was important to operationalize the technology bank in a timely manner and ensure that it also benefits rural areas.

The importance of national planning as a way to capture synergies and enforce action was underscored by some delegates. It was discussed that national plans also underscore many principles such as national ownership and leadership. One delegation suggested that this issue should be highlighted at the MTR as a way of mobilizing action for accelerated implementation of the IPoA.

Enhancing capacity of LDCs to collect and analyse data was seen by many delegates as being critical for designing useful policies, implementation and evaluation. Some delegations stressed that the data challenge as well as how to mobilise action should be highlighted

during the MTR preparatory process and at the high-level MTR in Antalya. One participant called for the implementation of Geographic Information Systems (GIS) to facilitate organisation and storage of data for analysts to find inter-linkages between issues. Some delegates called for detailed studies on LDCs as a group as well as individual studies for each LDC.

Many delegates underscored the need to mobilise resources from international capital markets. In line with this, it was also discussed that due to declining commodity prices and reduction in revenue from trade, LDCs could be encouraged to borrow from the international markets. It was however stressed that there was need for LDCs to invest in developing their productive capacities to avoid another debt crisis. The importance of PPPs in mobilising private sector was also highlighted. It was discussed that international institutions such as the World Bank, especially the Multilateral Investment Guarantee Agency (MIGA), which deals with political risk insurance, should help on this issue by reassuring the private sector, particularly in environments where the investment climate is not sufficiently strong to induce private sector investment.

Closing Session

The closing session featured the presentation of a summary by the Under Secretary-General, OHRRLLS and closing remarks by the President of the 70th Session of the General Assembly. In his summary, **Mr. Acharya** highlighted some important elements arising from the discussions.

He noted the discussions on national ownership, national priorities and national action as being critical for driving development in LDCs. He underlined that LDCs face constraints relating to limited capacities, weak institutions and financial constraints. He stressed that while ODA was important, it had to be complemented by a strong private sector, remittances, PPPs, etc. He also pointed out the critical importance of resilience against natural disasters and the need to deal with LDCs' vulnerabilities. He ended by highlighting that the MTR will look at best practices, challenges and solutions. He also hoped that partnerships at the MTR will be reinforced.

In his closing remarks, **Mr. Lykketoft** noted that mainstreaming the 2030 agenda, the AAAA and the Paris Agreement will present both challenges and opportunities for all 48 LDCs. Ultimately, he observed, it is up to LDCs and all international partners to ensure that the challenges are overcome and opportunities are maximised. He emphasised the need to intensify and strengthen partnerships and innovative cooperation between countries, donors and among stakeholders, including the private sector and civil society. He thanked delegates for their active participation and stated that he was looking forward to seeing as many of the delegates as possible in Antalya next May.
