

Civil Society Assembly for Assessing Development Challenges in African Least Developed Countries (LDCs): Reviewing the Brussels Programme of Action (BPoA) and the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) towards the Fourth UN Conference on LDCs (LDC IV)

*United Nations Conference Center, Addis Ababa, Ethiopia
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DRAFT PROCEEDINGS



Table of Contents

| | |
|---|----|
| 1. Introduction | 3 |
| 1.1. Background | 3 |
| 1.2. African Assembly Objectives | 3 |
| 1.3. Assembly Participants | 4 |
| 1.4. Methodology | 4 |
| 2. Summary of Plenary Sessions | 5 |
| 2.1. Welcoming remarks and Opening Statements | 5 |
| 2.2. Presentation: <i>The Brussels Programme of Action (2001-2010)</i> by Adrian Gauci | 12 |
| 2.3. Thematic Session 1 – <i>A Review of the of the Brussels Programme of Action (BPoA) and the Millenium Development Goals (MDGs)</i> by Amadou S.O. Taal..... | 15 |
| 2.4. Thematic Session 2 – <i>The Financial Crisis and its Impact on African Least Developed Countries</i> by Demba M. Dembele | 19 |
| 2.5. Thematic Session 3 – <i>Food Crisis, Livelihoods & Impact of Climate Change in African LDCs</i> by Azeb Girmai..... | 25 |
| 3. Break-Out Session – CSO Participation in LDC IV and Beyond..... | 29 |
| 3.1. Presentation – Strategic Preparations for the LDC IV Conference by Arjun Karki | 29 |
| 3.2. Group Deliberations | 32 |
| 4. Annex | 34 |
| 4.1. Assembly Schedule | 34 |
| 4.2. List of Participants | 37 |

1. Introduction

The purpose of this report is to provide highlights of the “Civil Society Assembly for Assessing Development Challenges in African Least Developing Countries (LDCs): Reviewing the Brussels Programme Of Action (BPoA) and Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) towards the Fourth UN Conference on LDCs (LDC IV)” held in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia on 4-5 March 2010.

1.1. Background

In 1971, 24 countries were segmented as Least Developed Countries (LDCs) distinguished by the structural weakness of their economic, institutional and human resources. The three main criteria used to establish the group were 1) per capita GDP of US \$ 100 per person in 1968 or less; 2) a share of manufacturing in total GDP of 10 per cent or less; and 3) an adult literacy rate of 20 per cent or less. While revisions have been made to the criteria the fundamental principle of identifying LDC as countries which face structural handicaps to growth has essentially remained the same.

Presently, the revised criteria include 1)Gross national income per capita; 2)Human Asset Index and 3)Economic Vulnerability Index. To date, three UN Conferences on LDCs have been held and three programmes of action developed to translate the need for special measures for these countries. The Brussels Programme of Action (BPoA) was endorsed in the Third UN Conference on LDCs (LDC III) in 2001 in Brussels. The decade long programme was set out to complement the MDGs and represents both a framework for partnership between LDCs and development partners and a poverty reduction strategy.

Albeit such measures, the number of LDCs has increased to 49 as economic growth has not had commensurate gains in poverty reduction mainly due to failed development paradigms. The upcoming LDC IV in 2011 in Istanbul will mark an important bridge between review of implementation of the BPoA and the way forward. In the build-up to the conference, the importance of CSOs and their networks has been recognised in the preparations and planning leading the next set of action plans.

1.2. Objectives

LDC watch in partnership with the UN Office of the High Representative for the Least Developed Countries, Landlocked Developing Countries and Small Island Developing States (UN-OHRLLS) and the UN Economic Commission for Africa (UNECA) including the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) organised the assembly with the overall aim to enhance the participation and contribution of African civil society at all levels of preparations leading to LDC IV in Istanbul, 2011 and beyond.

The assembly revolved around three thematic areas namely 1) Impact of the Financial Crisis on African LDCs 2) BPoA and MDGs in African LDCs and 3) Food Crisis, Livelihoods & the Impact of Climate Change in African LDCs. The assembly was held prior to the official Ministerial meeting on the Review of the implementation of the Brussels Programme of Action (BPoA) in Africa scheduled on 8-9 March 2010.

More specifically, the twin objectives of the African Civil Society Assembly were:

- ✓ To assess and review the implementation of the BPoA and MDGs in African LDCs including in the context of the economic, financial, food, climate climate and debt crises.
- ✓ To strengthen civil society alliances in African LDCs and further build strategic alliances with the LDC governments, the Africa Union (AU), the UN agencies and other relevant stakeholders and actors, towards an effective engagement at the LDC IV in 2011 including the MDG Review Summit in September 2010.

And the specific objectives:

- ✓ Review the policies and programmes of African LDC governments, their development partners, the UN agencies and other multi-lateral institutions with regard to the implementation of the BPoA and the MDGs, including focus on the issues of universal access to basic services and domestic productive capacity.
- ✓ Raise the level of awareness among CSOs for their meaningful contribution and engagement on the MDG Review Summit and the LDC IV, respectively.
- ✓ Strategize on the effective role of CSOs towards the LDC IV in 2011 including MDG Review Summit in September 2010.

1.3. Participants

Workshop participants included nearly 34 representatives from a wide range of African civil society organisations and the UN (UN-OHRLLS, UNECA and UNDP). Participants came from Benin, Burkina Faso, Burundi, Central African Republic, Chad, Democratic Republic of Congo, Djibouti, Ethiopia, Guinea, Mali, Nepal, Niger, Lesotho, Liberia, Senegal, Somalia, South Africa, The Gambia, Togo, Uganda and Zambia.

1.4. Methodology

To achieve the objectives, a broad-based participatory and inclusive process was followed in order to ensure that the African civil society organisations (CSOs) initiate and continue their engagement with all stakeholders in the long run. To this end, LDC Watch is expected to be the facilitator to the process.

The assembly consisted of:

- ✓ **Plenary Sessions:** included opening statements, presentations on three thematic areas namely 1) Impact of the Financial Crisis on African LDCs 2) BPoA and MDGs in African LDCs and 3) Food Crisis, Livelihoods & the Impact of Climate Change in African LDCs; and discussion panels.
- ✓ A final break-out session dividing participants into francophone and Anglophone was organised to discuss on strategies to enhance national, regional and global participation and contribution of CSOs in the issue of LDCs and preparations leading up to LDC-IV; identify country-specific needs for technical and donor assistance, and suggest ways to enhance regional collaboration.

Translators for French and English were available in order to ensure the equal participation of Francophone and Anglophone participants.

2. Summary of Plenary Sessions

2.1. Welcoming remarks and Opening Statements

The assembly opened with a plenary session to welcome participants. **Dr. Arjun Karki** International Coordinator for LDC Watch and the convener of the assembly welcomed participants with a vote of thanks to Mr. Jalal Abdel-Latif, Chief of Civil Society Section, Governance and Public Administration Division (GPAD) and his office's support to bring the assembly together as well as the support of the UN Office of the High Representative for the Least Developed Countries, Landlocked Developing Countries and Small Island Developing States (UN-OHRLS) including Fred Kirungi and Ricardo Dunn, and the UN Economic Commission for Africa (UNECA) and the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP). Dr. Arjun also highlighted that the engagement of CSOs is new phenomena as it started only in 2001 following the BPoA. He also gave brief background on the creation of LDCs as a political block and the BPoA and how despite various measures to address the special needs of LDCs, no meaningful changes are observed in the lives of the people.

He proceeded by introducing the panelists, **Mr. Sandagdorj Erdenebileg**, Director of Policy and Monitoring from UN-OHRLS representing the High Representative Mr. Cheick Sidi Diarra. In addition to monitoring the implementation of LDCs programmes of Action the office has also been engaged in advocacy work in the issues of LDCs. Professor Emmanuel Nnadozie, Director of Economic Development and NEPAD Division (EDND) from the UNECA. Mrs. Azeb Girmai representing ENDA-Ethiopia as well as member of LDC Watch Secretariat and host to the assembly in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia. Mr. Demba M. Dembele President of LDC Watch who is also a distinguished personality on African LDCs was also introduced.

The assembly was officially opened by **Mrs. Azeb Girmai** who welcomed participants to Addis Ababa, the capital of Africa and seat of the African Union. She informed that LDC Watch is the only global civil society (CS) network involved in policy advocacy on issues of LDCs. She underlined that this assembly is part of the official review of the BPoA organised in Africa by the UNECA that was to be held on 8-9 March 2010 and that it is also the first African LDC civil society assembly deliberating and forwarding its proposal concerning the issue of LDCs. Mrs. Azeb wished participants a successful meeting and stressed that a lot is expected from them to come up with a good strategy to further engage CSOs in the process.

Following, **Mr. Demba M. Dembele** also welcomed participants on behalf of the LDC steering Committee and also appreciated the partnership and representation of the UNOHRLS, UNECA and UNDP. He then proceeded by setting the context for the assembly by reminding participants that 2010 marks the last year of the implementation of the BPoA that was developed to assist LDCs improve their situation in 7 key areas. However, their situation has deteriorated. He informed that the assembly is taking place in a time of distress when LDCs especially African LDCs are amidst economic and

financial crisis combined with climate change that will lead to more people in extreme poverty.

He informed that the financial crisis has had devastating effects on African countries, especially on the least developed countries (LDCs). These countries are affected through three channels. There has been a steep decline in financial flows, as a result of lower export revenues; fall in remittances and official development assistance (ODA). Much of the growth gains in the continent are affected by the crises as evident in the recent growth rate of 2% compared to an average of 5% in the period preceding the crisis. In addition, FAO predicts that 1 billion people live in hunger 300 of which are in Africa. This food crisis will undermine the goal of cutting extreme poverty by half as articulated in the MDGs.

He stressed that developed nations have failed promises to allocate more aid flows to the continent. The food and financial crises and their impact are one more illustration of the high economic, financial and social costs of neoliberal policies imposed on African countries for nearly 30 years by the IMF and the World Bank. Therefore, African LDCs should use the current global crisis of the neo-liberal paradigm as an opportunity to challenge and break with those failed and discredited policies and regain control over the design and implementation of their own policies. They must reassess and reverse privatization, trade liberalization; unfettered capital flows and deregulation of internal markets.

He also underlined that LDC Watch calls for:

1. LDCs should reject free trade agreements such as the Economic Partnership Agreements (EPAs) imposed by the EU
2. Move towards food sovereignty
3. Mitigate the impact of the financial crisis through:
 - a. Stop the financial bleeding of LDCs is a moratorium on debt as proposed by UNCTAD Secretary General in April 2009. Once it is in place, the moratorium should be followed by the unconditional cancellation of all African LDCs' illegitimate debt
 - b. Transfer all financial aid flows to LDCs in response to the crisis into grants
4. Developed countries should allow LDCs more non-reciprocal access to markets in accordance with the BPOA.
5. Southern Countries to provide more financial assistance to LDCs in the framework of the South South Cooperation.
6. African LDCs need to have more collaboration with other LDCs and institutions such as UNECA and UNCTAD.

Mr. Sandagdorj Erdenebileg, Director of Policy and Monitoring from UNOHRRLLS also welcomed participants and thanked the UNECA, UNDP and LDC Watch for the support in organising the assembly. He reiterated the importance of CSOs involvement in the assessment of the comprehensive of the decade BPOA. He also informed that CSOs have already been part of the National level in the review process, including at national level in the preparation of national reports on the implementation of the Programme.

Mr. Erdenebileg also informed some achievement by LDCs to date and that they are to some extent fruits of the determination of civil society organizations to hold their governments accountable to its people:

1. For example, from 2004-2007, the LDCs as a group achieved an average growth rate of 7 percent annually. In 2008, growth decelerated to 6.4 percent but nevertheless remained better than the aggregate for all other developing countries.
2. On the issue of good governance at the national and international levels, most LDCs have taken measures to promote democracy and improve governance. Elections that meet international standards are increasingly becoming the norm in the LDCs. In several instances, there has been an increase in the proportion of seats held by women; in a number of LDCs, the female share exceeds 30 percent, partially because of quotas for women.
3. The 2008 Transparency International Corruption Perceptions Index indicated that corruption was being reduced, albeit slowly, in many of the LDCs. As part of this process, several LDCs have signed the Extractive Industries Transparency Initiative.
4. In 2008, the World Bank issued a new series of internationally comparable poverty data, based on a new international poverty line of \$1.25, measured in terms of 2005 purchasing power parity. Data for about two thirds of the least developed countries confirm their continued high poverty rates but also show that progress, while limited, has been made in reducing poverty.

In terms of building human and institutional capacities is paramount to the development of LDCs; achievements include:

1. A positive sign in this regard is the progress made towards universal primary education. Some countries have achieved gender parity in primary education; in a few cases, there are now more girls than boys in primary school.
2. On the health front, progress in reducing mortality among infants and children under 5 years of age has been mixed, ranging from substantial improvements in a few countries to marked deterioration in others. In sub-Saharan Africa, the proportion of children between the ages of 12 months and 23 months vaccinated against measles, a simple proven means of reducing childhood deaths, rose from 55 percent in 2000 to 72 percent in 2006.
3. There has been some, but not universal, progress made in reducing HIV infections in many of the LDCs. With substantial international support, many of the LDCs have been able to increase significantly the number of people receiving antiretroviral therapy

On the subject of building productive capacities:

1. Since 2000, most of the LDCs have continued their broad economic reforms and have taken a variety of steps to increase domestic and foreign investment, including the provision of incentives to domestic and foreign investors.

2. Reform by the LDCs has contributed to substantial and widespread progress in raising their investment rates.
3. The ratio of gross fixed capital formation to GDP for the group as a whole rose from 16 percent in 2000 to exceed the Brussels Programme target of 25 percent by two percentage points in 2007. Part of the increase in the investment rate is attributable to FDI in the LDCs, which increased by 150 percent between 2000 and 2007. Although concentrated in resource-rich countries, almost all of the least developed countries have succeeded in attracting increased FDI in recent years.

Greater emphasis is needed on increased investments related to the development of productive capacities, namely productive resources, entrepreneurial capabilities and production linkages in LDCs in 2011 and beyond. To this end, support should also be geared towards investing in

1. Technical and vocational training, secondary and tertiary education, research and development and extension schemes;
2. The development of effective business support institutions and banks;
3. Investment in physical infrastructure should go beyond current efforts to close the digital divide; it must also include investments in electricity grids and transport networks.
4. Inflows of remittances from migrant workers from the least developed countries living and working in other countries have become an important source of development finance for their home countries and of general income for their families.
5. Enhanced trading opportunities

Still the speaker noted that it is clear that the goals and targets of the programme are elusive as the number of people living in extreme poverty is forecast to grow from 100 million to 370 million in the next decade. This compounded by a triple 'food, fuel and financial' crisis threatens global food and nutrition security. As such Food security will remain to be an important agenda for LDCs. In the regard, a High-level Task Force on the Global Food Security Crisis, comprising members of the United Nations system, the Bretton Woods institutions and other relevant organizations was established in 2008. the Task Force identified options for tackling all aspects of food security, including food aid and nutrition, smallholder farming and agriculture, local and regional food markets and global trade.

In addition, FAO launched the Initiative on Soaring Food Prices with the immediate aim of rapidly increasing food production during the 2008 and 2009 agricultural seasons, mainly by supporting direct access to inputs for smallholders. The recently approved EUR 1 billion EU Food Facility is a testament to the High Level Task Force capacity and commitment to this role.

With all the above in mind, the speaker urged that CS engagement to forge strong coalitions and alliances to bring the issues of the LDCs to the front and ended his address by wishing participants a productive meeting.

Professor Emmanuel Nnadozie welcomed participants to Addis Ababa Ethiopia on behalf of Mr. Abdoulie Janneh, the Executive Secretary of the UNECA. He focused on three issues namely 1) State of Play, 2) Suggestions for Way Forward and 3) Role of ECA and LDCs

On the issue of state of play, Professor Emmanuel stated that LDCs are not where they should be in terms of the broad and specific objectives set in the decade BPoA. If MDGs are used as a proxy significant growth has been recorded until the global financial crisis yet no real progress observed in poverty reduction, climate change and health related goals. He also stressed that very often the focus is on the quantity of growth as articulated in the BPoA goal of 7% and not quality of growth as evident in the level of poverty among LDCs. This begs the question why and goes to the second issue of suggestions for Way forward.

In terms of suggestions for the Way forward, Professor Emmanuel raised the following points:

1. Recognise the nexus between growth, employment (in terms of decent jobs) and poverty reduction which is not the present case
2. Ignite the critical drivers of high level sustained employment and job creating growth rather than focusing on export of natural resources subject to high volatility and not sustainable in the growth it generates.
3. In relation to the above, the need for policies that take into account of employment targeting and employment mainstreaming combined with inter-governmental coordination.
4. Employment friendly growth strategies that are country-specific while considering regional opportunities.
5. Begin to capitalise on new job growth opportunities such as the Green road where the current climate crisis can be turned around into an employment generating opportunity.
6. Ensure that key stakeholders such as CSOs involve in this regard.

Since the inception of LDCs, 3 reviews have come up with the same results of no real progress in poverty reduction and that conditions have not improved as expected. As such 3 things need to be looked at:

1. **Accountability:** a need to look beyond monitoring and reporting failure and asking who is responsible. A good opportunity in this regard is the African Peer Review Meeting
2. **Implementation:** a multitude of policies exist but gaps in implementation are not well identified
3. **Stronger role and involvement of CS and private sector**

On the issue of ECA's role in LDCs, the speaker acknowledged and apologised that the UNECA's role had been limited despite its mandate to promote social and economic development in Africa and integration in the continent. However, he informed of a

renewed commitment through the creation of a new division on economic development and NEPAD with one out of four sections on MDGs and LDCs.

Professor Emmanuel finished his statement by asking participants to critically look at various issues and also discuss accountability aspects.

Comments, Q&A Session

Uganda Mrs. Jane S. Nalunga from SEATINI commented on the statement on the need for strong involvement of CS and private sector and that private sector needs to be distinguished between domestic and foreign private sectors.

Her comment was noted and agreed that there needs to be distinction between domestic and foreign private sector and that focus should be on strengthening the former. In this regard, LDC-IV will devote special attention to the private sector forum as well as a parallel event that will bring domestic and international private sectors together.

Zambia Mr. Simon Ngona from CUTS reiterated the statement on the state of play among LDCs despite many measures to address their special needs and the requirement for setting the agenda. He also reaffirmed the importance of linkages between growth, poverty reduction and employment and that their organisation also recognised such linkages owing to a project they are implementing focusing on trade, development and poverty reduction.

His comment was noted and was also recognised for raising the issue of trade in the above linkage

The Gambia Mr. Amadou Taal from Worldview asked about how the African Peer Review Mechanism (APRM) mentioned can work in order to bring about accountability at both government and CS levels when most countries are not committed to it.

His comment was agreed upon and that commitment to the APRM has not been to the expected level. However, progress has been made in about 29 countries that are using the mechanism. Countries have to undergo 5 levels:

1. Self-assessment
2. External review by a team led by an eminent person and a cross section of stakeholders to validate and/or further investigate.
3. Peer review among heads of state
4. Development of programme of action with a defined budget and delineated responsibilities
5. Follow-up to assess the extent of implementation of programmes of action

However more needs to be done to raise the commitment of governments and the UNECA raises the issue at very deliberation. In addition, the involvement of CSO will be key to advocate governments to take the mechanism on board.

Somalia Mr. Abdulkadir Khalif Yusuf, SOCDIA informed that the state minister for planning and International cooperation informed him of their recent registration in the UNOHRLLS programme in December 2009. He asked about how the UNOHRLLS sees the involvement of the Somali government so he can go back and push for their involvement.

In light of the special case of Somalia the issues will be looked into in order to enhance the involvement of the government in the LDCs. UNOHRLLS assists LDCs to develop their national programmes of action by to address 2 main issues:

1. Taking stock of progress and achievements at national level and
2. Identifying constraints and what needs to be done to overcome them

OHRLLS is making contributions in accountability and greater engagement of government and CS by adopting a bottom-up approach to the preparatory process leading up to LDC-IV from country to regional and global levels. Country reports are used as basis for regional reviews including outcome document from this CSO assembly. To this end very important discussion that have been raised so far in the current assembly such as debt moratorium, non reciprocal access to markets need to be included and stressed on in the outcome document.

Burkina Faso **Mr. Moses Kambou ORCADE agreed with statement on state of play among LDCs but the main reason base on experience in Burundi is the lack of good political and economic governance as aid inflows to the country are not being used for their intended purpose. So this is an area that needs focus.**

His comment was agreed upon and that the APRM is a good strategy that needs to be given the benefit of the doubt albeit its weaknesses in order to bring about good political and economic governance.

DRC **Mr. Danny commented the statement on moratorium on debt and that it should be unconditional relief of debt. He also asked what was meant in terms of market access and whether it is non-reciprocal or preferential like Goa and its weaknesses. The other questions were on what actions the UNECA has taken amidst the involvement of CS in programmes like the BPOA and whether the UNECA has decentralised representation in other African countries**

On the issue of debt moratorium, LDC watch supports the UNCTAD's call but beyond it LDC strongly believes and calls for unconditional debt cancellation for LDCs. In terms of market access, in accordance with the BPoA LDC Watch calls for non-reciprocal access to market access but that under current conditions this should be accelerated in order for LDCs to export their goods in countries like the US and in Europe.

Further, the ECA is engaged in a lot of research and policy analysis and has done assessments on for instance the impact of EPAs on integrate and trade which was shared to all countries. Also the ECA provides advisory service to governments on how to address EPAs and raised main concerns to heads of State at the AU summit. In addition the commission organised annual reviews of the BPoA which are more regional and should ideally be based on country reports but is not always the case. The organisation of a CSO assembly such as this one is also a good start.

Central African Republic **Mr. Siribi had similar question as his Somali counterpart about the involvement of UNOHRLLS and the government on LDCs. His second question was on what role the UNECA assumes in relation to CS participation.**

The answer to his is query on the involvement of UNOHRLLS was the same as the one given to his counterpart from Somalia.

Mr. Jalal Abdulatif from the governance and public administration division of the ECA responded that many measures are in place to ensure that opportunity and space is available for African CSOs in all deliberations and that the role of ECA in relation to CS and APRM will be further discussed during a presentation planned for the next day of the assembly.

Guinea Mr. Seck asked whether domestic priorities of African countries are considered in the country programmes of action of the ECA and UN or if they are parachuted and thus account for the failure of different paradigms as evidenced by the increase in the number of LDCs

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2.2.Presentation: *The Brussels Programme of Action (2001-2010)* by Adrian Gauci, Economic Affairs Officer, EDND

This session was chaired by Dr. Arjun Karki from LDC Watch.

Dr. Adrian Gauci from the UNECA's Economic Development and NEPAD division gave an overview about the BPoA, its achievements, challenges as well as lessons learnt in the implementation. He started the presentation by indicating a UN definition of LDCs characterises LDCs as having structural handicaps to economic growth and that this definition needs to be distinguished from World Bank and OECD. He also informed that the presentation findings were compiled from the country reports received from 14 African of the 33 LDCs with the support of the UNDP. In addition, he described the BPoA as large programme that requires regular follow-up of implementation as it articulates 7 commitments, 30 goals and 63 Indicators.

Overall, LDCs reached the 7% growth rate due to global commodity boom in 2004-2008 which also implies that the growth rate was dependant on international commodity prices such as oil, minerals, etc. A huge drop was noticed in 2008 in the prediction that there will be modest growth without reaching the 7% target for another several years. African countries above the 7% target are still exposed to the vulnerability of the global market as countries have a problem planning ahead when they are dependent on the international market. In terms of the capital formation goal of 25% none of the sub-regions had reached it, however noticeable increases are observed in all sub-regions from 2001-2010 with East Africa recording the highest at 17% followed by West Africa at 11.7% by2010.

Yet economic growth has not had commensurate gains in poverty reduction due to a dependence on commodity being produced and exported with little linkages between trade and the rest of the economy like employment. The case of Angola is an example where gains in oil export do not translate in growth in employment and poverty reduction. As a result large size of African LDCs population becomes excluded from development.

In terms of governance, the 2009 African governance report shows that political governance has improved as evidenced by the number of countries with multi-party system, contested elections, however constitutionalism is not embedded in society and public service delivery is not efficient enough that people perceive it to be useful for building their human assets.

In terms of human capital, improvements are noted in primary education with enrolment reaching 70% from 51% which marks a 20% increase from 2001-2010; completion rates remaining at 60% despite increase in primary enrolment but with significant improvement in gender parity. In regards to HIV&AIDs 20% increase in ART coverage and thus mortality rates stabilised. A study on equity of Provision of Basic Services (PBS) was conducted by the UNECA among 11 LDCs. An example from Zambia on provision of sanitation was presented.

Still inequity in access to public services show limited improvements in health indicators and goals and overall limited progress in access to water and sanitation especially in rural areas. When basic services are provided through government and donor support then progress in access is fast, inequity is more apparent in services like health where LDCs citizens have to pay or share the cost from their household income.

Selected trends also show that African LDCs are integrated in the world market but totally depend on it since there is limited diversification within the export sector itself. In 2001, primary commodities were at 52% of LDCs export but reached 92% in 2010. Other constraints to diversification include supply side constraints such as inadequate infrastructure, low skilled workforce and small economies. External constraints such as accessing markets in developed countries, limited intra-regional trade and malfunction of trade initiatives were also mentioned. In addition, while ODA flows have increased in volume they have neither reached their targets of 0.2% GNI commitment nor do they focus on diversification and productive capacity development. Rather, ODA flows are channelled towards debt relief and emergency and welfare services.

Despite the above some important lessons, opportunities and recommendations can be drawn. The importance of modernisation of agricultural sector is of paramount importance and there are interesting initiatives like the Comprehensive Agricultural Accelerated Programme where each country has to set 10% of their budget towards agricultural modernisation. Also, under the framework of the South-South cooperation, opportunities exist in regional integration where economies of scale can be reached given that LDC are small economies and growth corridors are gaining momentum. To this end, support should also be given for LDCs in trade negotiation in for instance WTO enhanced trade framework. Further it was noted that LDCs action plans need stronger political commitment and similar to MDGs require being anchored in national poverty reduction strategies and development plans in order to be successful. Also similar to

MDGs, LDCs plans of action should be needs based and so does their budget allocation thereof.

Comments, Q&A Session

- DRC** Mr. Danny B. Singoma OF PRODDDES wanted clarification whether DRC's plan to privatise all basic service provision will work in light of the presentation that showed that inequity exists in basic services that require citizens to pay from their household income? In addition, he asked if China should be considered as a threat or an opportunity to LDCs and commented that exports are led mainly by European Multi-Nationals Companies (MNCs) that are reaping the benefits instead of the host country. He also asked whether there are African LDCs that graduated from being LDCs.
- Benin** Mr. Hyppolyte Falade of GRAPAD commented that there is progress in the BPoA but wanted to know with the advent of the global financial crisis, if all goals can be reached by 2015.
- Guinea** Mr. Ibrahima Seck from CECIDE queried on why funding for PBS among donors themselves is not equitable as there is always one service that is funded at the expense of another.
- Niger** Mr. Hassane Boukar wanted to know why the presenter only focused on inequity in health and that this can apply to other services like education
- Uganda** Mrs. Jane S. Nalunga commented on the need to review underlying neo-liberal policies that focus on export of raw materials and not allowing value-adding diversification in Africa. Diversification has meant thus far growing only cotton and vanilla i.e. raw materials. Institutions such as the EU with its EPA's, IMF and WTO undermine South-South cooperation as they impose conditionalities that limit value addition.
- Zambia** Mr. Simon Ngona commented that non-tariff trade barriers were not discussed in the presentation of non-reciprocal access to market
Mr. Themba Linden from Green Peace Africa raised the issue that financial commitments on climate change accruing from Copenhagen like 30 Billion in the next years and 100 billion by 2020 should be allocated to LDCs. He also wanted to comment that there are diverse sources of funding including public spending as well as alternative sources like Tobin Tax and levies on airline that need to be factored in MDGs and targets of the BPoA which has not been the case especially when climate rise to 0.7 degrees. He also asked where adaptation and adaptation funding fits in all of this.
- Lesotho** Mr. Lehlohonolo Chefa from CPA informed that political commitment in Lesotho deliberately ignored support from south Africa in the South-south cooperation and favoured western partners. In addition there is no donor harmonisation as each country comes with their own agenda which is difficult for government to accommodate as such there is a need to have one overall programme that all donors can support in a coordinated manner.

In the absence of time the presenter focused on 4 themes:

1. When end-user of a public service has to spend money to access it, the progress towards that service decreases. Another important variable in addition to income in PBS is whether the person lives in urban or rural area in which the latter are showing progress.
2. On the issue of financial crisis, research conducted by the ECA, AU and African Development Bank (AfDB) found that African LDC have shown resilience to the global financial crisis when compared to previous crises and some LDCs like Tanzania and Uganda have increased their allocation to infrastructure development by 20%.
3. On the issue of diversification, it was added that even in terms of even agriculture sector itself there is opportunity for value adding as in the case of Ethiopia that has started Cut-flower and glasshouse production.
4. Commitments towards climate change will be more operational in 2010 in MDGs review and figures have been circulating. However, it is important to note that in order to effectively address climate change issues and need for budgets has to aligned with national priorities.

2.3. Thematic Session 1 – A Review of the of the Brussels Programme of Action (BPoA) and the Millenium Development Goals (MDGs) by Amadou S.O. Taal

This session was chaired by Mrs. Jane S. Nalunga from SEATINI Uganda.

Following an overview of the BPoA and MDGs, Dr. Amadou Taal from Worldview, The Gambia highlighted achievements and challenges in implementation of both programmes.

In the MDGs the following figures show the status of implementation (Source: UN MDG Report, 2009)

Goal 1 – Eradicate Extreme Poverty & Hunger.

Proportion of people living on less than \$1.25 a day – 1999 and 2005



- the number of hungry people in the world keeps on rising to over 1 billion and there are no immediate signs of a reversal of this trend
- the indications are that hunger is on the increase in Africa because of rising food and energy prices and extreme climate vulnerability
- The world is still faced with an economic and financial crisis and a delicate climate condition which could further exacerbate the plight of poor people in the LDC

Goal 2 – Universal Primary Education

Sub-Saharan Africa Enrollment ratio in primary education



Goal 3 - Promote Gender Equality and Empower Women

Girls' primary school enrollment in relation to boys (girls per 100 boys)



Goal 4 – Reduce Child Mortality

Under-five mortality rate per 1,000 live births Sub-Saharan Africa



Goal 5 – Improve Maternal Health

Maternal deaths per 100,000 live births 1990 and 2005



Goal 6 – Combat HIV/AIDS, malaria and other diseases

Sub-Saharan Africa shows a dramatic rise in the use of bed nets to protect children from malaria

Proportion of children under five sleeping under bed nets

The Gambia



Goal 7 – Ensure Environmental Sustainability

Proportion of urban population living in slums in Sub-Saharan Africa



- Access to safe drinking water is slow in most parts of Africa although some countries have registered some progress.
- It is estimated that some 3% of the forest cover has been lost, exposing the continent to a greater environmental vulnerability
- An assessment of the implementation of the MDGs in Africa has given mixed results in most of the targets

In addition, implementation of the Goal 8 that is developing a global partnership for development is difficult to assess especially in light of recession in developed countries. Also ODA flows in Africa have increased over the past decade mainly in debt relief but with differences in actual disbursement. Yet some progress has been registered in Goal 2, achieving universal primary education (although it is expected that the pace is too slow to meet the 2015 target), Goal 4, reduce child mortality, and Goal 6, combating HIV/AIDS, malaria and other diseases.

The BPoA similar to the MDGs has recorded progress country-wise and at continent level in the different commitments:

- Mozambique is being praised for pursuing a pro-poor economic growth,
- Uganda is seen as an example of good governance/accountability which is debatable and has succeeded in reducing HIV/AIDS infection rate from 18% to 7% in 2005
- Both Niger and Eritrea have made remarkable progress in reducing deaths from malaria.
- Benin and Mali have registered success in primary education and reducing maternal mortality respectively.
- In the area of reducing vulnerability and protecting the environment, both Mozambique and Tanzania have made remarkable progress in protecting the environment and reducing risks facing households and communities

Still the majority of the countries have not seen noticeable progress in the implementation of the BPoA, especially with reference to Commitments on building productive capacities to make globalization work for LDCs, enhancing the role of trade in development, and mobilizing financial resources. The challenges include:

- weak governance system, weak human and institutional capacities
- the persistence of killer diseases such as HIV/AIDS, malaria and TB
- vulnerability to environmental shocks and
- the lack of access to financial resources
- that only governments can reach the scale necessary to provide universal access to services that are free or heavily subsidized for the poor and geared to the needs of all citizens, including women, minorities and the very poorest.
- the greatest challenge facing LDCs is the struggle to establish food security/sovereignty in face of the present financial and economic crisis. Food prices have been rising over the past three years. In fact, the prevalence of hunger in the LDCs is now on the rise, from 16% in 2006 to 17% in 2008.
- Tightness in Aid as donor countries have failed to meet their commitments of 0.15% to 0.20% in light of the present economic and financial crisis as well concerns over aid effectiveness
- The climate challenge which could be properly handled by LDCs to develop more efficient green technologies in order to contribute to sustainable development.
- African LDCs are the countries furthest away from reaching the MDGs by 2015 since their share of world trade is less than half percent. With the Doha Round still crawling at a snail pace and the ACP-EU negotiations of the Economic Partnership Agreements facing strong obstacles

Role of CSOs

It was noted that African CSOs have been actively involved in formulation, implementation and monitoring of policies and programmes financed by their respective countries. Already they have been actively involved in the development of Poverty Reduction Strategy Papers, supporting their governments in the Doha round negotiations on trade, economic partnerships between ACPs and EPAs. However, their involvement has remained minimal in mobilizing financial resources due to their

limited contact with financial institutions such as the World Bank, AfDB and IMF that have direct influence over poverty reduction programmes.

In conclusion the following recommendations were forwarded for both governments of LDCs and donor groups:

1. LDC governments with support from donor partners, increase their focus on improving their productive capacity by investing in physical infrastructure and by supporting basic education, specialized training, nutrition and health care services that can develop a productive workforce
2. In relation the above, a strong south-south cooperation as envisaged in the BPoA and also the careful use of foreign direct investment (FDI) by LDCs to complement their domestic investment.
3. LDCs and the donor community must work harmoniously in this great endeavor to save mankind and the environment
4. LDC governments must adopt pro-poor policies and good governance systems so that development aid could be made effective
5. the donor community must honour their commitments made in the Monterey Consensus
6. must also make trade fair and equitable so that LDCs can benefit from their exports
7. Need for an immediate and unconditional cancellation of all LDC debts or over \$1billion
8. In light of Copenhagen Summit, LDCs must be prepared to give greater focus in addressing climate change
9. Both LDCs and donors must evolve a global development paradigm that would be people-oriented and not profit-oriented

Comments, Q&A Session

Lesotho Mr. Lehlohonolo Chefa commented while provision of basic services such as primary education and health is being heavily promoted, quality of services has deteriorated as the increase in demand was not met with proper infrastructure to fully meet them. He reiterated the need for South South cooperation as shown in the presentation with the case of Mozambique showing progress through support from South Africa. The issue quantity Vs. Quality was also raised by 2 other participants. In relation to this another participant also commented that real needs need to be considered in the promotion and availing of basic services.

Liberia Mrs. Caroline Bowah from FOHARD queried whether holding elections has become an over-indicator for good governance as the case for Uganda.

Zambia Mr. Simon Ngona indicate the need for a feedback platform between CS and government following consultation on for instance trade as was the case for a project on Fostering Equity and Accountability in Trading Systems (FETS). Consultations exist but it not clear whether the views are included or not which leads to frustration among CS and such challenges need to be considered.

- Guinea** Mr. Ibrahima Seck shared findings from research for 2005-2007 that share of Africa FDI has not even reached 3% while IDE share is 36% and asked how this can be linked to the BPoA. He also asked how diplomatic isolation can be reduced on CSOs in cases where there is instability and CSOs are also responsible for implementing the BPoA. Another participant also raised concerns over that CS is less informed and isolated.
- Niger** Mrs. Fatchima Noura also commented that with Agra that that profiles itself at the African ports that food sovereignty can be achieved. Mr. Themba Linden informed that Adaption has a huge budget allocated that could dwarf ODA and as such urged that African CS should push for inclusion of LDCs on the debate of adaptation and mitigation so that they can access the money and how it is spent.
- Benin** Mr. Hippolyte Falade stressed that LDCS should base their measures on indicators that reflect their reality. The presenter reiterated the need to work closely with government and show the importance of quality and that in due course of the assembly viable strategies son how CS can contribute and engage in the country development programmes will come out.

2.4. Thematic Session 2 – *The Financial Crisis and its Impact on African Least Developed Countries* by Demba M. Dembele

This session was chaired by Caroline Bowah from FOHRD, Liberia.

Mr. Demba M. Dembele from ARCADE, Senegal and chair of LDC Watch kicked off the session by underlining the identifying the root causes of the crisis, its impact and the way out for African LDCs.

The financial crisis is rooted in:

- The subprime debacle was only a symptom of a profound crisis already in the making
- The huge sums that circulate daily on foreign exchange markets far outpace the flows of real goods and services.
- The derivatives market alone experienced an exponential growth, fueled by lax monetary policies and deregulation in the United States and in Europe to a lesser extent. It is estimated that over 90% of the daily flows on the foreign exchange market is not linked to real production and circulation of goods and services.
- The derivatives market essentially means making money out of money! The derivatives market accounts for 78% of the liquidity circulating in the world and it is almost 10 (9.64) times the size of the world gross domestic product (GDP)
- The rise of the derivatives market is also linked to the blind faith in the power of markets to “self-regulate”.
- the spate of deregulations and liberalization over the last two decades or so by which States lifted controls on capital flows and regulation on the activities of corporations, banks and financial markets.

The financial, economic and social impacts on African LDCs were presented:

Overall Impacts

- Since the early 1980's, using the external debt crisis, the IMF and World Bank have subjected most African LDCs to the brutal and devastating structural adjustment programs (SAPs). These programs made those countries weaker and more vulnerable to external shocks by imposing neoliberal policies that left their economies at the mercy of financial speculators and powerful multinational corporations.
- States were deprived of resources through tight fiscal policies while State-owned enterprises were dismantled or privatized and the protection of the domestic market lifted which resulted in high unemployment rates and the explosion of poverty became the main features of African LDCs

Financial Impact

- Fall in export revenues, lower trade financing and investments and a contraction in development assistance and remittances. The United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD) has projected that developing countries may experience a shortfall of up to \$2 trillion and a drop of 30% in exports for some countries.
- there has been a steep decline in financial flows, as a result of lower export revenues; fall in remittances and official development assistance (ODA). Remittances from the African Diaspora were estimated at US\$27.8 billion for 2007 alone. Remittances represent 3.9% of GDP for North African countries and about 2% for the rest of the continent
- Even the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) predicts a sharp drop in FDIs toward developing countries. the continent received close to \$35 billion in foreign direct investments (FDIs) in 2007 and about \$16 billion in portfolio flows.
- According to the Development Assistance Committee (DAC), the 2005 pledge to bring aid levels to \$48 billion next year will fall short by \$21 billion. In other words, only 56.3% of the original amount pledged will be delivered. As for African LDCs, they are likely to get only...\$12 billion out of the \$25 billion promised in Gleneagles, that is less than half of the promise

Economic Impact

- the recession in developed countries and lower growth in countries like China and India resulted in a sharp fall in demand for African exports, especially for commodities.
- The average growth of the continent in 2009 was estimated at 1.7%, compared to the earlier projection of 5.9% before the crisis, which was consistent with the average annual growth recorded between 2002 and 2008
- The foregoing analysis is consistent with projections by UNCTAD, according to which developing countries will experience declines in export of 7-9% in 2009, while exports from least developed countries (LDCs) may drop between 9 and 16%.

Social Impact

- The financial crisis will further lead to the deterioration of the public sector for lack of adequate public investments and the aggravation in working conditions

- This will increase the marginalization of women and other vulnerable segments as a result of restricted access to public services, such as health care; education; public transport, etc
- Civil strife is likely to increase in tandem with strikes and other forms of discontent as a result of higher unemployment, rising food prices and worsening living conditions.
- The African Development Bank (AfDB) projects a 10% increase in unemployment in 2009.
- the risk of increase in inequalities and discrimination
- Women workers in developing countries were particularly vulnerable in such sectors as apparel, agriculture and tourism, where they predominate.

THE WAY OUT: DARING TO EXPLORE ALTERNATIVES

The food and financial crises and their impact are one more illustration of the high economic, financial and social costs of neoliberal policies imposed on African countries for nearly 30 years by the IMF and the World Bank. Therefore, African LDCs should use the current global crisis of the neoliberal paradigm as an opportunity to challenge and break with those failed and discredited policies and regain control over the design and implementation of their own policies. They must reassess and reverse privatization, trade liberalization; unfettered capital flows and deregulation of internal markets.

The presenter suggested the following recommendations:

Medium-Short-term Measures

- Moratorium on debt as proposed by UNCTAD Secretary General in April 2009 followed by the unconditional cancellation of all African LDCs' illegitimate debt and the establishment of a responsible, democratic and fair system of sovereign financing to serve sustainable and equitable development
- African LDCs need stimulus packages that could stimulate public spending, enhance production-and promote technological upgrading
- Public investment should also play a vital role. This requires that African countries recover and preserve the policy space lost to the IFIs since the early 1980s in order to address their financial problems, with a central role for the State.
- Still in the short term, Special Drawing Rights (SDRs) allocation by the IMF should be based on needs, not on quotas, in order to be of greater benefit to LDCs. Otherwise, they would only get a tiny fraction (\$17 billion, of which \$10 billion for Africa) of the \$250 billion allocations promised by the Fund. In addition, the costs to all LDCs should be lowered.
- Furthermore, all financial flows from the IMF, the World Bank and the G8 in response to the food, energy and financial crises should be provided unconditionally as grants, not new loans as Africa is an innocent victim in the crisis
- Western countries should make good on their commitments made in the Accra Agenda of Action on "aid effectiveness".

- the United Nations should explore more innovative sources of financing to channel to LDCs. Financial transaction tax (Tobin tax); carbon and pollution tax; levies on airline tickets and on kerosene, among others, can provide substantial resources. Levies on currency transactions alone have the potential of raising \$33 billion annually.

Reverse Neo-liberal Policies

- On trade, African LDCs must strongly resist any form of “free trade” agreement, such as the EPAs in their current form, which will only worsen their situation. African LDCs should join LDCs in other regions to call for international agreements on commodity prices that would stabilize price fluctuations and mitigate their trade losses
- African LDCs should strive to diversify their exports, along with enhanced domestic productive capacity and a better balance between export-led growth and domestic or regional demand-led growth
- African LDCs should evoke the commitments of the Brussels Program of Action (BPoA) to demand improved market access, including through South–South economic cooperation, and particularly increased non-reciprocal preferential market access to Western countries
- The European Union should remove all remaining non-tariff barriers that prevent a greater access to European markets within the framework of “Everything but Arms” (EBA) policy.
- On agriculture, African LDCs must put an end to liberalization and provide government support for small-scale and family agriculture, which is the key to achieving the goal of food sovereignty
- Domestic markets must be protected against the subsidized agricultural products of Western countries. Move to a better and more effective coordination in production and consumption at the sub-regional level.

Strengthen African Integration and Cooperation

- This is the message coming from the African Development Bank, which said that *“In the short run, recovery in Africa will depend on domestic drivers of growth. The continent needs to boost domestic resource mobilization to support growth and investment.”*
- African institutions, namely the AfDB, the Economic Commission for Africa (ECA) and the African Union Commission, should strengthen their cooperation and help drive the process of integration and cooperation both at the sub-regional and continental levels.

Strengthen South-South Cooperation

- Diversification of partners

- Not only should African LDCs strengthen economic, financial and technological links with Asia but also foster political cooperation in order to improve their chances in international negotiations.
- African LDCs should strengthen their solidarity with Asia/Pacific LDCs in order to have a stronger collective voice at the United Nations, with developed countries and international financial institutions
- Lessons can be learnt from Latin America Experience. Important developments are taking place in that part of the world that Africa should learn from. The Bolivarian Alternative of the Americas (ALBA) and the South Bank are initiatives to which Africa should pay close attention.

Financing for Development

- African countries, including LDCs, should pay more attention to measures aimed at mobilizing more effectively domestic resources through progressive fiscal and monetary policies through rethinking the role of the State as agent of development
- Improving domestic resource mobilization implies imposing capital controls to limit tax evasions and capital flight; limiting tax exemptions for corporations and shutting down tax loopholes to limit the siphoning of domestic savings; enforcing more effectively income taxation on foreign investors
- More resources should be raised on corporate income and higher taxation should be applied to high-income groups. In contrast, indirect taxes, such as value-added tax (VAT), which penalize low-income groups, should be curtailed
- Tax evasions, capital flight and transfer pricing have deprived African countries of billions of dollars that should be returned to serve the continent's development
- In 2005, the Commission for Africa, put together by then British Prime Minister Tony Blair, issued a report in which it recognized the complicity of the Western financial system in the transfer of illegal wealth from Africa to the North. The Commission estimated that wealth at least half of the continent's external debt, that is, hundreds of billions of dollars.

Comments, Q&A Session

- Togo** Mr. Edu Koku Raven from FONGTO/APED asked about who decided that LDCs be labelled so and according to which criteria. He added that the recommendation of paradigm might comfort the behaviour of leaders of LDCs that do not have the will to accept political and economic governance. He highlighted that Togo is regressing on all sectors like Health, education, etc. He also feared that changing paradigms justifies the existence of BWIs and donors and so focus should be given to coming up with African solutions.
- Burundi** Mr. Léon Ndikunkiko from ADISCO wanted clarification on whether in the presentation it was meant that African LDCs were less hit by the

financial crisis apart from remittances and delays in FDI as compared to more stable African economies like Morocco and Nigeria. A similar question was asked by another participant who highlighted that LDCs also export raw materials like those countries that produce oil and minerals and so should also be vulnerable to the crisis. He also stressed that African CS has not done its part on African solutions and so need to be well organised in order to optimise on the available resources instead of putting the blame on developed countries and institutions.

South Africa Mr. Themba Linden noted that Africa had a growth of 4.8% in 2009, 300 Million people in the middle class and 12 African countries that have higher GDP than China. Trade is occurring, money is coming in and growth is happening but the main issue is why it is not filtering to the poorest and vulnerable segment and supporting the provision of social services as inequality persists. The other comment was there is a need for paradigm shift as the presenter stated but asked about what alternative model is available and how African civil society can contribute with due consideration of timeframe, milestones and technical capacity to compete or stand up to BWIs. Another participant also asked what kind of paradigm can be adopted and whether there is a chance for a win-win partnership.

Lesotho Mr. Lehlohonolo Chefa shared his experience on ANSA where in the Southern region CS have started to make in-roads to political leaders and some leaders have already started to talk about the developmental state and it behoves CS to avail data so CS and government start to speak the same language. He also recommended that such initiatives should be shared as best practise in the rest of the continent.

The Gambia Mr. Amadou Taal underlined that there is a need for good governance, accountability and the African Peer Review Mechanism need to be woven together so that Africa can stand on its two feet. He also added CS are emerging but no to the level to that they can strongly influence heads of states especially in the light of the fact that the AU make statements that are not always translated into action.

LDCs came to be created or formed as a result of the BWIs conception of what development is and mainly based on economic growth which focuses on quantity and not quality. The UNDP once had non-economic indicators but this was not followed through.

Exports in Africa is not diversified but only issues of economic to growth are focused on. Both African LDCs government and BWIs need to be held responsible however the influence exerted on LDCs by the latter cannot be denied. And also the fact that not all cards are not in the table of leaders should be considered and thus more fault should lie on BWIs.

Alternative models already exist within the continent crafted through vast amount of research by well established African research institutions such as CODSREA which are neglected by African leaders who prefer advisory service from BWIs.

In terms of mobilising domestic resources, research in 2008 by Christian Aid show that Africa incurs USD 160 Billion loss for not enforcing commitment made by international investors.

2.5. Thematic Session 3 – Food Crisis, Livelihoods & Impact of Climate Change in African LDCs by Azeb Girmai

This session was chaired by Mr. Abdulkader Khalifa Yusuf from SOCDA, Somalia.

Mrs. Azeb Girmai from ENDA-Ethiopia made spate presentation on Food crisis, livelihoods on the one hand and Impact of climate change in African LDCs on the other.

There has been an evident decrease in agricultural produce in recent years and thus steady rise in food prices. There are two main reasons for this:

- Long term neglect of the agricultural sector by many developing countries, particularly African LDCs where the share for agriculture dropped in overall national budgets as well as development cooperation policies from 18% in 1980 to 4% in 2007.
 - Agricultural sector seen as unprofitable in the majority of LDCs. Govt. import cheap subsidised foodstuffs from global markets or receive it as Food Aid. Recent data for 2006 show that, on average, 20 per cent of the LDC's food consumption is imported, and in some countries the share is much higher (in Lesotho 67%, Gambia 82%, Mauritania 32%, Malawi 31%). (UNCTDA, Addressing the global food crisis, 2008)
 - The structural adjustment plans of the 1980s in the developing countries that led to decreased public and private agricultural investments, under-investment in the agricultural infrastructure, removal of state subsidy to agricultural inputs (seed, fertilizer, pesticide, herbicides etc.) and imposition of free trade agreements – where poor countries made to dismantle tariffs and other barriers to trade, enabling large agribusiness and subsidized goods from rich countries therefore undermining local agricultural production, particularly for local food demands
 - Decrease in Aid, ODA & FDI for agriculture in developing countries. Between 1980 and 2002: Multilateral institutions cut ODA spending on agriculture from US\$ 3.4 billion to US\$ 0.5 billion (a decrease of 85%), bilateral donors reduced spending from US\$ 2.8 billion to US\$ 1.7 billion (a decline of 39%) and decrease in investment for Agricultural Research, Science & Technology; innovation accompanied by percentage of FDI that goes to Agriculture decreased. (UNCTAD, Addressing the Global Food Crisis from World Investment Report, 2009).
- Challenges from years of **poor land and environmental management** threatening productivity/food security/livelihood of many LDC countries, has been aggravated even more by **climate change induced** already manifesting **drought and floods** due to the variability of rainfall and temperature.

The impacts of the above have translated into the following:

Moreover, alarming humanitarian, socio-economic, developmental, political and security-related challenges in the world, particularly in the LDCs in Africa are observed such as:

- Undermining one of the most fundamental human rights - **the right to be free from hunger and malnutrition,**
- **Reverse gains in many poverty reduction achievements (MDG, Goal 1)**
- **Undermine** broader efforts to promote **gender equality** and its related benefits in terms of education, health, and long-term economic productivity – thus reversing efforts to attain another Millennium Development Goals, namely **MDG, Goal 3**
- **Reduced availability or affordability of food compromising health, education, maternal well-being** and many other social indicators, as well as the capacity to earn a living- stringent **strains** on **household income - already 50 -80% spent on food in LDCs (FAO)**
- **Increasing in total cereal import bills of food importing African LDCs** - thus, reducing government funds to provide subsidies or emergency feeding programmes.
- **Additional severe localized insecurity** due to the influx of refugees, a concentration of internally displaced persons, or areas with combinations of crop failure and deep poverty (FAO/GIEWS 2008)

Examples of measures taken by African LDCs governments to reduce prices for basic foods depending on local circumstances and resources include:

- **Senegal** – which relies on food imports – government announced subsidies of 40% on wheat flour; suspended food tariffs and imposed some price controls.
- **Liberia & Cote d'Ivoire** - have also waived duties on imported staples
- **Ethiopia** – suspended value-added tax on grain and flour, new subsidies for wheat and the continuation of emergency rations to 800,000 people in the cities.
- **Tanzania** – lifted duties on an additional 300,000 tonnes of maize imports and has banned food exports.
- **Malawi** – disregarding donors advice doubled the country's maize harvest with a \$60mn fertilizer & seeds subsidy programme for smallholders in 2006 and erected 600 improved maize storage silos. This had a dramatic impact – maize harvest doubled in 2007 2.7mn, & 3.4mn in 2008. enough to feed the nation and sell 400,000 tonnes to the WFP. (Countries e.g. Zambia, Ghana, Senegal & Kenya planed to follow suit)

In addition to the above measures recent attitude of African leaders to reverse the impact of the food crisis have arisen:

- NEPAD's initiative in 2003 – Comprehensive African Agriculture Development (CAADP) Programme that requires governments to devote 10% of national budget for agriculture – seeks to increase farm production

in an environmentally sustainable manner so as to boost food security, provide more raw materials for African industries and raise rural income (*so far only 8 countries signed - still much to do*)

- A new consensus is forming around the need to sustain agriculture,
 - new re-investments in the public and rural sectors, private investment interest in agriculture encouraging (however alarming land grabbing frenzy!!)
 - real consciousness of the danger linked to dependence on imports to guarantee food security
- FAO piloting support for farmers in input, improved seed & farm implement of \$17mn intended to cover 40 African countries
- ADB, often critical of state intervention, announced in May 2008 a \$1bn in farm lending portfolio. (UN African Renewal, 2008)
- The threat of climate change is being taken seriously

Mrs. Azeb also presented LDC Watch's Recommendations in response to the food crisis:

- "Safety net" programs encouraged to revert food insecurity and shocks – aiming at boosting peoples livelihoods through income generating activities to enhance assets
- Take the opportunity offered by higher food prices for reinvesting in agriculture
- Support smallholder farmers, specially poor farmers
 - to ensure their dignified access to land, water resources, credit and essential inputs (seed, fertilizers);
 - Enhance their productivity through investment in agricultural research, extension, and training
- Policies aiming at stimulating foreign and domestic labor intensive investments
- LDCs uphold right to determine their production & consumption practices;
- Exemption of agriculture from global trade regimes

In terms of climate change and LDCs in Africa, the 4th Assessment Report of the IPCC published in 2007 indicated **Africa**, in particular SSA as **most vulnerable** because of **low adaptive capacity** and projected **changes in rainfall**, and most LDCs are located in the climate change sensitive regions.

Specifically,

- By 2020, between 75 and 250 million of people are projected to be exposed to increased water stress due to climate change
- By 2020, in some countries, yield from rain-fed agriculture could be reduced by up to 50%. Agriculture production including access to food, in many African countries is projected to be severely compromised. This would further adversely affect food security and exacerbate malnutrition
- Towards the end of 21st Century, projected sea-level rise will affect low-laying coastal areas with large populations. The cost of adaptation could amount at least 5 to 10% of Gross Domestic Product.

- By 2020, an increase of 5 to 8% of arid and semi arid land in Africa is projected under a range of climate scenario (Source LDC Watch Climate Change position paper. 2009)

In addition, the presenter highlighted the recent dynamics of climate change negotiation. The situation looks bleak for African LDCs as a result of distorted negotiations where both developed countries & advanced developing countries (China) try to avoid carbon emissions. Further, no concrete deal came out in Copenhagen but just “take note” of the agreement and lacking clarity on its implementation. This was due to the disparity in the G77 groups in terms of economic comparability, interests and priorities.

The Copenhagen Accord agrees in terms of:

- **Emissions**
 - 2 degree limit (but no individual emission cut targets for developed or advanced developing countries) considered dangerous or a “suicide pact”
- **Financial promises**
 - New and additional resources of up to \$30bn over the three years of 2010-12 with priority to LDCs, SIDS and Africa.
 - A goal of increasing finance to some \$100bn annually by 2020. However, it’s not clear where the money will be coming from

In this respect the AU estimated development costs of \$67bn annually by 2020 for adaptation and \$200bn a year to help them reduce emissions for clean energy & preserve their forests.

Mrs. Azeb finished her presentation by noting that Copenhagen for Africa did not bring about an equitable, legally binding agreement but that it was significant as African leaders took part in a coordinated manner, and should maintain and strengthen their unity to ensure climate justice for the continent.

Comments, Q&A Session

Burkina Faso Mr. Moses Kambou agreed with the point on land grabbing that does not benefit the domestic farmers but also added that internal conflicts are affecting agricultural production which has led to food insecurity and malnutrition. He stressed for the need to implement the Maputo declaration.

Benin Mr. Hyppolyte Falade commented on how type of food eating habits are changing as people are neglecting staple foods and relying more on imported foods. He also added that CS should voice what governments of LDCs cannot openly voice.

Zambia Mr. Simon Ngona appreciated the rights approach to food and reiterated that CS should take this up as most governments have ratified different conventions but also warned that rights to food has been misused by governments for political gains. He also asked how the measure of the government of Zambia to charge carbon emission tax is perceived as it has not separate account and goes directly to the state treasury.

Mr. Themba Linden answered that the carbon emission tax is

misplaced for Zambia. He underlined that mitigation should not be neglected by African LDCs. Important negotiating blocks have arisen such as the one with China, South Africa, Brazil and India which Africa will need to engage with. And alliances need to be created with AOSIS who have a similar negotiating power of LDCS but were the ones who put up the fight during Copenhagen. Further, he raised the need to breakdown the suspicion for media and CS in LDCS.

On land grabbing, the presenter shared the experience of Flower farms in Ethiopia that ignore the needs of farmers. More LDCs need to be pushed to sign the CAPEL. Focusing on adaptation gives leeway for developed countries to continue with carbon emissions. Putting a cap on emission is a human rights issue. In addition, LDCs were caught between the fight of the new negotiating block. Food sovereignty should be pushed by CS as a human rights issue.

Day 1 wrapped with the plenary deciding that a group of volunteers comprising Simon Agona, Mr. Bibi Diwara, Jane S. Nalunga, Caroline Bowah, Mr. Moses Kamousa, Demba Dembele (facilitator) and Eaman Mohamed (Rapporteur) will prepare a two-page outcome statement to represent the position of the assembly accompanied by one-page press statement. The outcome statement is to feed into the official regional review meeting.

3. Break-Out Session – CSO Participation in LDC IV and Beyond

3.1.Presentation – Strategic Preparations for the LDC IV by Arjun Karki

Dr. Arjun gave an overview of the preparatory process leading to LDC-IV and space for CSO engagement in preparations leading to the conference in 2011. The presentation then led to the break out session dividing participants into francophone and Anglophone to discuss on strategies to enhance national, regional and global participation and contribution of CSOs in the issue of LDCs and preparations leading up to LDC-IV; identify country-specific needs for technical and donor assistance, and suggest ways to enhance regional collaboration.

Following an overview of the BPoA, he discussed the modalities for LDC-IV which has the following twin objectives:

- Review of the implementation of the BPoA, and adoption of next generation LDC development agenda
- Opportunity for reflection on failure of BPoA to achieve sustained results intended

He also stressed that the Role of Civil Society is recognised in UN Resolution A/RES/63/277 which makes preparations for LDC-IV more unique and that partnerships across the board among the following actors will lead towards synergies and leverage towards the conference:

- UN-OHRLLS, UNCTAD, UNESCAP, UNECA, UN-NGLS, UN Millennium Campaign, CSO Division of UNDP and other relevant UN agencies
- Governments – LDCs, Development Partners, Host Country
- International, Regional and Global CSOs

- Present assembly participant organisations

The following pre-conference engagements were also highlighted:

- Continuation of national consultations on BPoA review throughout 2010
- Asia-Pacific LDC regional consultation, June 2010
- MDG Review Summit, September 2010
- Global CSO conference prior to LDC IV, early 2011
- Lobbying and advocacies G8, G20, G77+China, WB, IMF and RDBs
- Engagement/interventions at the official pre-conference events

In addition, to the above events the following table presents important national; regional and global events in which CS will be involved from 2009- 2011

| Time period | National activities | Regional activities | Global activities | Secretariat |
|---------------------------------|---|-------------------------|---|-------------------------|
| 2009 4 th Quarter | CSO engagement in preparation of national reports | | | |
| 2010 1 st Quarter | | Asia Regional meeting | 1 st meeting of CS | Secretariat established |
| 2 nd Quarter | | Africa Regional meeting | Starting CSO Global Review Report | |
| 3 rd Quarter | | | 2 nd meeting of CS | |
| 4 th Quarter | | | 1 st Prep Com 3 rd meeting of CS | |
| 2011 1 st Quarter | | | 2 nd Prep com 4 th meeting of CS | |
| 2 nd Quarter | | | 4 th LDC conference CS Forum | |
| 3 rd Quarter | | | | |

Participants were also informed that the CSO forum for LDC IV will play an important role during the conference and in preparatory process from participation in country and regional reviews as well as other events which will present good opportunities to showcase the value of CS contribution. LDC Watch has been mandated to lead the CS process by UN-OHRRLLS. The forum will have a steering committee comprising representatives from CS including the host country for LDC IV, Turkey.

The tentative programme for civil society in LDC IV was presented as follows:

- **Preparatory meetings**
 - Days 1-2: briefings, orientation, and discussion of CS strategies towards official conference
- **Formal opening of Civil Society Forum**
 - Evening before opening of official conference
 - Aim: to involve prominent actors from official conference and host country, in addition to the NGO/CSO reps
- **Plenary meetings**
 - 1-2 times per day during duration of Forum, focusing on specific topics relevant to official conference
- **Thematic seminars**
 - CSOs invited to organise own seminars and workshops on own issues
- **Dialogue with the official conference**
 - Regular meetings – dialogue between participants of official conference and LDC CSF
 - Opportunities for cross-briefings and issue-based dialogue
- **Press briefings**
 - Press conferences organised each day
 - Publicity on Forum activities and on CS participants' observations on Conference proceedings

- **Strategy meetings**

- Provision for 2 strategy meetings of CS reps each day

Dr. Arjun concluded his presentation by stressing the need for the assembly to strategically plan on the way forward for LDC-IV and beyond. He informed that LDC watch will provide guidance and technical support to this end and that participant organisation the assembly can register in LDC Watch network and that form was circulated to that end. The plenary was open for ideas and issues that need to be considered on the way forward.

Ethiopia Mr. Mizane Kristos from Greener Services commented that agenda setting during the MDGs and BPoA as well as other international agreements particularly in aid and trade negotiations should be geared towards innovative strategies and move away from their welfare focus

Uganda Mr. Jane S. Nalunga commented that LDCs were divided in themselves base don their own interests and priorities during WTO, SCPU lobbying. Thus BPoA needs to be mainstreamed in all negotiation platforms at national levels.

The Gambia Mr. Amadou Taal commented that at national levels awareness on BpoA should be raised that everyone is conversant of it like MDGs. The World Social Forum planned in Dakar will present a good opportunity for LDCs to form alliances. There is also a need to identify and work with institutions that are working on issues of alternative models of development.

Somalia The question of who focal points are and information about networks was raised by Mr Abdulkadir Yusuf

Dr. Arjun clarified that the list of government focal points is available on the OHRLLS website and usually it's the economic planning commissions that are FPs. He also informed that engagement of LDC Watch has been limited due to human resource problems but that countries need to take the initiative to start the political process and request for LDC Watch to be part of it. The idea that the Global committee can be held during Dakar was also suggested.

Participants were then divided into groups to discuss and deliberate on 3 points:

1. What strategies should be adopted at national, Africa regional and international levels for the engagement of CS in preparatory processes and beyond LDC-IV
2. What thematic areas need to be discussed pre and during LDC-IV
3. Suggestions how the CS forum should be organised in terms of methodology and content.

The following issues were raised by Mr. Themba who could not join group work.

1. He urged participants to be realistic on what can be done by LDCs based on existing capacities to take on the WTO and BWIs and to pick fights that can be won
2. He stressed on the importance of research in terms of power analysis and consider policy forums. WSF is a good network but not strong one at policy level.
3. Coordination among all CS
4. Messaging needs to be clear and based on aligned interests
5. Political interaction is important in order to have Politician's attention through campaigning and using a solution-based approach.

3.2.Group Deliberations

The Following is a summary of the groups deliberation on the 3 points.

1. At LDC country level, selection and recognition thereof of LDCs CSO focal points that will work together with government focal points and other stakeholders such as development partners in the AU, UN, donor groups and networks of development actors at national levels on the issue of African LDCs. The recognition should also extend to regional and international levels including LDC-IV.
2. Create strong linkage with national, regional and global research institutions to take stock of research and documentation about the policy failures, best practices and alternatives that can inform and gear governments of African LDCs towards a paradigm shift and provide a stronger advocacy position.
3. Join value adding networks at country, regional and international levels that can provide better leverage to the issues of LDCs and stronger advocacy on global financial and trade institutions like the World Bank, IMF and WTO, EU.
4. Ensure that a separate Pre- LDC IV assembly of civil society will be held instead of having parallel thematic sessions that will dissolve the key issues. Ensure resource are mobilised for an optimum preparation, turn-out and participation of CSOs in the conference.
5. Prioritise on thematic areas to be discussed during LDC-IV. The thematic areas should lead towards a focus on the nexus among growth, employment and poverty reduction, protection of domestic consumption and trade; a call for detachment from welfare oriented aid priorities.

Participant organisations also elected themselves to join the LDC Watch Network which is attached as part of this proceeding.

Mr. Demba made the closing remarks by noting that more challenges await CS as there is as the network of CS needs to be strengthened so that the voice of LDCs and their issues will be heard in all forums. He also thanked participants for their contributions. Thanks also went to Mr. Azeb who hosted the assembly and Dr. arjun for his relentless dedication and effort to push for assembly to take place. He also thanked Ms. Prerna for her untiring support to all participants and their administrative issues.

Dr. Arjun also reminded participants this assembly is only a beginning and the uniqueness of the advocacy and lobbying work that awaits members of the LDC Watch network as it needs to be done lobbying on LDCs and their issues need to take place at civil society networks like Jubilee South, Green Peace and in addition to governments and donor groups. He also promised that list of network members, government focal points and other information will be posted on the LDC Watch website and also information sharing will regularly take place. He also thanked Mr. Ricardo _____ from UNOHRLLS for his support in the preparation of this assembly.

A press statement was then held with media.

4. Annex

4.1. Assembly Schedule

Civil Society Assembly for Assessing Development Challenges in African Least Developed Countries (LDCs): Reviewing the Brussels Programme of Action (BPoA) and the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) towards the Fourth UN Conference on LDCs (LDC IV)

4-5 March 2010, Addis Ababa, Ethiopia

(PROGRAMME)

Thursday, 4 March – Day 1

09:00–09:30 Registration

09:30-10:45 Opening Session

- *Welcome, objectives, presentation of agenda by Ms. Azeb Girmai, ENDA-Ethiopia, LDC Watch*
- *Statement by Mr. Demba Moussa Dembele, President, LDC Watch*
- *Opening remarks by Mr. Sandagdorj Erdenebileg, Director, Policy and Monitoring, UN Office of the High Representative for the Least Developed Countries, Landlocked Developing Countries and Small Island Developing States, UN-OHRLLS*
- *Welcome by Mr. Emmanuel Nnadozie, Director, Economic Development and NEPAD Division (EDND), UN Economic Commission for Africa (ECA)*

Moderator: Mr. Arjun Karki, International Co-ordinator, LDC Watch

10:45-11:15 Tea/Coffee Break

11:15-11.30 *Report on the Review of Progress towards the BPoA by African LDCs by Mr. Adrian Gauci, Economic Affairs Officer, Economic Development and NEPAD Division (EDND)*

11:30-13:00 Thematic Session I

- *Introduction of participants*
- *Thematic paper on the status and trends of implementation of BPoA and MDGs in African LDCs by Mr. Amadou Taal, Worldview - The Gambia*
 - *Key discussion points: 1) Universal access to basics services, 2) Domestic productive capacities*
- *Floor discussion*

Moderator: Ms. Jane Nalunga, SEATINI

13:00-14:00 Lunch

14:00-15:30 Thematic Session II

- *Thematic Paper on the impacts of Global Financial Crisis on African LDCs by Mr. Demba Moussa Dembele, Africaine de Recherche et de Cooperation pour l'Appui au Developpement Endogene (ARCADE) and LDC Watch*
- *Floor discussion*

Moderator: Ms. Caroline Bowah, FOHRD

15:30-16:00 Tea/Coffee Break

16:00-17.30 Thematic Session III

- *Thematic Paper on the Food Crisis, Livelihoods & Impact of Climate Change in African LDCs by Ms. Azeb Girmai, ENDA Ethiopia*
- *Floor discussion*

Moderator: Mr. Abdulkadir Khalif, SOCDA

(Formation of statement/declaration drafting team and announcement of any logistical information)

Friday, 5 March – Day 2

9:00-11:00 Strategy Planning Session

- *Recap of Day 1*
- *Strategic Preparations for and expectation from the LDC IV Conference*
- *Presentation on the LDC IV CSO preparatory process by Mr. Arjun Karki, International Co-ordinator, LDC Watch*

Moderator: Ms. Azeb Girmai, ENDA-Ethiopia, LDC Watch

11:00-11:30 Tea/Coffee break

11:30-13:00 Strategy Planning towards LDC IV (Contd ...)

Moderator: Ms. Azeb Girmai, ENDA-Ethiopia, LDC Watch

13:00-14:00 Lunch

14:00-15:30 Presentation and finalisation of African CSO Assembly Statement

- *Discussion on the statement to be presented to the official conference on the Regional Review of the BPoA in Africa, 8-9 March 2010*

Moderator: Mr. Demba Moussa Dembele, President, LDC Watch

15:30-16:00 Closing Session

Moderator: Demba M. Dembele, Arjun Karki, Azeb Girmai

16:00-17:00 Press Conference

- *Statement to national and international media*

19.00 Dinner hosted by ENDA Ethiopia, LDC Watch

17:00 Snacks/Tea/Coffee

4.2. List of Participants

| No. | Name | Organisation | Country | E-mail |
|-----|-----------------------------|----------------------|--------------------------|--|
| 1 | Moses Kambou | ORCADE-BF | Burkina Faso | moskam@orcade.org |
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| | | | | |
|-----------|-------------------------|--|----------|---|
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