

Meeting of the National Focal Points of the Least Developed Countries on the Implementation of the Istanbul Programme of Action (IPoA)

13-14 November 2019

UN Headquarters, New York, /Conference Rooms # 11

Background

The Istanbul Programme of Action for the Least Developed Countries for the Decade 2011-2020 (IPoA) is coming to an end. The UN General Assembly has decided to convene the Fifth UN Conference on Least Developed Countries (LDC V) which will be held in Doha, Qatar in 2021. The Conference will undertake a comprehensive appraisal of the implementation of the IPoA by the LDCs and their development partners, share best practices and lessons learned and identify obstacles and constraints encountered as well as actions and initiatives needed to overcome them. The Conference will also mobilize global support and enhance partnerships in support of LDCs. A new 10-year programme of action for the LDCs will be adopted at the Conference which coincides with the remaining 10 years of implementation of the 2030 Agenda.

Since the adoption of the IPoA, notable progress has been made by LDCs in the implementation of the IPoA. In 2018, 12 countries met the criteria for graduation from the LDC category and are at various stages in the graduation process. Extreme poverty (measured as the population living below \$1.9 per day) in LDCs fell to 35.5 per cent in 2015 from 36.2 per cent in 2013. Enrolment in primary and secondary education in LDCs has more than doubled, from 107 million in 2000 to 215 million in 2017. Access to electricity increased by about 10 per cent from 34 per cent in 2011 to 45 per cent in 2016. In 2017, mobile cellular subscriptions in the least developed countries rose from 33 per 100 people in 2010 to almost 70 per 100 in 2017. Some LDCs in Africa are among the world's top performers in terms of the percentage of parliamentary seats held by women.

Despite progress made on some economic indicators and targets set forth in the IPoA, many LDCs have not met the objectives. Only three countries, i.e. Maldives, Samoa and Equatorial Guinea, have graduated from the LDC category since 2011. Projections indicate that nearly 30 per cent of the LDC population will remain in extreme poverty by 2030. Around 80 million people of LDCs are in food crisis. The number of undernourished people increased by 32.7 million during the period from 2011 to 2017.

Means of implementation continue to remain a major challenge for LDCs. Government revenue in LDCs stagnated around 19 per cent. Although there is some progress in exports of goods and services by LDCs, they are still far away from the target of 2 per cent of global exports. Regarding enhancing productive capacity and achieving

structural transformation in LDCs, a central priority of the IPoA, only modest improvements have been made. The share of the manufacturing sector has remained stagnant in most LDCs.

LDCs still face special challenges in implementing the SDGs, and these difficulties are further compounded by other emerging challenges including climate change and related natural disasters, health pandemics, rising external debt, declining ODA, and huge uncertainty in the global trading system.

This year's annual meeting is a crucial component of the preparatory process for the LDC V. The meeting will focus on the comprehensive country-level review of the implementation of the IPoA with presentation of national reports on key aspects of the IPoA to share best practices and lessons learned. It will also collect recommendations on new priority areas of action and initiatives to accelerate implementation of the SDGs in LDCs over the next 10 years and address emerging challenges. The meeting is expected to provide substantive input to the outcome document of the LDC V which will shape a new development agenda for the LDCs for the next decade.