

LDC Civil Society Forum

Comprehensive High-level Midterm Review of the Implementation of the Istanbul Programme of Action for Least Developed Countries for the Decade 2011-2020 (IPoA) Antalya Declaration 28 May 2016

1. We, the representatives of civil society organisations from the Least Developed Countries (LDCs), Landlocked Developing Countries (LLDCs), Small Island Developing States (SIDS) and beyond, who have met here in Antalya, Turkey from 26 to 28 May 2016 at the LDC Civil Society Forum of the Comprehensive High-level Midterm Review of the Implementation of the Istanbul Programme of Action for LDCs for the Decade 2011-2020 (IPoA), have very much appreciated the opportunity and space provided to assess and express our views on the development challenges of LDCs and their graduation from the LDC category as agreed in 2011 during the Fourth UN Conference on Least Developed Countries (UN LDC-IV) in Istanbul, Turkey.
2. Following our assessment, sharing and deliberations, we have concluded that the overarching goal of the IPoA to overcome structural challenges faced by the LDCs in order to eradicate poverty, achieve internationally agreed development goals and enable graduation of at least 50% of the LDCs by 2020 from the LDC category still remains a distant dream. Thus, although graduation prospects are promising for few countries, LDCs in general are lagging behind the IPoA goal on graduation from the LDC category.
3. Special attention should be given to those LDCs who have been undergoing painfully protracted political transition after internal conflicts, natural disasters and severe economic crisis towards building sustainable peace and transformation of just and equitable societies. Further, the implementation of IPoA is considered as a slow and weak move towards strengthening LDCs' capacities in order to mitigate the adverse impacts of external shocks, including climate change impacts, disasters and other unique vulnerabilities related to the special situations of LDCs such as extreme desertification, sea level rise, glacial melting & glacial lake outburst floods and ocean acidification.
4. There is, therefore, the urgency for demonstrated political will by LDC governments in terms of ownership and leadership with genuine delivery of Means of Implementation and Policy Coherence by development partners. Just and democratic

governance, mutual accountability and transparency are imperative to ensure the Right to Development of the peoples in LDCs.

5. The fact that majority of the LDCs are plagued by violence, instability and conflict are clearly symptomatic of the structural causes of poverty, vulnerability, injustices and marginalisation in LDCs along with the exploitation and extraction of natural resources including illegal, unregulated and unrecorded fishing. We are calling for a structural transformation of the relations between rich and poor, powerful and powerless, men and women, the elites and those without resources, the dominant and the marginalised peoples.
6. Adding to the woes is the escalating climate change crisis and frequency of natural disasters that have led to reversal of any development gains which urgently calls for Climate Justice to LDCs who have been least responsible but ironically most affected being at the forefront, aggravating their development needs and increased burden. Moreover, loss and damage as a consequence of climate change has remained a major burden for the LDCs, the reparations of which are not agreed in the 2015 Paris Agreement. We therefore call for the Warsaw International Mechanism to come with specific support mechanism for Loss and Damage in the LDCs as well as clear sources of support for Adaptation actions within the Paris Agreement that delivers new, adequate, sustainable and predictable flow of finance. The principle of Common But Differentiated Responsibilities and Respective Capabilities (CBDR-RC) as agreed in the Climate Convention must be abided by the developed partners. We also call for the protection of human rights of climate-induced migrants by either revising the 1951 Refugee Convention or drawing up a new protocol.
7. Immediate formulation and implementation of effective policies for resilience building; right to health; food and water sovereignty leading to sustainable agriculture and fisheries; protection of ecosystems, forests and biodiversity; have become a development priority for LDCs.
8. We are calling for Fair Trade within the regime of World Trade Organisation (WTO) and beyond in terms of bilateral, regional and pluri-lateral trade and investment agreements primarily driven by the neoliberal market-oriented trade agenda. Special and Differential Treatment, policy flexibility for LDCs and the Bali LDC package need to be made operational immediately in the spirit of the development agenda of the Doha Development Round of WTO negotiations.

9. The bleak development situation in LDCs is further exacerbated by the debt crisis which is an unjust use of already limited resources of LDCs which instead can be channeled toward much needed social and human development. We call for immediate and unconditional cancellation of all LDC debt which is totally unsustainable and detrimental to the achievement of poverty eradication and sustainable development in LDCs.
10. We are firm on our conviction and call that no SDGs would materialise worldwide without these being effectively realised in the LDCs, hence we reiterate our call 'No SDGs without LDCs' and underscore the need for increased synergy and coherence between the IPoA and SDGs, the Addis Ababa Action Agenda on Financing for Development, the Paris Climate Agreement and the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction and other Internationally Agreed Development Goals. .
11. We urge governments of LDCs to promote gender justice and guarantee in their development strategies the full enjoyment by women of their rights, as enshrined in domestic, regional and international laws. The good practices to this end needs to be replicated by all LDC governments. Promotion of women entrepreneurship and self-employment including of the rural marginalised populations are key especially in the context of the climate change crisis and its devastating impacts. Governments must ensure the effective participation of women in policy and decision making, monitoring, follow-up and evaluation of strategies targeted towards the implementation of the IPoA.
12. We call upon the private sector to respect states' sovereignty and adhere to human rights norms and standards.
13. LDCs are worse victims of illicit financial flows and developed partners must take immediate steps to abolish tax havens. We urgently need to combat capital flight, tax evasion, tax avoidance and erosion of tax base to achieve Tax Justice. We additionally urge for an independent UN Tax Commission.
14. Transfer and promotion of appropriate innovative technologies to the LDCs is long overdue and hence, we urge to expedite the process of transfer of technology, the establishment of the Technology Bank for LDCs as well as promoting indigenous technologies that are vital for the development of LDCs.

15. We urge to promote regional cooperation, South-South cooperation and North-South cooperation to enhance productive capacity of LDCs to fight against poverty, structural transformation and to achieve sustained and equitable economic growth, and reversing gender inequality, social exclusion and marginalisation in LDCs.
16. We strongly believe that the fundamentals of democratic institution-building and human rights principles must be respected, protected and fulfilled in any policy decisions and actions on the ground. We, therefore, ask the states of the world to uphold to these principles for the materialisation of IPoA.
17. LDCs and their development partners, including international development agencies, should develop an overarching framework for smooth transition towards graduation and a set of time-bound specific and result-oriented guidelines that promote sustainable post-graduation developments.
18. Civil society is an integral and independent development stakeholder in their own right and hence, we call for continued and more policy space to enhance their participation and decision-making in national, regional and international development processes. We will continue to engage in the monitoring, follow-up and implementation of the IPoA.
19. We conclude by extending our thanks and appreciation to the LDC Watch and fellow participants here in Antalya for their contributions and ardent political commitment, the Government and people of Turkey, the Secretary-General of the Midterm Review conference with his entire team of UN-OHRLLS and the UN-NGLS.

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