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THE COMMITMENT

Mobilizing Global Actions for LDCs

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United Nations

UN OFFICE OF THE HIGH REPRESENTATIVE FOR THE LEAST DEVELOPED COUNTRIES, LANDLOCKED DEVELOPING COUNTRIES AND SMALL ISLAND DEVELOPING STATES

High Representative Expresses Gratitude to Turkey, India for Contributing to LDC IV

USG Cheick Sidi Diarra with the Permanent Representative of India to the UN, Hardeep S. Puri.

The United Nations Under Secretary-General, Cheick Sidi Diarra, representing the world's most vulnerable countries praised the Turkish and Indian governments for their contributions to the Fourth UN Conference on the Least Developed Countries (LDC IV).

Scheduled to take place in Istanbul in 2011, the 5-day event is expected to attract about 6,000 participants, including several heads of state, legislators and members of civil society and the private sector. The purpose of the conference is to address the critical issues of sustainable development facing the world's 49 LDCs.

As the host of LDC IV, the Turkish Government has announced a US $2 million donation to assist in the preparatory process, which will involve laying the foundations for several meetings in Istanbul. These events will include an intergovernmental exchange, a parliamentarian caucus and a forum for private sector and civil society participation.

"This is indeed a heartening gesture especially in the prevailing economic climate in which we find ourselves," said Cheick Sidi Diarra, High Representative for the Least Developed Countries, Landlocked Developing Countries and Small Island Developing States. "With so many competing pressures, the Turkish contribution is an encouraging sign that emerging economies can play a productive role in support of the LDCs and the challenges they face."

The Turkish Ambassador to the UN, Ertuğrul Apakan, underscored that Turkey is determined to make the conference a success. "We trust that the Conference will create a new momentum with renewed commitments, reinforced partnerships, concrete action and predictable and targeted development assistance, which responds to the needs of the LDCs and their country-specific challenges," Apakan said.

Meanwhile, the Government of India has also announced US $250,000 in contributions to support the travel costs of LDC representatives to the conference.

"Given the challenge of organizing a meeting of this scale in these tough economic times, the donation from the Government of India is even more heartening," Diarra said. "It also serves as a strong signal of India's commitment to the fundamental principles underlying South-South cooperation."

"With so many competing pressures, the Turkish contribution is an encouraging sign that emerging economies can play a productive role in support of the LDCs and the challenges they face."

–Cheick Sidi Diarra

In announcing the donation, the Permanent Representative of India to the UN, Hardeep S. Puri, emphasized the importance of LDC IV as a pivotal landmark of the global development agenda that will affect all Member States of the UN.

"Given our increasing political and economic interdependence, [development for LDCs] is an agenda that affects all Member States on a variety of levels," Puri said. "As such, it is incumbent upon all of us to step up to the plate and support the upcoming Conference."

Diarra urged other Member States to provide resources to support the LDCs as well, such that "a prosperous future becomes a reality for all and not just a few." ■

on the cover

The United Nations Secretary-General appointed a group of Eminent Persons to galvanize greater international support for the work of 49 Least Developed Countries (LDCs). The Group is co-chaired by Alpha Oumar Konaré, former President of the Republic of Mali, seen here with the High Representative for the Least Developed Countries, Landlocked Developing Countries and Small Island Developing States, Mr. Cheick Sidi Diarra.

Migration, Development and Remittances in the Least Developed Countries Context:

An LDC-IV Preparatory Event

Director of UN-OHRLLS, Lakshmi Puri (second from left), participated in the debate on "Migration, Development and Remittances".

On 17 June this year, the United Nations Institute for Training and Research (UNITAR) featured a debate centered around the theme, "Migration, Development and Remittances," as part of its Migration and Development Series.

Held in collaboration with the International Organization for Migration (IOM), the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) and the MacArthur Foundation, the one-day seminar encompassed LDC-relevant development issues, such as human resources and migration development cooperation policies.

As a preparatory event for the Fourth United Nations Conference on the Least Developed Countries (LDC-IV) to take place in Turkey next year, the seminar aimed to raise awareness about the positive impact of migration in the development context of LDCs. It also brainstormed ways to strengthen the linkage between migration and development for the LDC-IV agenda.

In an age of globalization and unprecedented mobility, maximizing the positive relationship between migration and development is especially relevant for LDCs. Moreover, given the recent increase in attention on migration's effects on development in LDCs, it was fitting to comprehensively assess the implementation of the Brussels Programme of Action in this context, leading up to LDC-IV. The goal was to ensure that specific references to migration are included in the upcoming LDC-IV outcome document.

As stated by Lakshmi Puri, Director of OHRLLS, in her introductory statement, the seminar objectives were to provide policy recommendations on the migration and development agenda for LDC-IV in the following areas:

- Identifying key gaps and priorities on migration data collection for the LDCs;
- Maximizing the benefits of human capital mobility;
- Leveraging migrant remittances and diaspora contributions towards development;
- Enhancing the capabilities of LDCs through capacity building, institutional reforms and partnerships; and
- Suggesting pro-poor and vulnerable population targeted measures to confront climate change, the effects of the global crisis and other vulnerability factors.

The seminar included Permanent Missions representatives from LDC countries. ■

The MSI +5 review will create an opportunity for SIDS and the international community to reaffirm their commitment to meet the sustainable development goals and priorities in the Barbados Programme of Action as well as the Mauritius Strategy.

High Representative Welcomes Appointment of Eminent Persons Group for the Fourth UN Conference on the Least Developed Countries

By Ricardo Dunn, UN-OHRLLS

The United Nations Secretary-General Mr. Ban Ki-moon appointed on 26 August this year a group of Eminent Persons to galvanise greater international support for the world's 49 Least Developed Countries (LDCs).

The members of the Eminent Persons Group have been selected in light of their international stature, expertise and strong commitment to development issues. The appointments come just nine months before the Fourth United Nations Conference on the LDCs which is scheduled to take place in Istanbul, Turkey, from 30 May to 3 June 2011.

The Group is tasked with assisting the United Nations system in its efforts to build political will and mobilize global action that will result in a Programme of Action for the LDCs for the next decade. The Group will also undertake efforts to raise public awareness on important issues affecting the LDCs in key areas such as trade, investment, technology transfer, official development assistance, building of productive capacities, adaptation to the effects of climate change, and the creation of a stimulus package for LDCs to manage the impact of the global financial crisis.

The High Representative for the Least Developed Countries, Landlocked Developing Countries and Small Island Developing States, Mr. Cheick Sidi Diarra expressed his gratitude to each member of the Group for their generosity of time and spirit as the United Nations embarks on this major undertaking. "It is indeed an honour and a privilege to collaborate with such esteemed personalities, each of whom has demonstrated in various ways their unswerving commitment to addressing the challenges facing the poorest countries," Diarra said.

The Group is co-chaired by Alpha Oumar Konaré, former President of the Republic of Mali and Jacques Delors, former President of the European Commission; other members of the Group are: Sir Fazle Hassan Abed, the founder and Chairperson of BRAC, the Bangladesh Rehabilitation Assistance Committee; Nancy Birdsall, the founding President of the Center for Global Development; Kemal Dervis, Vice President and Director of Global Economy and Development at Brookings Institution; James Wolfensohn, Chairman and CEO of Wolfensohn & Company and former President of the World Bank; Hiromasa Yonekura, Chairman of Sumitomo Chemical Company Ltd.; Louis Michel, Member of European Parliament and formerly the European Commissioner for Development and Humanitarian Aid; Louis A. Kasekende, Deputy Governor of the Bank of Uganda and formerly Executive Director at the World Bank; and Sir Richard Jolly, Honorary Professor of the Institute of Development Studies at the University of Sussex. ■

Towards a New Partnership for LDCs

LDC IV Pre-Conference Event

In preparation for the 2011 LDC IV conference in Turkey, OHRLLS organized a three-day brainstorming meeting 14-16 July 2010 to identify priorities for a renewed partnership in preparing the Conference outcome document and to develop guidance for appraising the implementation of the Brussels Programme. The meeting aimed to ensure a strategic approach to drafting a new programme of action for the next decade. This appraisal should help inform policymaking by LDCs and their development partners. In addition, meeting participants identified ways to strengthen the monitoring and implementation of the LDC programme of action for the next decade to improve mutual accountability.

Specifically, the meeting focused on changes at the global level that have affected LDCs, including the food, energy and financial crises. Likewise, participants analyzed the effects of climate change on LDCs and changes in the international aid architecture. ■

OHRLLS Senior Programme officer Ms. Susanna Wolf in discussion with participants during the brainstorming meeting on substantive preparation for UN-LDC IV "Towards a New Partnership for LDCs".

The Role of Women in Countries in Special Situations

Africa, LDCs, LLDCs, SIDS, post-conflict and post-crisis countries

A special policy dialogue took place on 30 June, 2010 at UN Headquarters in New York to discuss the role of women in Africa, LDCs, LLDCs, SIDS, post-conflict and post-crisis countries. Carla Koppell, Director of Initiative for Inclusive Security, gave a presentation and moderated the session. The other panelists included Frances Stewart, Director of Centre for Research on Inequality, Human Security and Ethnicity, Department for International Development, University of Oxford; Jan Egeland, Director of the Norwegian Institute of International Affairs; Graciana del Castillo, Senior Research Scholar, Columbia University; and Leyman Gbowee, Executive Director of Women in Peace and Security Network Africa. Participants also included member states, representatives from international organizations and civil society.

The different presentations highlighted the following key challenges faced by women in conflict and post-conflict countries:

- Poor access to education and health services, including basic maternal health care and other social services because of disruptions caused by conflict.
- Vulnerability of women and girls to trafficking and different forms of sexual abuse.
- Vulnerability of women and girls in conflict and post-conflict situations to HIV infection and other epidemics experienced in the camps.
- General insecurity, which limits women's access to decent employment, agricultural opportunities and other income-generating activities.

Despite the frameworks of protection and engagement stipulated in Security Council Resolutions 1325, 1820, 1888, and 1889, women remain marginalized in the resolution of conflict and in peace processes such as peace negotiations, demobilization programmes, and post-conflict reconstruction. In 2008, UNICEF estimated that women account for less than 10 percent of participants in formal peace negotiations and less than 2 percent of signatories to peace agreements. In addition, projects in post-conflict reconstruction usually do not favour women.

Carla Koppell, Director of Initiative for Inclusive Security at the meeting.

The various presentations emphasized the fact that women have the potential to become active agents in restoring peace and promoting socio-economic development, given the success of Colombian women in their national peace movement, as well as the success of the Mano River Women's peace Network in West Africa that convened women from Guinea, Liberia and Sierra Leone to participate in peace making. Women's participation in key decision making positions is also often accompanied by improvements to family health, education and human welfare. Women can also play a critical role in peace mediation, negotiation and post-conflict reconstruction.

Below are key recommendations from the meeting:

- Provide women and girls with full access to education as this will empower them economically, socially and politically.
- Empower women politically by getting them to decision-making positions and include them in all development activities. This can be achieved through legislation and affirmative action policies that promote the role of women. The Rwandan constitution, for example, requires 30% representation by women in parliament. Empower women economically by strengthening their property and land rights and support agricultural production by providing extension services and credit. Ensure that reconstruction resources support women through targeted employment creation and investment into programs that meet their needs.
- Include women in all peacebuilding processes and ensure that peace agreements have gender provisions.
- Mainstream gender perspectives into emergency operations and humanitarian work. Recruit more women into military, police and peace-related positions.
- Include in all peacekeeping mission mandates the obligation to consult women regularly and involve them in program design. Undertake gender sensitivity training for police, military, medical and legal personnel.
- Bridge the gap between policies and implementation.
- Document effective strategies and share widely.
- Undertake advocacy and sensitization to promote the role of women in conflict and post-conflict situations and to overcome cultural and religious values that perpetuate gender inequality.
- Support the implementation of the Security Council Resolutions. ■

Charting a New Course for Small Island Developing States

AOSIS Chairperson and Grenada's Ambassador to the United Nations Dessima Williams in conversation with Nosh Nalavala

AOSIS Chairperson and Grenada's Ambassador to the United Nations Dessima Williams

The latest talks in Bonn showed that the 194 negotiating countries have failed to even define a common target or method for curbing greenhouse gases. Where do the negotiating countries go from here? Does AOSIS have a strategy for breaking this deadlock?

Our strategy is to be prepared for progress and for lack of progress, in the sense that we are working for very ambitious, deliberate and timely outcomes. What we have done is to stress the situation of our islands and of the world. The whole world is suffering from a worsening situation in climate change. Island countries are on the forefront of global climate deterioration. Many economic and physical science studies suggest that we are in trouble. The earth is now hotter than it has ever been, and 93 percent of the warming over the past 50 years has gone into the oceans, which directly affects our coral levels, fish stock, sea-level rise and thus the security of islands. For those reasons, negotiations ought to be moving faster.

One of our main strategies is to resist a pullback based on the absence of US legislation. Many say that when "there is no US legislation, there is no commitment," therefore they should not commit. But we got the Kyoto Protocol without the US, didn't we?

Ambassador, what are you asking for?

AOSIS is asking for fair international climate policy measures that are protective and supportive of small islands. First, a legal commitment that the global average rise in temperature be limited to less than 1.5 degrees Celsius from pre-industrial levels.

Secondly, we are asking for a level of financing commensurate with the needs of adaptation and mitigation. We acknowledge the "fast start" financing and other bilateral efforts. Fast Start is a $30 billion fund—$10 billion a year for the next 3 years, starting this year—intended to support LDCs and SIDS and others who have already sustained damage from climate change. Three years from now there will be the longer-term funding of $100 billion until 2020.

Thirdly, we are negotiating for a legal institutional framework to bind all Parties in such an agreement.

And where will your strategy fit in this context?

Everybody agrees that when we emerge from the economic downturn of 2008, we cannot use the same old pollutant technology. If we move toward a greener and climate-resilient paradigm, we will be able to resuscitate the global economy and protect the environment simultaneously.

The islands have positioned themselves in large measure as the bell weather of the global regime. Our small size highlights our vulnerability whether in climate change, global trade or the economic arena. We therefore have to make a strategic advantage out of that vulnerability. Thus linking climate change needs to our sustainable development needs is a strategic approach for SIDS, and for LDCs and Africa too.

In a recent press conference, the Secretary General said he does not expect a resolution in Cancun and therefore advocated taking small steps in small conferences. Are you hopeful there will be a meeting of the minds in Cancun?

COP-16 is a big conference that requires big outcomes. So far, there is a little progress in the negotiations, including in forestry programs and technology transfer. But we are still far from the mandate of the 2007 Bali Action Plan and from definitive agreements that would reduce carbon emissions and support islands.

That, and the failure to have legislation in the US, have encouraged some to say, "We cannot get anything definite. Therefore we should just ask or take a little bit here and a little bit there." This is not consistent with the AOSIS mandate, which is to stick to the Bali Action Plan that calls for definitive, comprehensive and ambitious legal outcomes. We anticipate a meeting of AOSIS Environment Ministers in September in the margins of the General Assembly. They will have to take a look at the state of the negotiations and suggest what exactly has to be done.

But, we have to be careful. We could be on a slippery slope where we just postpone outcomes every year while climate impacts worsen. We understand incrementalism in negotiations. But the talks must move forward more rapidly. AOSIS has built a coalition of 107 countries who support a comprehensive outcome with 1.5 as an upper allowable temperature target.

As of last week, have you received any financing for Climate Change?

Some Fast Start financing may be flowing to some countries, but nothing under the UNFCCC framework. On a longer term, the UN Secretary General has put together a high-level finance panel to look for sources for $100 billion. The challenge there is to have public sources of financing for adaptation and to have it ready and available in Cancun in November. Another challenge is to propose it under the UNFCCC guidelines and have it accepted as such. That could happen.

AOSIS members have repeatedly indicated that small islands are at risk of rising ocean levels and have accused industrialized countries of backing away from their pledges. In that sense was Copenhagen Conference a failure and are you hopeful about the Cancun Conference?

Overall, islands have not made the kind of progress we should have made coming out of the 1994 Barbados Programme of Action or the MDGs themselves. Within the UN system we need a more coherent institutional response across all the departments and agencies. Secondly, SIDS ought to be in a specially designated category that will allow for policy responses appropriate for our needs, for example in seeking financing.

The MSI agenda encompasses a vast agenda. How far has the Mauritius Program of Action been implemented and where would you like the MSI to go in the next 5 years?

AOSIS countries are far from our targets and our potential, which has to be realized by reducing carbon emissions and eliminating poverty. We have made a number of improvements due to the resilience and the determination of the population, which is remarkable. All the islands display such potential. Support from the international community in the form of policies, financing and programs as well as a sturdy climate convention can vastly expand that potential. ■

Communiqué Issued at the CARICOM and Pacific Island Forum Meetings

Several heads of Government agreed to expedite the regional programme in preparation for the Sixteenth Conference of Parties (COP16) to the United Nations Conference on Climate Change in Cancun, Mexico, November 2010. Recognising that the Copenhagen Accord which resulted from the Conference in 2009 was disappointing, heads of Government agreed that its negotiators must adhere to the principles of the Liliendaal Declaration on Climate Change and Development (2009) and to the AOSIS Heads Declaration September 2009. They pointed specifically to the stabilisation of Green House Gases at 1.5oC and efforts to achieve a legally binding agreement on issues related to mitigation, adaptation, research and finance. Similarly, heads of Government agreed to convene a joint COTED/COHSOD meeting in Saint Lucia in early September to consolidate the regional position on climate change for Cancun, Mexico.

The heads of Government expressed appreciation to Grenada for its role as Chair of Alliance of Small Island Developing States (AOSIS) and agreed to collaborate with AOSIS in advancing the region's interest in the Climate Change Negotiations.

UN-OHRLLS attends 2010 Pacific Islands Forum

The Forty-first Pacific Islands Forum (PIF) was held in Port Vila, Vanuatu, from 3 to 6 August 2010 and was attended by the Heads of State and Government of: the Cook Islands, Federated States of Micronesia, the Republic of Kiribati, the Republic of Nauru, New Zealand, Niue, the Republic of Palau, the Republic of the Marshall Islands, Samoa, Tonga and the Republic of Vanuatu; the Minister for Foreign Affairs and Trade of Australia and the Minister for Planning and District Development of Papua New Guinea. Solomon Islands and Tuvalu were represented by Special Envoys; Timor-Leste, Tokelau, Wallis and Futuna, the Asian Development Bank, the Commonwealth Secretariat and the United Nations representatives attended as Observers and New Caledonia and French Polynesia attended the formal session as Associate Members.

Among the issues discussed during this year's forum were: the Millennium Development Goals, Climate change, the Pacific Environment Community Fund, as well key progress achieved by members of the PIF.

The communiqué called upon the partners to strengthen their support to Pacific Island Countries towards achieving sustainable development by mainstreaming the MSI and BPoA into programmatic work plans of development partners, including the regional banks, Bretton Woods Institutions and the UN system, including through development of vulnerability and resilience indices. ■

upcoming events

16th Conference of the Parties (COP 16) / UN Climate Change Conference in Cancun, Mexico, 29 Nov - 10 Dec 2010

MSI+5 High-level Review, New York, 24-25 September 2010

The Ninth Meeting of the Ministers of Foreign Affairs of Landlocked Developing Countries (LLDCs) will be convened in New York, in the margins of the 65th session of the United Nations General Assembly, on 24 September 2010. Since the focus of the high-level Plenary Meeting of the 65th session of the General Assembly is on the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), the theme of the ninth Meeting of Ministers of Foreign Affairs of LLDCs is "Further implementation of the Almaty Programme of Action to support acceleration of the achievement of the MDGs by LLDCs".

Enhancing International Cooperation for LDC Development and Transformation

LDC IV Side Event at the Development Cooperation Forum 2010

On 30 June this year, the permanent missions of Nepal, Turkey and Belgium organized a panel discussion on enhancing international cooperation for LDC development and transformation, in collaboration with OHRLLS and the Office for ECOSOC Support and Coordination of DESA. Bringing together academics and senior LDC officials and their development partners, the event sought to stimulate discussion on the role of international cooperation in the sustainable development of LDCs, notably in helping to reduce their vulnerability in economic and social development. The discussion also centered on the complementary role of Official Development Assistance for increasing opportunities for LDCs through trade, FDI and other sources of finance.

This side event put forward substantive recommendations on the future of ODA flows to LDCs, including priorities and deliverables, which will feed into the preparatory process of the LDC IV. Specifically, these recommendations will be reflected in the pre-conference event on mobilizing financial resources and the draft outcome document.

Recommendations that emerged from the discussions are summarized as follows:

Enhance innovative financing such as microfinance, which can provide additional funding for LDCs, but should not be seen as a substitute for more traditional sources of revenue.

Carefully coordinate climate change efforts with issues of energy supply, as increasing fuel prices worsen the situation in LDCs. Renewable energies might therefore hold particular promise for LDCs.

Further integrate LDCs into global trade frameworks. Current efforts have been insufficient in profoundly enhancing development in LDCs. Greater trade opportunities would also allow LDCs to diversify their economies, thereby reducing their vulnerability. In this respect, furthering Aid for Trade programmes to enable LDCs development is a key effort for LDC development in upcoming years.

A new LDC programme of action should formulate very concrete deliverables and targets for LDC development and should include mechanisms to ensure the implementation of measures to reach these targets. ODA should focus on capacity building in LDCs. ■

Overview of Meetings Attended by UN-OHRLLS

UN-OHRLLS attended, as an observer, the resumed conference of the UN Fish Stock Agreement which was convened from the 24-28 May 2010.

- UN-OHRLLS provided substantive support to the SIDS parties to the agreement throughout the meetings, particularly in SIDS advocacy for the need to link recommendations from the conference to the other development strategies of the UN, including the MSI and Barbados PoA and the Brussels PoA.
- UN-OHRLLS urged the mainstreaming of efforts to assist developing states, in the context of the Agreement, in particular the least developed and small island developing states, with other relevant international development strategies with a view to enhancing international coordination to enable them to develop their national capacity to exploit fishery resources, consistent with the duty to ensure the conservation and management of those fisheries resources.

On June 21-25 June UN-OHRLLS attended the eleventh Informal Consultative Process on Ocean Affairs and the Law of the Sea (ICP).

- The focus of the ICP was on 'Capacity-building on ocean Affairs and the law of the sea, including marine science'. The issue of capacity-building, including on matters concerning ocean affairs and marine science is of key importance to SIDS. The High Representative has highlighted this issue in his statements during the SIDS inter-regional meeting and at the CSD's SIDS day which were convened in 8 and 10 April respectively. He also underscored this issue including the particular need to establish UNCLOS regional scientific centers in SIDS at ESCAP's meeting in Inchon on 13 April.

During the ICP, UN-OHRLLS provided substantive support to SIDS. SIDS called for the establishment of UNCLOS regional centers during the ICP calling for cooperation of relevant UN entities, including UN-OHRLLS in setting up these regional centers in the SIDS regions and the Pacific SIDS region in particular. ■

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