

**STATEMENT BY AMBASSADOR ERTUĞRUL APAKAN  
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AD-HOC OPEN ENDED WORKING GROUP  
ON SMOOTH TRANSITION  
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At the outset, I would like to thank Ambassador Grauls and Ambassador Bowler for the dedication to and efforts on smooth transition process of the Least Developed Countries.

The Istanbul Programme of Action articulates the ambitious goal of graduating half of the LDC's by 2020. It is our expectation that towards the end of this decade, many LDC's will be able to reach a level of development to graduate.

Development of the LDC's is a continuous process. Thus, attention should be given to not allowing graduation occur in a way to interrupt this process.

The four main benefits granted to the LDC's are preferential market access, special treatment in the WTO, ODA and technical cooperation. They ought to be phased out with a gradual approach following the graduation. In other words, they should not be cut off abruptly.

In this regard, preparation and implementation of appropriate transition strategies for graduating LDC's is a must.

LDC's and their development partners should engage in consultative mechanisms to identify the difficulties and the gaps in the transition process. They need to focus on the ways in which international community continues to support the graduated LDCs.

The main objective of the transition process should not be the creation of additional incentives. Instead, emphasis should be placed on setting the rules of engagement by the development partners to grant benefits and in the post-transition period and adjusting those rules to country-specific situations and vulnerabilities.

The United Nations has an important role to play in supporting the LDC's in their preparations for transition strategies as well as monitoring their implementation to avoid setbacks.

In addition to the cooperation with the traditional development partners, South-South cooperation and support of the emerging countries are crucial for smooth transition. Those countries should incorporate graduated LDCs in their technical and financial assistance programmes. They should also be involved in consultations for the preparations of smooth transition strategies.

In this context, Turkey is planning to extend its assistance package to the graduated LDCs in order to further support their development processes.

Thank you.