Intervention at Roundtables

Distinguished Co-Chairs,
Distinguished Delegates,

While we rejoice the progress we have collectively made in some of the MDGs, we need to note that the progress has been uneven, slow and many of the goals of MDGs will not be met by the vulnerable groups of countries, especially by the LDCs including those in conflict affected situations.

This trend should be reversed and we should ensure that the ODA allocations are shielded from the budgetary reductions and the commitments are fulfilled. There is also a need for making sure that the quality of aid and development effectiveness should be enhanced.

What we have found is that all the MDGs will not be met without the vulnerable countries, in particular LDCs. Since LDCs and other vulnerable countries are lagging behind the most, they should receive highest priority in the acceleration of MDGs in the remaining years so that we can make as much progress as possible in all the MDGs everywhere, in an equitable manner.

Equity and solidarity clearly demand that there should be an enhanced level of financial and technical support for these countries to match the committed leadership and prioritisation of MDGs by LDCs themselves. That would help establish a firm foundation for Post-2015 development agenda as well. We will have to ensure eradication of poverty, rapid and inclusive economic growth, and sustainability in a holistic and integrated manner. Now the sustainable development agenda would be much for bigger and ambitious. We should make sure that there is a partnership, inclusive agenda and multi-stakeholder approach. Energy, infrastructure, productive capacity building, agriculture and forestry, protection of natural capital, disaster risk reduction and stronger comprehensive partnerships would be crucial for the vulnerable countries while building on the progress of MDGs which still remain largely unfinished business. A life of dignity for all, equity and justice demands that the poorest and the most vulnerable countries are at the forefront of the Post-2015 development agenda.

It is true that even in the areas of poverty alleviation, maternal mortality, child mortality reduction and access to health and education, there has been a substantial progress in terms of the absolute change from their own initial conditions. Yet a vast majority of LDCs are far below other developing countries.

The average poverty level in LDCs has certainly come down from 65 per cent to 47 per cent of the total population; it is very high compared with the global average of around 22 per cent. Similarly, the global average for the people suffering from hunger is about 15 per cent and, it is still double in the LDCs, at 30 per cent.
Child mortality has decreased almost half at 95 deaths per thousand but not two thirds. Despite the significant progress that has already been achieved in maternal mortality, LDCs are still far behind the MDG target of its reduction by three quarters.

In education and gender equality, LDCs have made more progress. Similarly important progress has been made in combating HIV, malaria and TB and other major diseases in these countries. Loss of biodiversity, deforestation and soil erosion has not seen much progress in these countries.

On MDG 8 – Develop a Global Partnership for Development

We are alarmed that ODA going to the LDCs, the net bilateral ODA, has reduced by 12.8 per cent in 2012 according to preliminary estimates. Even today, total ODA remains still far below, even the lower bound commitment at 0.10 per cent to LDCs.

On market access, while progress has been made on duty free and quota free market access, it is still far below the commitment made at Hong Kong Ministerial. LDCs share of world trade is still far below potential. With 12 per cent of total population, their share of trade in goods and services is around 1.5 per cent. Tariff and non-tariff barriers should be removed for them to have a better access for their products. Similarly, Aid for Trade should give priority to LDCs to ensure that they have a supply side capacity and necessary infrastructure to engage in meaningful trade.

On debt sustainability and access to affordable medicines, LDCs and the vulnerable countries should be given due priority.