

Please check against delivery



Statement

by

Mr. Gyan Chandra Acharya

**Under-Secretary-General and High Representative
for the Least Developed Countries, Landlocked
Developing Countries
and Small Island Developing States**

**The post-2015 development framework:
priorities for the least developed countries**

Wednesday 29 – Friday 31 January 2014

**Wilton Park
UK**

The Conference Chair, Excellencies,
Distinguished participants,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

It gives me a great pleasure to welcome you all to this important meeting. I would also like to express my thanks to the colleagues from Wilton Park and the International Institute for Environment and Development (iied) for the great cooperation in preparing this event and to the UK Department for International Development as well as the Dutch and Norwegian Ministries of Foreign Affairs for their support and cooperation.

To us, this event is part of a series of meetings in which OHRLLS has been involved over the past 12 months. Let me just give you some examples:

- In September, we supported an event on LDCs in the Post-2015 development agenda, which was organised by the Permanent Missions of Benin and the United Kingdom in New York.
- During the opening week of the GA, a High-Level Event on Sustainable Energy for the Least Developed Countries was organised, co-chaired by Prime Minister Hailemariam Desalegn of Ethiopia, President Ellen Johnson Sirleaf of Liberia and Prime Minister Jens Stoltenberg of Norway.
- During the same week, a Ministerial Breakfast Meeting on “LDC Graduation: The Way towards MDG Acceleration, Sustainable Development and Structural Transformation” was held, co-chaired by the Ministers from Turkey and Belgium.
- Finally in November 2013, we organised a Consultative Meeting on LDCs priorities in the post-2015 development agenda and the SDGs.

These and many other meetings have been very important to bring the priorities of LDCs to the table and I am grateful to all who were involved in their preparation.

We are at a crucial time now here. MDG was a great leap forward as the contribution of UN to the development issues. But the SDGs will have to be a game changer for the people and planet. The post-2015 development agenda is of crucial importance for LDCs. As we all know, LDCs have made considerable progress, but still lag behind all others in reaching many internationally agreed goals, including the MDGs. For example, LDCs have twice the share of their population in extreme poverty, as compared to all developing countries and in some of them the poverty rate is higher than 80%. The same applies to the prevalence of hunger. They also face low levels of social and human development. Maternal and child mortality rates have been reduced by half, but LDCs started from very high initial conditions. LDCs have 880 million people with lowest development indicators and the number of people living in current LDCs is expected to double over the next 40 years.

And add to that the structural constraints and new vulnerabilities. LDCs display serious structural impediments to growth, and high exposure to shocks and disasters. Also, the headwinds of the global economic slowdown are reaching the LDCs in the forms of reduced ODA flows and increased fluctuations in commodity prices. Recent estimates suggest that bilateral ODA has declined by nearly 13 per cent in 2013, which is much larger than overall reduction of ODA, which was 4 per cent. At the current trends, most LDCs will not meet most MDGs by 2015.

We all know that to make progress towards sustained and sustainable development and to graduate from LDC status, business as usual will not

do. Thus the Post-2015 Development Framework should address the special needs of the LDCs, especially in light of their serious constraints on domestic resource mobilization and external borrowing.

We all agree that the primary responsibility for their own development lies with the LDCs themselves, who have to show ownership and leadership. However, they also need a supportive environment to be able to overcome their main challenges. ODA plays a very important role in LDCs, as it constitutes a sizable portion of external flow, which is as much as 50 per cent of the external flow. Similarly coherence in international policies and regime relating to trade, investment and technology transfer will be crucial. The current turbulences in exchange rates and capital markets of several emerging economies might have serious implications for LDCs, as their share in trade and investment has been soaring over the past decade. Thus progress towards transparent and responsive global financial and trading systems is crucial.

With sufficient policy space, LDCs can also be part of the solutions to the challenges of today and tomorrow. For example, they have a great potential to leapfrog into a green economy sidestepping the path of a brown economy. They can contribute to innovation through their biodiversity, traditional knowledge and the creativity of their large youth population. Sustainable development in LDCs is also closely linked to peace and security, as development and peace reinforce each other.

There is a strong feeling among the LDCs the IPoA is a very good basis for discussions about a post-2015 development agenda. As it is a partnership between LDCs and their development partners based on mutual accountability, it is very comprehensive and it focusses on long-term

development and structural transformation, together with building resilience.

Let me highlight the main messages from the consultative meeting:

- LDCs display the highest poverty incidence in the world. Global poverty eradication will therefore be unattainable without meaningful progress in LDCs;
- Without rapid and sustained growth, extreme poverty could not be eradicated and progress made so far on human and social development fronts cannot be sustained;
- Growth on its own will not be enough. Economic opportunities must reach the most vulnerable and marginalized groups. An integrated approach to poverty eradication must address not only various aspects of deprivation such as malnutrition, lack of access to education, maternal health and water and sanitation, but also feature equity dimensions;
- Rapid, inclusive and sustained economic growth and poverty eradication could not be achieved without productive capacity building. Job-rich growth and connecting to high value chain is very important. Elements of productive capacity building include: resilience building in the face of shocks and social protection measures, infrastructure development, especially transportation, and energy; technological innovation and diffusion; the building of human capabilities, including through quality education at all levels; gender empowerment, agricultural development and food and nutrition security, framework of domestic policy space that is conducive to prudent but supportive macroeconomic policies; the roles of state and private sector, and the protection and sustainable management of natural resources;

- To be affective, any development agenda must include a strategy to empower women and be grounded on principles of good governance at all levels; furthermore the issues of ownership and capacity of LDCs need to be taken into account;
- Addressing climate change is also a key challenge. If the international community does not take adequate and timely measures to tackle climate change, sustainable development will remain out of reach for many LDCs, especially those that are at the forefront of the dire effects of climate change, such as the low-lying and island countries, countries with deserts and degraded mountain lands.
- Also development effectiveness demand good governance at all levels. On the one hand, it demands inclusive decision-making process, greater transparency and accountability and thus tackling corruption. On the other hand, it requires that trade, financial and technological architectures fully reflect the concerns and aspirations of LDCs and also provides space for their full participation in global decision-making processes. It also demands that development partners deliver their commitments towards LDC development;
- Realizing LDC development aspirations demands effective means of implementation, including stronger domestic resource mobilization, increased quantity and quality of ODA, FDI and remittances as well as tapping into innovative finance and risk-management instruments as well as climate-change finance; South-South cooperation as well as regional integration will also be of great importance;
- The huge gaps in data availability for MDGs (including poverty) and in proposed new areas in LDCs need to be addressed. These data are not only needed for monitoring of a new partnership but also for policy planning at the national and local level.

- Let me also state that poverty eradication, economic growth and sustainability have to go together, as they are mutually reinforcing.
- LDCs are depending directly on the natural resources than many other countries. Therefore disaster risk reduction is key to them. Similarly, they see very closely the nexus between food security water and energy in daily lives.

Let me also say a few words about the sixth meeting of the open working group on SDGs, which took place in December and had a session on countries in special situations. The co-chairs in their summary stressed that LDCs need special attention. For example they need international support to strengthen domestic capacities. Reference was also made to the IPoA, for example the target to significantly increase access to telecommunication services, while striving to provide 100 per cent access to the internet by 2020. It was discussed at the OWG whether this could be adopted as a universal target. Likewise the target to double the share of LDC exports in global exports by 2020 was discussed. In this context also the importance to implement existing commitments was highlighted, for example with respect to duty-free quota-free market access. Furthermore enhanced support in acquiring modern technology tailored to productive capacity building was discussed, including the operationalization of a proposed Technology Bank dedicated to LDCs.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

To everything, there is a season. This is time to get LDC priorities fully on board, while shaping the SDGs and post 2015 development agenda. We should not miss the boat, or else the world would be poorer. Therefore, our purpose of the meeting here is to dig a bit deeper. We have much more at stake. We have to get the goals, priorities and the means and the process

right to have an effective delivery on the ground. That alone is the barometer of our success.

Therefore, these are some of the things that we could be looking at here:

1. How can IPOA be fully integrated into post 2015 development agenda? New realities of the world such as the degradation of the natural capital of the world and persistence of poverty demands new solutions.
2. What are the key priorities, which would directly deal with various dimensions of deprivations in a focussed manner?
3. How to confront structural challenge and the vulnerabilities?
4. Means of implementation is critical, how do we ensure that for LDCs?
5. What are the measures to strengthen mutual accountability of national ownership and global commitments to ensure effective delivery?
6. How do we ensure the multistakeholder approach with holistic collaboration among civil society, academia, philanthropic organisations and the private sector.

Our discussions should help create a better course of action for a better future for all. We are setting our sights on reaching the shining city on the Hill. We should all reach there, bar none and certainly LDCs. I believe that it is perfectly doable, given our collective will and resources. It is also desirable from all perspectives, moral, peace and stability and promotion of enlightened interests of the global community.

Thank you.