



World's least developed countries gather in Benin to call for new partnerships to build productive capacity

New York, 28 July 2014 – Ministers and senior government officials from across the world and United Nations representatives have gathered in Cotonou, Benin, for a special four-day meeting to explore a range of concrete proposals to strengthen the ability of the world's forty-eight least developed countries (LDCs) to produce more goods and services and trade in world markets more efficiently thereby accelerating their sustainable development.

This meeting is hosted by Benin, the Chair of the LDC group, in close collaboration with the UN Office for the Least Developed Countries, Landlocked Developing Countries and Small Island Developing States, (UN-OHRLLS) and the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP).

Increasing productive capacities in the LDCs is seen as a defining challenge and an opportunity for poverty alleviation rapid, inclusive and sustainable development in the decade to come. The meeting will focus on policy framework and institutions, the development of value chains, infrastructure, access to energy and international support measures.

The meeting, organized under the theme 'New Partnerships for Productive Capacity Building in the Least Developed Countries', will run from 28 to 31 July and is intended to strengthen cooperation between the LDCs and their development partners, both traditional and emerging.

High Representative for the Least Developed Countries, Landlocked Developing Countries and Small Island Developing States. Gyan Chandra Acharya said, "The conference is an invaluable opportunity for governments, the United Nations, private

sector and civil society to come together to strengthen and expand multi-stakeholder efforts towards significant and robust partnerships. It is particularly prescient given the on-going discussions on the post-2015 development agenda.”

Acharya added that strategic partnerships are a key tool in advancing the global development agenda. “Traditional development partners, emerging countries in the south, and the LDCs themselves have a shared and collective responsibility to do more to ensure that partnerships are transformative, inclusive and meaningful” he said, adding that “development partners should be encouraged to do more by channelling aid to support productive capacity building in the LDCs, leveraging aid to encourage investment flows and facilitating trade and promoting technology transfer in a coherent manner. The emerging countries in the south could also substantially enhance their efforts to support the LDCs.”

Last September, a report published by the UN-OHRLLS showed that after many years of economic stagnation, the LDCs are now achieving encouraging progress with some signs of structural transformation.

The report, however, cautioned that most LDCs continue to face structural challenges and their progress is uneven. Concern was also raised over the deleterious impact of climate change on many of these nations. As it stands, the majority of the LDCs will not meet most of the Millennium Development Goals by 2015.

Speaking ahead of the meeting, the Director of the Regional Bureau for Africa of the UNDP, Abdoulaye Mar Dieye, called for sustained, inclusive and people-centred development in the LDCs.

The key for LDCs is to “diversify into new, sustainable, job-rich, productive sectors so as to transform the structure of their economies, while building an environment in which development gains are broadly shared,” he said.

For more information, please contact: Louise Stoddard. Email: stoddard@un.org