

Please check against delivery



Statement

by

Mr. Gyan Chandra Acharya

The High Representative for LDCs, LLDCs and SIDS

Stocktaking meeting of the Least developed countries Expert Group (LEG)

Landmark Hotel

Bangkok

Thailand

9 March 2015

Mr. Youssef Nassef, UNFCCC,

Ms. Caitlin Wiesenthal-Antin, UNDP

Mr. Batu Uprety, chair of LEG

Mr. Giza Gaspar Martins, chair of LDCs

Excellencies,

Distinguished participants,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

It is a pleasure for me to be here with you today at this important meeting.

Let me thank the UNFCCC and UNDP for jointly convening this very timely and important meeting.

In the lead-up to Paris, all related meetings, particularly those concerning the LDCs, are of high importance. While focus has rightly been on the outcome and push for strong and ambitious commitments, the special significance of structures, mechanisms, and institutions like LEG in providing dedicated technical support, advocacy and advice to LDCs should be duly recognized.

Indeed, the role that LEG has played since its inception has been an invaluable one for LDCs. Its rationale are clear for us. If there are common institutions and mechanisms for all the countries, LDCs, because of their lack of capacity and representation, would hardly have an opportunity to get due benefit from those mechanisms. In this connection, therefore, this meeting is of particular importance to LDCs.

In many ways, the landscape has changed since 2001, when the LEG was established.

In terms of the climate challenge itself, the IPCC's Fifth Assessment report finds that during the decade 2000–2010, emissions have been higher “than any previous decade since 1750” and “between 2000–2010, greenhouse gas emissions grew on average 2.2% per year compared to 1.3% per year over the entire period 1970–2000”.

The sobering reality, as the IPCC points out, is that regardless of future emissions, the world is already on the path towards further warming, due largely to past emissions and inertia in the climate system. Climate change impact is here and now. In LDCs, desertification, glacier melting and coastal erosion, ocean acidification and sea level rise are all a stark reality and already a major challenge in reducing poverty and ensuring livelihood for a large number of people in LDCs.

Given this science backed evidence, the transition from the development and implementation of National Adaptation Programmes of Action (NAPAs) to the effective implementation of National Adaptation Plans (NAPs) is vital. Because regardless of the ambition of the outcome of Paris, and I hope that it would be strong and substantially ambitious, the fact is that LDCs will have to adapt to the adverse impacts of climate change for the foreseeable future.

Therefore, the relevance of institutions like LEG will be all the more pronounced going forward.

Climate change is a global phenomenon that affects us all. But in our advocacy efforts in favor of LDCs, we have all consistently stressed that while this is so, the structural handicap and capacity as well as resource constraints of LDCs present adaptation challenges in such a way that LDCs cannot overcome these on their own. Moreover, such climate change impacts have acutely undermined their poverty eradication efforts, resilience and sustainable development prospects. That is the fundamental reality in terms of their limited capacity to deal with the climate change. Hence the special need for a robust, well funded and dedicated mechanisms for LDCs in all the relevant global processes.

For LDCs, national leadership and ownership, like for every one else, is fundamental, but support and cooperation from international partners are essential. It is on the basis of mutual accountability that we can overcome these complex challenges.

Indeed, the international community has recognized the special situation of LDCs. The fact that the COP established the LEG some 15 years ago is an example of such recognition. And we are happy to see that it has provided a strong platform to promote adaptation efforts in LDCs through dedicated support including through the NAPAs and NAPs.

LEG has rightly uplifted the discourse, work and strategy in LDCs and among their partners for building resilience from climate change. From the preparatory process with granular yet comprehensive national analysis in each LDCs to developing guidelines and technical papers, from the implementation strategies with a multistakeholder approach to the analysis of technical and financial gaps analysis, from the need for technological support and monitoring and reporting gaps, and now on the way to create a NAP portal, LEG has provided both a strong impetus as well as necessary groundwork. LEG has also helped consolidate linkages with relevant institutions and organizations. The scaling up of this work with adequate funding, capacity building and technological support would be crucial. Similarly preparing them better to access GCF and collaboration with other stakeholders would be no doubt invaluable.

Experts here are more well placed to assess your own work going forward, especially in the area of improving delivery of support as well as best practices and lessons learned given the last 15 years of its work. But there is no doubt that having developed NAPs, there should be no time lost to fully implement them and continuously reassess and reevaluate the impacts, practices and policies and strategies with concurrent and effective implementation of projects and programs in LDCs.

Regional cooperation and regional approach will definitely contribute more by linking up the national efforts with the international aspirations. Regional collaboration and synergies will be invaluable to effectively deal with the cross-country climate change impacts. And they are increasingly becoming more and more important as well.

Similarly, the need to ensure coherence with the wider development aspirations of LDCs is obvious to us all. Given the early stage of economic development in LDCs and existence of much less brown industries, there is also a great opportunity to ensure that these countries will be able to follow both the resilient as well as low carbon economic development path.

I would therefore like to make a few observations.

Besides all the issues mentioned above, coherence with the global processes would immensely contribute to uplift the profile of these works. The Istanbul Programme of Action (IPoA) for LDCs recognizes the challenges posed by climate change and the loss of biodiversity, which all have increased vulnerabilities and inequalities and thus adversely affected development gains in LDCs.

The IPoA acknowledges that securing equitable, inclusive, and sustainable economic growth and development in LDCs requires building their resilience to withstand crises and emerging challenges including the impacts of climate change. They have become a much bigger challenge than before. LDCs cannot ensure irreversible and rapid progress without strong sustainable development policies with built-in adaptation programs. Especially the poorest among the poor such as the rural population, marginalized groups and women will bear the disproportionate burden in these countries. And they form more than a majority in these countries. We should not lose sight of that reflection.

The other important global process is the post-2015 development agenda. And while the intergovernmental process is still in progress, it should be noted that the LDCs were active in promoting the need for a standalone goal on climate change in the post-2015 development agenda. Paragraph 13.b of the document from the Open Working Group process speaks of the need to '[p]romote mechanisms for raising capacity for effective climate change-related planning and management in LDCs, including focusing on women, youth and local and marginalized communities'.

Indeed, one of the mechanisms for raising capacity for effective climate change-related planning and management in LDCs could be the NAPs. I certainly see a vigorous role for LEG in the days ahead.

So one of the messages I would like to leave with you is the need to ensure coherence and coordination with all the global processes, so that the mechanisms are effective, they would develop more visibility and support, and in the end, they will help deliver substantially on the ground in LDCs. After all, that is what we have been all looking for.

Secondly, there have been changes in the funding landscape as well since the creation of the LDC Fund (LDCF), which supported the work leading to the development of NAPAs in LDCs. The Green Climate Fund is perhaps the most prominent of these funding sources. I see the need for again building strong coherence with the Green climate fund and ensure how the preparedness is strengthened in LDCs, how a definite share of the fund goes to LDCs commensurate with extreme lack of resources and the disproportionate need, and how funding access would work better for LDCs. We hope that LEG will play a strong role in this regard.

The rise of the Green Climate Fund should not result in diminishing ODA to LDCs. The commitments made by international community with regard to ODA flows to LDCs must be kept.

Last year, the Benin Ministerial Meeting on New Partnerships for Productive Capacity Building in LDCs as well as Kathmandu ministerial meeting of Asia Pacific LDCs also called on donor countries to allocate at least 50% of ODA and the Aid for Trade disbursement to LDCs, taking into account the unique structural handicaps and constraints that LDCs face. These and climate change fund would greatly complement each other, given our strong focus on an integrated approach to sustainable development.

The Green Climate Fund is expected to provide resources for readiness and preparatory activities and technical assistance, including for implementation of NAPAs, NAPAs and for in-country institutional strengthening, including the strengthening of capacities for country coordination, among other things. Close linkages with LEG and LDCs would be critical, given its specific mandate for LDCs.

LDCs' advocacy efforts has led to representatives of LDCs in the Board of the Green Climate Fund. This should be celebrated and I am sure that the ongoing consultations between the representatives will ensure that LDCs benefit to the fullest extent possible from the resources made available to them.

With these thoughts, I wish you all successful deliberations over the next couple of days. I look forward to hearing about the outcomes of your meeting.

I thank you for your attention.