Global community meet to assess progress of Least Developed Countries at major UN event

Press Release

Antalya, 27 May 2016- High-level officials from around the world have gathered in Antalya, Turkey today to assess the progress of the world’s Least Developed Countries and their path to sustainable development. The event is set to discuss the lessons learnt over the past 5 years and assess ways forward, highlighting that global peace and prosperity hinges on progress in these countries where almost a billion people face significant development challenges.

The three-day meeting, co-organised by The Office of the High Representative for Least Developed Countries, Landlocked Developing Countries and Small Island Developing States and The Government of Turkey, will assess the progress made on the path to sustainable development as set out in The Istanbul Programme of Action for Least Developed Countries.

“Least Developed Countries have seen significant progress and are a major human and natural resource potential for the world, but more needs to be done to support them” said Gyan Chandra Acharya, United Nations High Representative for Least Developed Countries Landlocked Developing Countries and Small Island Developing States and Secretary General of the event.

“This event is a major opportunity for the international community to come together and reaffirm global commitments that were made in 2015 to ensure that the world’s poorest nations are at the forefront of efforts to build an inclusive and sustainable future for the world”.

The meeting, hosted by Turkey, included high-level representatives and over two thousand stakeholders who have come together from governments, parliaments, international and regional organizations, civil society, private sector, foundations, think tanks and the media.

“It is our humanitarian responsibility to look for solutions to the challenges of the Least Developed Countries”, said H.E. Mevlüt Çavuşoğlu, Minister of Foreign Affairs of Turkey, who reiterated Turkey’s role as an advocate for Least Developed Countries and outlined important steps forward including increasing productivity and the financing of sustainable development in Least Developed Countries.

The Midterm Review of the Istanbul Programme of Action takes place immediately after the World Humanitarian Summit in Istanbul, which focused global attention on humanitarian crises, many of which disproportionately impact people in the Least Developed Countries. In Antalya, the international community will look for solutions to minimize or eliminate these crises through economic stability, peace and security and long-term sustainable development.
Three days of events will focus on how the Least Developed Countries have experienced some progress recently in areas including poverty reduction, reduction in child mortality rates, gender parity and access to internet and mobile networks. Economic growth has also been strong, even though its pace has been more volatile and below the average of the last decade. There has been an increase in the number of countries fulfilling criteria which will lead towards graduation from their status as a Least Developed Country. Strong global partnerships, national leadership and inclusive and accountable institutions have proven to deliver sustainable development in Least Developed Countries.

Despite this, much needs to be done to build productive capacity in agriculture, manufacturing and services infrastructure building and energy access are the key sectors that will have far reaching effects in LDCs to eradicate poverty and promote sustainable development. Least Developed Countries also need support to build their productive capacity, embark into structural transformation and reduce their vulnerability to economic crises, climate-related events, natural disasters and health related threats.

The Midterm Review of the Istanbul Programme of Action runs from 27 – 29 May and includes a number of pre-conference events including an event dedicated to civil society and a private sector forum on investment opportunities in Least Developed Countries. UNFPA co-hosted a ministerial event with the Government of Bangladesh that discussed challenges, opportunities and recommendations for building quality human capital for sustainable development in LDCs. OHRLLS in cooperation with the World Association of Investment Promotion Agencies (WAIPA) hosted an Investment Forum during which participants shared best practices in attracting sustainable foreign direct investment and opportunities that exist in LDCs. Civil Society Organizations (CSOs) inaugurated a three-day Civil Society Forum that will deliberate on the structural causes of poverty, vulnerability and marginalization of LDCs.

Further Information:

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