Statement

by

Mr. Gyan Chandra Acharya

Secretary-General
Comprehensive High-level Mid-term Review of the Implementation of the Istanbul Programme of Action for the Least Developed Countries for the Decade 2011–2020

and

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

Closing Session

Antalya, Turkey
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Madam Chair,
Excellencies, Honourable Heads of delegation,
Ministers, Distinguished delegates
Ladies and Gentlemen

It gives me a great pleasure to address the Closing Session of the Comprehensive High-level Mid-term Review of the Implementation of the Istanbul Programme of Action for the Least Developed Countries for the Decade 2011–2020.

Let me begin by conveying my deep appreciation to you all for your outstanding contribution to the success of the Mid Term Review.

I wish to express my heartfelt gratitude to the Vice Presidents, Prime Minister, Deputy prime ministers, Ministers, president of the general assembly, UNDP administrator, parliamentarians, Ambassadors, heads of UN regional commissions, senior officials of UN and other organisations, and all members of delegations, private sector participants, civil society, academia and members of the media.

During the last three days, about two thousand representatives of all key stakeholders of the Istanbul Programme of Action, namely, Member States, parliamentarians, international and regional organizations, civil society and private sector, gathered together in the spirit of solidarity to fulfill the aspirations of almost a billion vulnerable people.

Together, we capitalized on the unprecedented global consensus and momentum to the concerns and aspirations of LDCs. We reaffirmed and further strengthened our commitment to address the special needs of LDCs for sustainable development.

The Political Declaration that you have adopted embodies the renewed commitment of the international community to the sustainable development of LDCs. It is reflective of the solidarity, spirit of cooperation, and collaboration among all stakeholders of the IPoA.

It recognizes the challenges and vulnerabilities of LDCs and builds on last five years’ success stories and lessons learnt, including progress and constraints confronted. It makes
concrete action oriented recommendations on the way forward. It clearly spells out practical actions to be taken by LDCs and Development Partners at national, regional and global levels.

The outcome document recognizes the importance of strong synergy and coherence in the implementation, and review and follow up of the recently adopted agendas, and the equally ambitious and transformative IPoA. To translate commitments into action on the ground, it recognizes the critical role of genuine, effective and durable multi-stakeholder partnerships between and among governments, the private sector, and civil society, in advancing sustainable development.

This is vital to accelerate the full and effective implementation of the IPoA. It will fast-track structural transformation in LDCs, eradicate poverty and end marginalization, therefore directly contributing to peace, prosperity, poverty eradication and sustainable development for all.

Excellencies,

Allow me to highlight few specific elements from the Political Declaration:

- There is a strong focus on the role that the national leadership and ownership plays in promoting sustainable development in LDCs. Development begins with national commitment and vision. In this regard, the Political Declaration reiterates the importance of domestic resource mobilization, integrated and multi-stakeholder approach in development for the achievement of sustainable development outcomes in LDCs.

- There is renewed commitment to to achieve the target of 0.7 % and 0.15-0.2% of ODA/GNI to LDCs and improve the quality, impact and effectiveness of development cooperation, including though better alignment of international LDCs’ national priorities, reduction of fragmentation and acceleration the untying of aid.
There is a reaffirmation of reaffirmed the need to make use of existing initiatives and programmes on duty-free and quota-free market access for LDCs and on preferential rules of origin for those countries. Also related to this, there is commitment to increase Aid for trade to LDCs both in absolute term and proportionate terms.

There is an invitation to ECOSOC to discuss the adoption and implementation of an investment promotion regime for LDCs at its next annual forum on Financing for Development.

The is call to undertake a study that will consider ways in which Least Developed Countries can manage and withstand shocks such as natural disasters and economic volatility.

There is decision to undertake an in-depth analysis on crisis mitigation and resilience-building for the least developed countries, at the national and international levels, with a view to building and further strengthening crisis mitigation and resilience in the least developed countries, and request to the General Assembly to determine the parameters of this analysis at its seventy-first session.

There is an acknowledgement of the fact that graduation from the LDC category is not as a cut-off point, but as a resolute move towards better and sustained economic development, and virtuous and inclusive structural transformation. LDC graduation reviews are to be comprehensive, taking into account all aspects of the evolving international development context, including relevant agendas.

In addition to the inter-governmental plenary, the meeting featured four high-level roundtables on the priority areas of IPoA, over two dozen side events, a parliamentary parallel event, a private sector forum, a civil society forum, and a pre-conference event. The presentation of the current status and policy invitations, in-depth analysis, vision, and constructive ideas from these meetings and the events, contributed to the success of the meeting.
With the participation of high-level officials, and renowned experts, all the events provided an opportunity for partners to discuss lessons learnt and propose options to intensify action at all levels to accelerate progress in the implementation of the IPoA. Emphasis was laid on the need for greater mobilization of resources both domestic and international, public and private, to meet the development needs of LDCs. There was a common understanding that success of the SDGs will be largely determined by the success in LDCs, as per the guiding principles of leaving no one behind and transformative change. The critical importance of fostering productive capacities with jobs rich growth, and structural economic transformation, human and social development and building resilience permeated all our discourse.

A number of initiatives were called for, aimed at supporting the implementation of the IPoA. They ranged from targeted financial support for LDCs, specific instruments for investment in infrastructure and development, technical cooperation and capacity-building, as well as analytical work to support smooth transition strategies. Concrete suggestions were made at the side events in the areas of climate change, social capital and human capital development, technology transfer, trade and productive capacity, agriculture and food security.

I consider these as your collective guidance to all of us for the next five years in the implementation of the IPoA. We will follow them up with your full support, cooperation, and solidarity.

Excellencies,
The Mid Term Review Meeting is the culmination of more than a year long preparation. We organized series of preparatory events and meetings, working together with our partner institutions and Member States, to undertake comprehensive analyses of the progress, constraints, and challenges on the implementation of the IPoA. Many LDCs prepared national reports. The President of the General Assembly and the President of ECOSOC organized thematic events on synergy and coherence, and implementation of IPoA. Consultative meeting of LDCs and Friends of LDCs were also convened. The UN system has been fully mobilized in this process. A number of reports, including the Secretary General’s report on the status of LDCs and a toolkit-consisting of a set of guidelines and best practices for UN Systems to support the implementation IPoA have been prepared.
These have collectively informed the MTR with on the ground perspective of aspirations and constraints of LDCs with practical inputs.

Excellencies,
Allow me to convey my heartfelt gratitude to our gracious host, the Government and the people of Turkey, for their warm hospitality, excellent arrangements and for the generous support for the participation. Hosting this Meeting here and the Fourth UN Conference on LDC in 2011, is a vivid expression of Turkey’s continued strong commitment and contribution to the cause of LDCs.

I sincerely thank the H.E. Mr. Mevlut Cavusoglu, the Hon’ble Minister of Foreign Affairs of Turkey, for leading all of us with his personal commitment, solidarity and support. Similarly I express our sincere thanks to the deputy Minister as well as you Madame Deputy Under secretary, ambassador PR of Turkey and all the officials of the Foreign Ministry and mission in New York for their support and dedication.

I wish to appreciate the leadership role provided by Bangladesh as the current Chair of the LDCs, and Benin as the previous chair of the LDC Group. I want to express my deep appreciation for your commitment and strong support. I also acknowledge and thank the support provided by the friends of LDCs, ably chaired by the Ambassadors of Turkey and Belgium in New York and also thank the Ambassadors of Belgium and Benin as co facilitators for the outcome document. We count on your continued engagement and leadership in supporting the development efforts of LDCs, and in ensuring the effective implementation of the Istanbul Programme of Action.

I would also like to thank my own colleague Catherine Pollard and all our staff from the United Nations, and the host country, and the volunteers, for navigating us through the conference management and ensuring smooth arrangements. Let me also thank those who have supported the Review Meeting behind the scene, the technicians, the interpreters, security, and the hotel staff for their excellent support. Let me also thanks the media persons for their support.

Excellencies,
In conclusion, I can say with confidence that it has been a very successful conference,
from the perspective of high level of attendance, the depth and breadth of discussions and reflections and a very positive and forward looking outcome document. Allow me to reiterate that LDCs represent almost a billion people, an enormous human and natural resource potential for world economic growth, welfare, and prosperity. Leaving no one behind and protecting our planet is possible only by addressing the special needs of the poorest and most vulnerable group of nations.

We must pool our efforts and enhance our partnerships for LDCs. We must translate all our commitments into activities on the ground to ensure that the next five-year will produce tangible and effective results for this group of countries, and sustainable development for all. I am confident that to MTR of IPOA will make substantive contributions to move us towards that direction.

Thank you.