The Istanbul Programme of Action emphasizes the importance of promoting productive transformation and decent work opportunities in LDCs to achieve sustainable development. Lessons from past experience show that high economic growth in itself does not generate the productive employment needed to eradicate poverty and realize the demographic dividend. There is a need for coherent development strategies centered on jobs.

The quality of jobs is a critical dimension. Most people in LDCs are already at work but their human development potential remains untapped and the incomes they earn are not sufficient to escape poverty traps. It is central to tackle the question of informality that afflicts the large majority of workers in LDCs, supporting a gradual transition to productive formal employment. This is not a simple derivative of economic growth. It requires policies and institutions for voice, rights and protection. Of special importance to LDCs is the introduction of a social protection floor aiming at ensuring greater access to a basic set of essential social services and social transfers, in line with country needs and circumstances. This is a critical complement to the efforts to promote a resilient economy and a stable society.

Since the Istanbul Programme of Action was adopted, the ILO estimates that a number of LDCs have made progress in GDP per capita, growth, macro stabilisation, domestic resource mobilisation, employment and working poverty, and social outcomes. However, a number of LDCs have struggled to progress in many areas and many have even slipped backwards.

Given these developments in growth and employment in LDCs, four key areas are needed to enable decent work and the requisites for productive transformation: job quality and paths to better work; meeting the challenge of poverty by filling income gaps through labour and transfer income; the need for social protection; and the special challenges of fragility and conflict. As the implementation of the SDGs gets underway, it will be critically important to ensure that decent work is prominent in sustainable develop strategies including SDG Goal 8.

The SDGs have set new standards for development. The objective of this event is to review options for LDCs to stimulate job rich growth to achieve the SDGs and ensure no LDC is left behind.


- Mr. Gilbert Houngbo, Deputy Director General for Field Operations and Partnerships
  International Labour Organization (ILO)

Panellists

- Mr Moazam Mahmood, Director, ILO Research
- Mrs Annemie Neyts, Minister of State, Belgium
- Mr Borhene Chakroun, Chief of the Youth, Literacy and Skills section, UNESCO
- Mr. Patrick Nwokedi Osakwe, Head, Trade and Poverty Branch, Division for Africa, LDCs and special Programmes, UNCTAD

Synopsis of the expected outcome:

This session will serve to launch the report prepared by the ILO for the Midterm Review meeting, and provide an in-depth and interactive discussion of good practice in LDCs, highlighting opportunities and challenges. A set of policy options to promote productive transformation, employment and decent work are suggested in the report. This may help countries prioritize actions when developing national sustainable development plans, which have been called for as part of the SDG review process. Specific topics will include export-oriented manufacturing, SME development, skills, improving workers’ productivity and upholding social protection and labour standards. The discussion will also look at opportunities for international and regional cooperation to support job-rich growth and inclusive development in LDCs.