



# MIDTERM REVIEW OF THE ISTANBUL PROGRAMME OF ACTION

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BACKGROUND RELEASE

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## GLOBAL COMMUNITY MEETS TO ASSESS PROGRESS OF LEAST DEVELOPED COUNTRIES AT MAJOR UNITED NATIONS EVENT

ANTALYA, Turkey, 27 May (Office of the High Representative for Least Developed Countries, Landlocked Developing Countries and Small Island Developing States) — 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 five 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-organized 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 for the Decade 2011-2020.

“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,” he said.

The meeting, hosted by Turkey, includes high-level representatives and over 2,000 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 Mevlüt Çavuşoğlu, Minister for Foreign Affairs of Turkey, who reiterated his country'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 such as poverty reduction, child mortality, gender parity and access to the 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 that 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 least developed countries to eradicate poverty and promote sustainable development. Those States also need support to build their productive capacity, embark on structural transformation and reduce their vulnerability to economic crises, climate-related events, natural hazards and health-related threats.

The Midterm Review of the Istanbul Programme of Action runs from 27 to 29 May and included a number of pre-conference events such as one dedicated to civil society, as well as a private sector forum on investment opportunities in least developed countries. The United Nations Population Fund (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 least developed countries. The Office of the High Representative for Least Developed Countries, Landlocked Developing Countries and Small Island Developing States, in cooperation with the World Association of Investment Promotion Agencies, hosted an investment forum, during which participants shared best practices in attracting sustainable foreign direct investment and opportunities that exist in least developed countries. Civil society organizations inaugurated a three-day civil society forum that will deliberate on the structural causes of poverty, vulnerability and marginalization of least developed countries.

For further information, please visit [www.ipoareview.org](http://www.ipoareview.org).

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