

Midterm Review of the Istanbul Programme of Action – partnerships for transformative change in Least Developed Countries

Statement by
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Distinguished Delegates,

Last year was a remarkable year for international development and cooperation. The agreements in Addis Ababa on financing; in New York on sustainable development; and in Paris on climate change, together constitute a new paradigm for global development.

A paradigm of solidarity and promise – where the particular concerns and legitimate aspirations of Least Developed Countries are recognised.

That is why the mid-term review on the implementation of the Istanbul Programme of Action is of such importance. We must focus our minds and efforts on the special situation of LDCs.

This meeting is about addressing their needs. Your needs.

Sweden stands firmly by LDCs. We are reliable.

We consistently contribute 1 % of Gross National Income to development cooperation, well above the UN target. This is Swedish Government Policy since the 1960s.

We are also a top donor to LDCs, allocating 0,3 per cent of our Gross National Income.

We call on other developed countries to **deliver on agreed global commitments on financing**. That is fundamental.

But there is more we must agree and act upon.

Firstly: fair trade – not only free trade.

Sweden has worked and will continue to work for the integration of the LDCs into the multilateral trading system. We champion duty-free and quota-free market access, and reduced trade obstacles, for LDCs. The Swedish government actively encourages imports to Sweden and Europe from developing countries.

Secondly: climate action.

Climate change affects all countries. But the consequences are most severe for the poorest and most vulnerable. Sweden is doing and will continue to do its share.

On mitigation, we have set ourselves a bold target: to become the first fossil-fuel free welfare nation in the world.

And we are taking a leading role on climate finance. Sweden is the largest donor per capita to the Green Climate Fund, and one of the largest donors to the Least Developed Countries Fund.

This year, we are doubling our multilateral climate support to developing countries, with special focus on LDCs.

Importantly: those most in need, should be the first in line. Sweden is making a particular effort to secure the access to financing for developing countries.

We challenge others to follow on climate financing. Live up to the promises.

Thirdly: combat inequality.

I am upset by the rising inequality between and within nations. Inequality is bad politics and economics. It reduces trust and prospects for growth. It affects social cohesion.

We need a global commitment to reverse this trend. And we can do it.

By practicing solidarity among nations, such as through international cooperation, development aid, technology transfer and more. The Technology Bank, hosted by the government of Turkey, can make an important contribution.

And domestically through social dialogue, decent work for all, and ensuring equal access to education, health and other services.

It remains particularly important to work for gender equality. Investing in the education of girls is not only right, but smart.

Fourthly: sensible policies.

The universality of the new development agenda must not divert our focus.

There are special development needs of LDCs: eradication of poverty, capacity-building, promotion of diversified productive capacities, and strengthening social protection. These needs must be addressed.

And we must also commit to smooth transition arrangements for countries graduating from LDC status.

Distinguished Delegates,

Leave no one behind. That is our promise.

Sweden is ready to do its part in fulfilling that promise – and to work with others in solidarity. For those most in need.

Thank you.