Statement

By

H.E. Dr. Yinager Dessie, National Planning Commissioner, with the Rank of Minister

At

The Comprehensive High-Level Midterm Review of the Implementation of the Istanbul Programme of Action for Least Developed Countries

May 2016
Antalya, Turkey
Mr. President,
Distinguished Delegates
Ladies and Gentlemen,

The Ethiopian High Level Delegation is very pleased to be here for the comprehensive high-level Mid-Term Review (MTR) of the implementation of the Istanbul Program of Action (IPoA). My delegation would like to take this opportunity to express deep appreciation to the Government of Turkey for hosting this important Mid-Review.

My delegation is also very pleased over the work that has already been done and would like to pay tribute to the UN Office of the High Representative for the Least Developed Countries, Landlocked Developing Countries and Small Island Developing States (UN-OHRLLS) for the commendable work and for participatory follow-up of the progress of IPoA implementation. The preparatory work for the high-level MTR, we believe laid basis for the success of this Mid-Term Review, we are also convinced that the draft outcome document can serve us well and facilitate our deliberation.

For the Least Developed Countries (LDCs) including my country Ethiopia, this comprehensive high-level MTR of the IPoA has enormous meaning in terms of sharing best practices, identifying challenges encountered & emerging and actions needed to overcome these challenges, so as to further progress in the implementation of the IPoA in the remaining five years period.

Mr. President,

Five years ago, when we embarked on a 10 years historic journey, we had a shared vision and common aspiration as LDCs and development partners. Our overarching goal for the decade 2011-2020 was to overcome the structural challenges faced by the LDCs in order to eradicate poverty, achieve internationally agreed development goals and enable graduation from the LDC category.

Based on these commitments, Ethiopia took bold measures to mainstream the IPoA into its National Development Plan which spanned the period 2011-2015 and proceeded to implement the program as part and parcel of the National Development Plan. Accordingly, encouraging progress have been achieved in the last five years, in areas of economic growth, social development and environmental management with dramatic improvements in domestic resources mobilization and utilization. The average real GDP growth rate registered during 2011-2015 was 10.1 percent which is well above the IPoA’s goal target of at least 7 percent, what we were able to achieve in many
areas, including infrastructure has been enormous. These achievements have meaningful positive impacts in building productive capacity and reducing poverty.

Despite all these significant achievements, in the course of last five years of IPoA implementation, the country has faced serious challenges and constraints including with respect to inflation, declining commodity prices, financial and human capacity constraints, and recently, drought. In this regard, it has become clear that without additional joint efforts, it will be impossible for LDCs and LLDCs, such as Ethiopia to achieve the IPoA Targets by 2020.

Mr. President,

The Istanbul Program of Action is now at the mid-point in its journey towards achieving its targets by 2020 and we are now embarking upon the remaining five year phase of program implementation. To this effect, this comprehensive high-level Mid-Term Review provides greater opportunities for LDCs, LLDCs and their development partners to undertake an all-inclusive evaluation of the implementation of the program of action to share best practices, identify challenges as well as initiatives to address them and reaffirm commitments to further strengthen the global partnership for successful implementation of the program of action in the remaining five year period.

Here, it must be noted that without structural transformation that tackles existing and emerging challenges and capacity constraints, LDCs and LLDCs, including my country Ethiopia, will remain vulnerable to various economic, social, and environmental shocks. In this regard, concrete actions need to be taken to build productive capacity of LDCs and LLDCs for economic transformation and poverty eradication through:

(1) physical infrastructure and human development
(2) technology innovation, development and transfer
(3) value addition to primary commodities
(4) youth development and women’s empowerment and
(5) addressing the challenges posed by climate change.

Mr. President,

The world has witnessed the largest climate change occurrence to date bringing droughts, flooding, destruction of agricultural production and diseases. Ethiopia is facing one of the worst droughts the country has seen in 30 years leaving about 10.2 million people food insecure. To make matters further complicated, the weather
phenomenon has also brought heavy flooding to different areas of the country which has ended up with losses of lives and displacement of many people from their homes.

With its efficient National Early Warning System, Ethiopia is responding effectively in a well organized and coordinated manner to these emergency situations so that no human lives have been lost particularly from the worst drought situation, the country is experiencing in three decades. In this regard, the Ethiopian Government would like to thank all development partners from multilateral and bilateral institutions who are supporting Ethiopia’s development in general and strengthening the National Disaster Prevention and Preparedness capacity of the country to effectively address the current drought and flood emergencies situations in particular.

Mr. President,

The effects of climate change induced disasters on LDCs and LLDCs including Ethiopia, such as drought, flooding and other natural calamities, require recurring human efforts and financial resources for recovery over years after suffering significant damage at the expense of planned development interventions. To avoid and/or to effectively manage such a wasteful and precarious risks, it is important to build resilience in the national economy so as to prevent human loss by any means and avoid deadly damage to and ensure quick recovery of the economy.

This again calls for strong national productive capacity for structural economic transformation and poverty eradication in LDCs and LLDCs which are vulnerable to various economic, social, and environmental shocks. Accordingly, driven by the national vision of becoming a lower middle income economy by 2025, human as well as physical infrastructure development and poverty eradication in all its dimensions should continue to be the priority development agenda of the Ethiopian Government in the remaining period of IPoA implementation and for Agenda 2030 and SDGs.

Finally, let me close by reaffirming Ethiopia’s commitment to achieving the IPoA targets and implementing SDGs by fully mainstreaming into the national development plan.

I Thank You!