Comprehensive High-level Midterm Review of the Implementation of the Istanbul Programme of Action for the Least Developed Countries for the Decade 2011-2020
Antalya, Turkey, 27-29 May 2016
Item 6. Review of implementation: general exchange of views

Statement by
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President,
Excellency’s,
Ladies and gentlemen

2015 was a pivotal year towards the realization of gender equality and the empowerment of all women and girls. The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development envisions “A world in which every woman and girl enjoys full gender equality and all legal, social and economic barriers to their empowerment have been removed”. And while no country has achieved gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls, this vision takes on a particular urgency for the LDCs as the 2030 Agenda also sets out to reach those furthest behind first.

Coming at an opportune moment as all countries gear up for the implementation of the 2030 Agenda, this mid-term review of the Istanbul Programme of Action enables the LDCs and their partners, including the UN system, to assess and refocus their commitment to action, building on the gains achieved in the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, the Addis Ababa Action Agenda, the Sendai Framework, and the Paris Climate Change Agreement, as well as the 20-year review of the Beijing Platform for Action and the 15-year review of Security Council resolution 1325 on women and peace and security.

The Midterm Review clearly reflects a significantly deepened and expanded commitment to gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls. Placing gender equality centrally within the sustainable development context of LDCs will create the enabling environment that is so urgently needed for unleashing women’s and girls’ full potential and their contribution to the well-being and development of their countries.

It is especially welcome that gender equality and women’s empowerment is addressed in a targeted manner, and also as a cross-cutting issue where swift action is needed, including in areas related to agriculture, food security and nutrition and rural development, economy, trade and investment, good governance at all levels, human development, financing for development, science, technology and innovation, migration and remittances, and resilience building.

UN-Women is strongly committed to support and work with partners in helping to accelerate the achievement of gender equality and the empowerment of all women and girls and the realization of their human rights in LDCs. UN-Women is present in many LDCs, bringing to bear our strategic mandate, advocacy, voice and leadership for the benefit of women and girls.
In line with LDCs national priorities, our corporate focus encompasses work on women’s leadership and political participation, ending violence against women, women’s economic empowerment, and women’s leadership in peace and security.

Working with a variety of partners, UN Women’s programmes in LDCs promote women’s ability to secure decent jobs in improved labour market conditions, accumulate assets, and influence institutions and public policies, including in Cambodia, Sierra Leone, and Pacific countries. We support women’s full participation in public and private sector decision-making, including in Liberia and Haiti. We encourage women political candidates through training to help build their capacities, and offer voter and civic education and sensitization campaigns on gender equality, including in Bangladesh and Mali. We advocate for legislative and constitutional reforms to ensure women’s full and safe access to political spheres—as voters, candidates, elected officials and civil service members, including in Afghanistan and DRC. We advocate for women’s participation as the core to the effectiveness of humanitarian action and response to crises, including in Nepal, and increasing the likelihood of reaching sustainable and inclusive peace. We work with Governments to enhance laws, implement national action plans and expand prevention of all forms of violence against women and girls, including in Malawi and Myanmar.

Our support to the full implementation of the Istanbul Programme of Action includes our Flagship Programme Initiatives on, for example: Climate-resilient agriculture; Equal opportunities for women entrepreneurs; Women’s entrepreneurship for sustainable energy; Prevention and access to services to end violence against women; and Decent work and social protection.

UN-Women stands ready to continue to support LDC’s in the achievement of sustainable development.

I thank you.