Concept Note

Towards an integrated approach to the implementation of the IPoA:
Perspectives from African and Arab LDCs

Side-event:
The Mid-term Review Meeting of the Istanbul Programme of Action

Golf Lounge, Hotel Titanic Belek
Antalya, Turkey

Date: Saturday 28 May 2016
I. Background

The Istanbul Programme of Action (IPoA)
At the Fourth United Nations Conference on Least Developed Countries (UN-LDC IV) held in Istanbul, Turkey, in May 2011, the global community agreed on a comprehensive and ambitious global compact in support of the LDC development agenda. Known as the Istanbul Programme of Action (IPoA), this compact rests on the fundamental tenets of mutual accountability and enhanced international cooperation and seeks to guide national, regional and global efforts to overcome the structural challenges faced by the LDCs in order to eradicate poverty, achieve internationally agreed development goals and ensure that at least half the number of LDCs meet the criteria for graduation from the LDC status by 2020.

The UN General Assembly will hold the comprehensive high-level midterm review of the implementation of the Istanbul Programme of Action in June 2016, in Antalya, Turkey, for a period of three days. The high-level midterm review will result in an inter-governmentally negotiated and agreed outcome in the form of a political declaration. The review will undertake an assessment of the implementation of the Istanbul Programme of Action by the LDCs and their development partners. It will share best practices and lessons learned and identify obstacles, constraints and actions and initiatives needed to overcome them, as well as new challenges and emerging issues. The midterm review will also serve to reaffirm the global commitment to address the special needs of the LDCs made at the Fourth UN Conference on the Least Developed Countries and to further strengthen the global partnership for development for LDCs in all priority areas of the Istanbul Programme of Action in order to ensure its timely and effective implementation during the remainder of the decade, while taking into account the post-2015 development agenda as it relates to the LDCs.

An Integrated approach to Implementing the IPoA and the Global and Regional Agendas
The endorsement of Agenda 2030, the Addis Ababa Action Agenda and most recently COP21 by member states of the UN marked a watershed in the global development landscape. Collectively these initiatives call for a shift in the development paradigm that places sustainability at the heart of the development narrative. LDCs have meanwhile been engaged in the process of implementing the IPoA, which seeks to ensure that at least 50 percent of its members meet the criteria for graduation through the eradication of poverty and the achievement of accelerated, sustained, inclusive and equitable growth and sustainable development.

The chronological and substantive overlap of the IPoA with Agenda 2030, the Addis Ababa Action Agenda and the outcomes of COP21 however calls for reflection on how LDCs can implement all the global initiatives in a coherent manner without unduly burdening their national capacities and systems. For African LDCs, which account for the majority of the LDCs, implementation of the IPoA will be even more tasking; it must also take into account Africa’s Agenda 2063 and its First Ten Year Implementation Plan. The side event will share perspectives on how LDCs can leverage the synergies among the IPoA, Agenda 2030 and 2063 for effective and accelerated graduation from LDC status.
Harnessing Africa’s Demographic Dividend in the Context of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and Agenda 2063

The demographic transition in Africa implies a significant increase in the share of working age population. In fact, by 2035, as both infant mortality and fertility rates decline, the number of Africans joining the working age population will exceed that from the rest of the world combined. Basic determinants of growth—e.g. a strong and stable macroeconomic environment, expanding the productive capacity and value addition, integration to the global economy and trade openness, and strong institutions— are the keys to harnessing a demographic dividend. These factors assume particular importance in the case of a rapidly growing population: To harness its demographic dividend, Africa needs to create 18 million new and high-productivity jobs every year until 2035. Investments in education, health care, technology at the early stages of demographic transition are also crucial as they enhance the productivity of the workforce.

Against this backdrop, the side event will explore various ways to support the implementation of flagship projects of the first Ten-Year Implementation Plan of Agenda 2063 taking into account the special role of technology and innovation and the continent’s abundant human resources. With respect to the latter, the event will discuss the importance of harnessing Africa’s demographic dividend for LDCs sustainable development in the context of the IPoA, Agenda 2063, and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

The Specific Case of Conflict Affected Countries

Conflict and instability have a profound debilitating impact on development, including economic growth, health, education and other socioeconomic indicators. Both agenda 2063 and 2030 agenda for sustainable development underline the vital nexus between peace-security and development in achieving sustainable development.

Conflict has resulted in severe loss of life, displaced thousands of families and disrupted livelihoods. At minimum, conflict has reduced the quality of life, compromised the capabilities of people to lead the lives they choose with dignity and severely undermined sustainable opportunities for development. The impact of conflicts in the Middle East and Africa, are evident at various levels, crossing borders, while generating spillover effects that are threatening security as well as socio-economic development of neighboring countries and beyond.

Cognizant of the severe constraints to LDC graduation posed by conflict, this side event will highlight the exacerbated vulnerabilities of conflict-affected African and Arab LDCs which account for 1/3 of LDCs globally. Exacerbated by political instability, conflict affected LDC’s are facing daunting challenges related to their structural vulnerabilities. As a result, these countries fall significantly short of the criteria for graduation from the LDC category. Despite positive developments in other LDC’s, meaningful socio-economic changes are still slow and uneven. Windows of opportunity for socio-economic advancements, even though present in the last four years, have failed to deliver sustainable results.
II. Objective

The objective of the side event is to provide a platform for African and Arab LDCs to brainstorm and craft concrete proposals on an integrated and coherent approach to the implementation of the IPoA and the recently adopted continental and global agendas. It will also provide a platform for all stakeholders to critically assess progress and challenges encountered by conflict affected LDCs while attempting to construct the building blocks for resilience and post-conflict transformation.

The proposed side event will:

1. Provide an overview of progress towards the IPoA
2. Propose a unified framework for reviewing progress on the IPoA that takes into account recently adopted continental and global frameworks.
3. Propose measures for the coherent integration of the continental and global frameworks in national planning frameworks
4. Propose measures to support the implementation of flagship projects of the first Ten-Year Implementation Plan of Agenda 2063;
5. Explore options for seizing opportunities to maximize benefits through special support measures for conflict affected LDCs
6. Highlight a critical set of priorities which would facilitate progress of conflict affected LDCs towards the sustainable development goals

III. Participation

Participants will be Ministers of Planning and Foreign Affairs from African and Arab LDCs, senior policy makers and managers of international organisations and representatives from civil society.

IV. Format

The format of the discussion will be a presentation of the key issues followed by a panel discussion where panelists will provide their perspectives on the issues. The discussions will be guided by a moderator and a chairperson. The hour and a half long event will start at 1:15 and end at 2:45.

V. Contact information

For more information about the Side-event, kindly contact:

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