

Statement by
Mr. Gyan Chandra Acharya, Under Secretary-General and High Representative of LDCs, LLDCs and
SIDS at the Special Body of ESCAP on LDCs and LLDCs held
Bangkok, 25 April 2013.

Mr. Chairman

Madam Executive Secretary Noeleen Heyzer

Excellencies, distinguished delegates

Ladies and Gentlemen,

It is an honour and privilege for me to speak at the special body on LDCs and LLDCs. This year's special body has particular significance, as it takes into consideration the outcomes of the regional review on LDCs and LLDCs. I express my profound appreciation to the Executive Secretary and her able team for supporting in successfully organizing both the events. Both the outcomes contain substantive elements from the Asia-Pacific perspective and will make enormous contributions to carry forward the respective agenda.

At OHRLLS, we attach special importance to the bottom-up approach in the review, follow-up and monitoring of the implementation of the Programmes of Action for LDCs, LLDCs and SIDS. We are working closely with the national governments in LDCs and LDCs to bring the national experiences and overviews to the global processes.

My office synthesizes all contributions received from the national level through various programmes organized by my office, which serves as important inputs for the global level comprehensive documentation. The two important regional meetings on LDCs and LLDCs, special body meeting today and our day-long event of yesterday on the post-2015 development agenda, meaningfully serve to strengthen the seamless link of the national, regional and global processes. We feel the urgency of institutionalizing such processes and practices in the days ahead. These processes can also effectively contribute to sharing knowledge and practices to build an inclusive and sustainable development. Its importance is further enhanced as you look at it from the perspective of building resilience, an issue of great importance to these vulnerable countries. All these contributions will inform the shaping of post-2015 development agenda.

As you are aware, OHRLLS with a substantive support from ESCAP jointly organized a day-long meeting yesterday on the post-2015 development agenda for Asia-Pacific LDCs, LLDCs and SIDS, the countries in special situation and most vulnerable. The meeting was interactive and participatory. The discussions were very rich. The special vulnerability of Asia-Pacific LDCs came up quite prominently. Delegates suggested moving forward strategically with a collective and well-coordinated position on the post-2015 development agenda.

Let me present some of the key points and suggestions of the meeting.

In the area of conceptual articulation, participants emphasized the principles of unity, solidarity, collectiveness and comprehensiveness together with an integrated approach, which should help integrate the fundamental concerns of the most vulnerable countries. Integration of the IPoA and other Programmes of Action in the post-2015 development agenda was underscored. It should

effectively integrate IPoA in order to ensure sustainable development of LDCs and also contribute to enabling half of LDCs to reach the stage of graduation by 2020. Delegates underscored the need for sharing best practices and lessons learned in the implementation of the MDGs. Participants also underlined the need for accelerated focus on the areas and countries where progress is minimum, until 2015, which is less than 1000 days from now.

Together with the progress in human and social development, delegates underscored the need for a structural transformation by moving from low value-added agriculture to manufacturing, processing and high value added products. The need for a new development paradigm was stressed which should be people-centered and inclusive of all three dimensions of development in a balanced way with particular focus on the countries, which are at the lowest level of development ladder and face huge capacity constraints.

It was suggested that the world should pay more attention to results than the processes and the end result should be to enable and empower people. Investment in LDCs is the investment in the future for all of us and is in the enlightened interest of all as it greatly contributes to the global peace, security and stability in an increasingly globalized and integrated world.

Speakers suggested that the post 2015 agenda should come out with a set of universal, focused and interrelated goals with enough flexibility to accommodate divergent national circumstances. Countries' national circumstances, resource endowments and the magnitude of vulnerability should be taken into account while setting the goals and targets.

Issues such as structural constraints, poverty, malnutrition, underweight, food and energy crisis, sustainable agriculture, addressing water pollution and ensuring efficiency in water uses, climate change and disasters were identified as some of the fundamental challenges ahead. Lack of resources, financial crisis, price fluctuations, high transit-transport costs and population dynamics were also identified as big challenges to LDCs, LLDCs and SIDS.

In the area of economic development, participants emphasized the need for strong and inclusive economic growth, employment and decent work for all. The need for building a viable and competitive productive capacity, investment in infrastructure, inclusive and equitable economic growth at a minimum rate of 6 to 7 percent was emphasized. Sustainability both in terms of continuity and inter-generational impacts were highlighted.

With regard to social development, high importance was accorded to social protection and social contract and fairer redistribution of resources to address the inequality and deprivation together with strong components of empowerment of women and all the marginalized groups. Delegates underscored that the extreme poverty was still a big challenge in the most vulnerable countries and suggested to look at the human dimension of poverty. The world should come up with effective strategy of eradication of poverty by 2030, especially at a time when we have the collective capacity and resources to do so. Ambition and vision is critical to energize our action at all levels. Importance of education including quality education was highlighted. Demography and population dynamics, health and nutrition, development of human resources and human capacity were underlined as vitally important.

On the means of implementation, delegates underlined the importance of mobilizing resources domestically. It was noted with grave concerns that the ODA was falling rapidly. Such reduction is also manifested at the national as well as global trends. Participants expressed concern over the fall of ODA by 4 percent in 2012 and 2 percent in 2011, which was alarming and needed to be reversed. They suggested that this was not the time to reduce the ODA. Development partners should not look at the short term difficulties but to take a long term development perspective. It is an investment for a stable and secure future of all. Allocation of ODA on the basis of country's need and the degree of vulnerability was stressed. ODA should leverage the mobilization of other resources. We are all aware that in the long run, domestic resource base with better tax administration and wider tax base provides a firm basis of sustainable development for all. But in the short to medium term, vulnerable countries need ODA for their development.

Remittances, engagement of the private sector were emphasized. It was suggested that private sector's investment as well as south-south and triangular cooperation will complement the ODA shortfall and can facilitate transfer of technology and know-how.

Early conclusion of the Doha round, DFQF market access, trade facilitation and support including through aid for trade and the removal of restrictive market entry conditions both at the border and beyond were also highlighted.

The importance of debt relief was underscored. It was mentioned that a major share of external assistance was spent to payback the debt services. Specific support for the countries who will be graduating from the LDCs status but still remain economically and environmentally vulnerable, are also the priority of LDCs.

The speakers also focused on technological assistance and technology transfer, particularly to address climate change and support green growth and sustainable development. The importance of establishing a technology bank was underscored.

The global partnership is critical to deal with severe impacts of financial and economic crises, food crisis and climate change crisis, especially to them as they are disproportionately affected by these challenges.

In the area of environment, participants suggested for responsible management of natural resources in all the LDCs, LLDCs and SIDS. They suggested that SDGs should be an integral part of the agenda and there should be one universal framework. Effective management of the Oceans as a regional public good, including in relation to protect and promote the interests of small fish farmers was called for.

As regards the regional cooperation, delegates reemphasized the need for regionalism and the regional and sub-regional cooperation, connectivity and integration. That is the wave of the future. It should strongly complement the global process and be a strong building block. They also called for pursuing common vision and common voice of the Asia-Pacific countries.

On governance related issues, some representatives suggested to change the development architecture and paradigm. Delegates underlined the need for strengthening democracy and political stability. It was suggested that countries in conflict and post-conflict situation should receive due

attention. Building legal and institutional framework for anti-corruption was emphasized. Human rights, social justice and the empowerment of women were underscored with a view to promoting them in a collaborative manner.

Coordinated and coherent approach was underlined to avoid the current practice of fragmented support at the national level. Voice and representation of LDCs were underscored. Participation of all stakeholders including the civil society was underlined.

Delegates called upon the international community to extend full support to make the 10 year review conference of LLDCs a success.

Strong follow-up mechanism along with the mutual accountability framework for the post-2015 development agenda was also underscored.

A declaration was adopted by the meeting for consideration of the member states which broadly resonates the priorities identified as above. The declaration recognizes that given the intensity of challenges, business as usual is not an option and calls upon all development partners to fulfill their commitments, take decisive actions and to put the concerns of these countries at the front and centre of the post-2015 UN development agenda, as well as all other ongoing processes including SDGs.

It also calls upon all concerned to ensure that the priorities and actions contained in the programmes of action for LDCs, LLDCs and SIDS are fully and effectively integrated in all the areas of the post-2015 agenda. This is not only a moral imperative, but it is indispensable for the promotion of a stable and peaceful global order.

Finally, I am glad that this special body is considering the final review of the APoA which was successfully held in Vientiane with strong support and cooperation of the Government of Lao PDR and UN ESCAP. I thank the Government of Laos for their generous support and contributions. It has come out with practical but a forward looking suggestion for LLDC conference in 2014. Similarly, I am happy that the special body is also considering the biennial review of the IPoA held in Cambodia. Its periodic review for the effective and comprehensive implementation of the IPoA is critical to lift the LDCs out of poverty and move them on to a sustainable development path. I thank the Government of Cambodia for their generous support and contribution.

In the declaration, the Member States invited the OHRLLS and ESCAP to continue to support these countries, within a framework of cooperation and collaboration, in the substantive areas as well as in the area of capacity building and in the implementation of the United Nations Programmes of Actions for LDCs, LLDCs and SIDS and other internationally agreed development goals.

I thank you all.