

Concept Note

A Side event Entitled: **Towards an integrated approach to the implementation of the IPoA: Perspectives from African and Arab LDCs.**

Organized in the sidelines of the *Mid-term review meeting of the Istanbul Programme of Action:*

28 May 2016, Antalya, Turkey

A. 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 by 2020.

The UN General Assembly has decided to 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 shall 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 countries 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.

Other 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 total, implementation of the IPoA will be even more tasking; it must also take into account the recently crafted Ten Year Implementation of Plan of Agenda 2063 - the continent's blueprint for development.

The specific case of Conflict affected countries

This side event will also highlight the exacerbated vulnerabilities of African and Arab conflict affected LDCs which consist of 1/3 of LDCs globally. **Exacerbated by political instability, conflict affected LDC's are facing daunting challenges related to their structural vulnerabilities** as least developed countries. 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.

Conflict and instability have a profound impact on development, including economic growth, health, education and other areas of socioeconomic development. It has resulted in severe loss of life, displaced thousands of families and disrupted livelihoods. Conflict has at minimum 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 spatial levels and forms, crossing borders, while generating spillover effects that are threatening security as well as socio-economic development of neighboring countries and beyond.

B. Objective

The objective of the side event is to provide a platform for African 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 the recently adopted frameworks.
3. Propose measures for the coherent integration of the continental and global frameworks in national planning frameworks
4. Explore options for seizing opportunities to maximize benefits through special support measures for conflict affected LDCs
5. Highlight a critical set of priorities which would allow facilitate progress of conflict affected LDCs towards the sustainable development goals

C. Participation

Participants will be African and Arab LDCs Ministers of Planning and Finance or their designates and representatives from civil society and the private sector.

D. 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 side-event will last approximately 2 hours.