

# THE COMMITMENT



## The World Prepares to Partner with the LDCs for Global Prosperity



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United Nations

UN OFFICE OF THE HIGH REPRESENTATIVE FOR THE LEAST DEVELOPED COUNTRIES, LANDLOCKED DEVELOPING COUNTRIES AND SMALL ISLAND DEVELOPING STATES

# India, Turkey and LDCs Pave the Way for Greater South-South Cooperation

**O**n February 18-19, 2011, India welcomed LDC delegations for a pre-conference event on “Harnessing the Positive Contribution of South-South Cooperation for Development of Least Developed Countries” in the run up to the Fourth UN Conference on the Least Developed Countries (LDC-IV) in Istanbul. Hosted by India’s External Affairs Minister and Foreign Secretary, the event enjoyed high-level attendance by several ministers and representatives of the LDCs, the Turkish Minister of Foreign Affairs H.E. Ahmet Davutoğlu, Secretary-General of LDC-IV Cheick Sidi Diarra, and observers from several development partner countries and UN agencies.



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credit line facility over the next five years to be used specifically for LDC projects and programmes. The announcement underlined India’s commitment to LDC development and South-South cooperation and set a tone of real commitment to ensuing discussions.

Substantively, the event included presentations on India’s ITEC programme, its Duty Free Tariff Preference Scheme, the India-Africa e-Connectivity Program and other aspects of telecommunications

including improved market access, investment preference regimes, a “technology bank” and the improvement of synergies in ODA. As a contribution to LDC-IV, the event produced the Delhi Declaration, which presses for strengthened international support mechanisms to address the situation of the LDCs, augmented by increased development assistance and enhanced South-South and triangular cooperation. The declaration calls for an ambitious Istanbul Programme of Action that aims to move at least 50 percent of LDCs to the threshold of graduation by 2020. It notes increased South-South flows of trade, investment and assistance and asserts that harnessing this must complement, not a substitute, North-South cooperation. The declaration calls for the early conclusion of the Doha Round, the promotion of private enterprise and foreign direct investment, strengthened energy security, initiatives for the scaled-up transfer of technology to the LDCs and the immediate disbursement of funds for mitigating and adapting to climate change.

Mr. Cheick Sidi Diarra noted the great potential of South-South cooperation as a “force multiplier” in LDC development. He advocated a “new international support architecture” for tackling the continued difficulties faced by the LDCs and reiterated the need “to adopt renewed support and cooperation mechanisms to enable LDCs to reap the full benefits offered by South-South cooperation.” All eyes now move to Istanbul where delegates hope to see an ambitious, forward-looking and results-oriented outcome. ■

**The event was hailed as a key pillar of the LDC-IV preparatory process given the importance of, and greatly increased prospects for, South-South cooperation.**

The event was hailed as a key pillar of the LDC-IV preparatory process given the importance of, and greatly increased prospects for, South-South cooperation. Events began with India’s announcement of significant new commitments to the LDCs, including: an additional 5 scholarships every year under the Indian Technical and Economic Cooperation (ITEC) Programme for each LDC; a special fund of USD\$5 million over the next five years for the follow-up to LDC-IV; and a US\$500 million

infrastructure. Delegates engaged in a lively debate on the issues surrounding LDC development and the potential for South-South, regional and triangular cooperation. The changing geography of trade, investment, technology and development assistance, increasingly oriented to the South, underscores the great potential for stimulating further cooperation on policy and initiatives. Delegates were tasked with the question of how to facilitate this.

Several concrete ideas were discussed,



A montage of activities in the Least Developed Countries in preparation of the Fourth UN Conference on the LDCs to be held in May in Istanbul, Turkey.

# First Intergovernmental Committee Prepares for LDC-IV

At its first plenary meeting on January 10, the Intergovernmental Preparatory Committee discussed activities under way for the Fourth United Nations Conference on the Least Developed Countries (LDC-IV), scheduled to take place in May. The meeting was the first of four plenary events in a four-day session at UN Headquarters, New York.

In total, the Committee heard 55 statements: 43 from Member States and 12 from intergovernmental organizations. The Secretary-General of the Conference, Cheick Sidi Diarra (Under Secretary-General and Special Adviser on Africa and High Representative for the Least Developed Countries, Landlocked Developing Countries and Small Island Developing States) briefed the Committee on pre-conference events. Turkish Ambassador Ertuğrul Apakan gave remarks in his capacity as the host country

representative for the Conference; Anda Filip, Permanent Observer of the Inter-Parliamentary Union to the UN, spoke about the parliamentary track of the Conference; Arjun Karki, Chair of the Civil Society Organization Steering Committee, addressed the civil society track; and Gavin Power, Deputy Executive Director of the UN Global Compact Office, discussed the private sector track.

During the latter half of the session, the Committee held six informal meetings to deliberate the desired outcome of the Istanbul Conference. The basis for discussion was a draft document called, "Compilation of Contributions for the Outcome of the Fourth UN Conference on the Least Developed Countries."

The representative of Turkey briefed the Committee on practical arrangements and



The Intergovernmental Preparatory Committee for the Fourth United Nations Conference on the Least Developed Countries held its first session at United Nations Headquarters in New York earlier this year.

preparations being made by the host country. The Committee then held structured discussions on the draft document, following a presentation by the Chair of the Group of Least Developed Countries.

At the fourth and final plenary meeting on January 14, 2011, the Committee considered other matters, including follow-up consultations in the intersessional period, with a view to making further progress towards an outcome of the Istanbul Conference, based on the non-paper and other inputs. ■



Lakshmi Puri, Director, UN-OHRLS addresses the preparatory event on Science, Technology and Innovation.

The new Programme of Action resulting from the upcoming conference for least developed countries (LDCs) in Turkey can make a big impact by addressing the role of science, technology and innovation (STI) in the development of LDCs, according to participants at a preparatory event of the conference.

"Science, Technology and Innovation: Setting Priorities, Shaping and Implementing Policies for LDCs" was held by TUBITAK and

## Science, Technology and Innovation: Unexplored Issues for LDCs

UNIDO on February 7-8, 2011 in Istanbul, Turkey. The meeting participants noted that previous LDC Programmes of Action (PoA) had not addressed this issue sufficiently and that it was precisely this area where the new PoA could make a real difference. The lack of STI capabilities is both a cause and effect of being least developed and LDCs are characterised by unarticulated knowledge systems, a lack of sufficient entrepreneurial activities and under-resourced institutions, participants concluded.

Attendees agreed that institutional change was required for upgrading knowledge systems and production capabilities in LDCs and that it was necessary to establish an enabling environment to promote acquisition and adaptation of technology. Promoting entrepreneurship that can transform innovative ideas into products

and processes and integrate STI in education policy is crucial to achieving technology-integrating development in LDCs.

A substantial increase in the share of STI in official development assistance (ODA) is necessary, participants concluded, and ODA would have to be channeled to address under-investment of STI-related activities in LDCs. Some broached the idea of a Global Facility for STI development in LDCs with the goal of helping LDCs access and absorb critical technologies. Such a centre could bring together existing bilateral and international organisations and related programmes and tailor them to the needs of LDCs. The centre could act as a clearing house for technology transfer on concessional terms. The Turkish Government offered to host such a facility in Istanbul. ■

# Officials Debate Key Issues for Promoting Universal Access

A pre-conference event on promoting universal access to essential services in least developed countries (LDCs) took place on March 10, 2011, and deliberated four key themes: promoting universal access to education, energy, health, and water and sanitation. Three LDC Ministers attended the meeting and contributed to the discussions by sharing their national experiences in the four thematic areas. Also in attendance was the UNESCO Director-General, as well as representatives from UNESCO, UNIDO, UNICEF and UNDESA, who moderated the panels on universal access to education, energy, health and water and sanitation respectively. Two civil society organizations from LDCs also attended the event.

The meeting reaffirmed the need to develop policies that link economic and social considerations. Evidence shows the development of human capacities in LDCs is affected by such factors as low school

enrollment and low health, nutrition and sanitation status. The meeting underscored the need for strong political will and commitment in promoting universal access to essential services in LDCs. While the advantages of public and private sector partnerships was recognized as a vital ingredient for enhancing access to essential services in LDCs, leadership from national governments must also be enhanced. Leadership roles include better coordination among government authorities, as well as carefully planned and adopted policy and regulatory frameworks.

Participants also highlighted the need to adopt incentives that would attract entrepreneurs to invest in providing essential services. Creating enabling environments that are conducive to SME delivering essential services at affordable rates could help contribute to increasing access to essential services. Attendees also discussed the need to



A pre-conference event on promoting universal access to essential services in LDCs took place this month. High Representative Cheick Sidi Diarra with the Secretary-General of UNESCO Irina Bokova.

decentralize services to address the disparities that have emerged in LDCs between the rural and urban dwellers. Rural dwellers often miss out on infrastructure and facilities, as well as access to the essential services. Examples of successes in decentralization involved the energy sector and the move from centralized grids to off-grid installations in rural areas, which have proven to be hugely beneficial for the rural dwellers in LDCs.

Participants agreed that the Istanbul conference and a new programme of action for LDCs for the next decade should give underscore the need to promote access to essential services. The meeting also underscored the fact that all these essential services are interrelated and comprehensive promotion of these services will contribute to improving the human condition in LDCs. ■

## U.S. POLICY DIALOGUE EVENT: Global Cooperation and the LDCs at Brookings Institute

On February 22, 2011, Africa Growth Initiative at Brookings, InterAction and the Center of Concern co-organized a discussion on U.S. and global policy in the Least Developed Countries (LDCs) with a particular focus on LDCs in Africa. The panelists included Cheick Sidi Diarra, Secretary-General of the Fourth United Nations Conference on the LDCs (LDC-IV); Dr. Arjun Karki, International Coordinator of LDC Watch and chair and spokesperson of LDC-IV Civil Society Forum; Steve Radelet, Chief Economist of the U.S. Agency for International Development; and Brookings Fellow Laurence Chandy. Senior Fellow Mwangi Kimenyi, director of the Africa

Growth Initiative, gave introductory remarks and moderated the discussion.

The panel discussion touched on the most contingent issues in the LDCs, such as food security, trade preferences and debt-relief initiatives. Mr. Diarra reiterated the pivotal role of the United States in supporting LDCs with international development aid. He highlighted that traditional donors like the United States should explore proposals and initiatives on innovative sources of development financing, extending trade preferences and promoting global market access for the LDCs.

Mr. Diarra called upon development partners for tangible assistance in productive



Last month the Africa Growth Initiative at Brookings, InterAction and the Center of Concern co-organized a discussion on U.S. and global policy on the Least Developed Countries, with a focus on LDCs in Africa.

capacity development, infrastructure and energy development, agriculture and ICT and other priorities areas. He reiterated the inclusiveness of the upcoming UN LDC IV as a platform for governments, parliamentarians, the private sector, civil society and international organizations from around the world to negotiate and explore the full potential of partnerships for meaningful development and prosperity in the world's poorest countries. ■



# LDCs Will Have to Play a Bigger Leadership Role in Implementing Policy Choices

*MediaGlobal's Nosh Nalavala interviews Ambassador Brian Bowler, Permanent Representative of Malawi to the United Nations*

Malawi representatives have often mentioned in several forums that the aspiration of the Malawian people was to graduate from the least-developed countries' list and become a middle-income economy by 2020. How real is this desire and do you feel it will happen soon?

Our President, Ngwazi Professor Bingu wa Mutharika, has made substantial strides in our country's economy over the last five years. His Democratic Progressive Party has transformed Malawi and put it on the road to prosperity. The DPP has made phenomenal progress in transforming Malawi from a food deficit to a food surplus and food exporting country. It has reduced the number of people living below "poverty line" as well as achieving the rate of economic growth averaging 7.5 percent annually. In order for us to achieve our goal of becoming a middle economy we must see that our country continues this momentum in our economic growth fast enough to bring prosperity as well as transformation from a predominantly importing and consuming country to being a predominantly producing and exporting country. Our goal is to gradually emerge as an industrial nation capable of transforming our agriculture, raw materials, and minerals into wealth for our country.

*The Malawi government has come up with a Malawi Growth and Development Strategy. Has that Strategy yielded any positive outcome?*

The Government of Malawi is undertaking concerted efforts in eradicating poverty and improving the welfare of its people. Malawi has made tremendous progress towards achieving the goals we set out to achieve. One of our greatest accomplishments has been the Agricultural Inputs Subsidy Programme (AISP) that has allowed over half of Malawi's farmers to receive vouchers allowing them to receive fertiliser and maize at a subsidised rate.

*Malawi has set ambitious targets for realizing the MDGs through medium-term national development strategies. How close are you to achieving the MDGs?*

The 2010 Malawi MDGs Report shows that progress has been achieved in attaining the eight MDGs. Five of the goals are likely to be achieved, and significant progress has been

made on the other three, despite Malawi having a much lower starting base compared to other countries. The five MDG targets that are likely to be achieved are eradicating extreme poverty, reducing infant mortality, combating AIDS and Malaria, ensuring environmental sustainability, and developing global partnership for development. In regards to eradicating extreme poverty the proportion of the population living on less than one dollar a day has declined from 50 percent in 2005 to 39 percent in 2009.

The three MDG goals that are unlikely to be attained are achievement of universal primary education, improvement of maternal health, and promotion of gender equality and women empowerment. The last of the three MDG goals that is unlikely to be attained is the promotion of gender equality, although, significant progress has been made on the ratio of girls to boys enrolled in primary school which at 1:3 has already surpassed the 1:1 target.

**Our goal is to gradually emerge as an industrial nation capable of transforming our agriculture, raw materials, and minerals into wealth for our country.**

*Malawi, at a preparatory conference for LDC-IV, indicated, "the upcoming Istanbul Conference would offer a chance to revitalize global partnership appeal to development partners to open their markets to goods from Least Developed Countries, attract meaningful investment, and appeal to developed nations to live up to their financial pledges." These are very similar to the Brussels Programme of action. How different will this conference be in terms of implementation?*

The general consensus between the LDCs shared at the preparatory conference meetings was that in order for the new Programme of Action to be implemented successfully the

LDCs, such as Malawi and others, would have to play a bigger leadership role in implementing the policy choices. The preparatory meetings have given the LDCs a chance to review the progress and shortcomings of the BPoA allowing us to improve the formulation and implementation of the new Programme. We believe the new Programme must also have realistic, narrowly focused goals that need to be carefully monitored and followed-up. This would be the true measure of the success of the Programme.

*The Africa Regional Preparatory meeting held in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia concluded that despite improved economic growth in African LDCs during the decade, progress towards poverty reduction has been limited. Do you see that happening to Malawi?*

Absolutely not. The best indicators for poverty reduction are life expectancies, infant mortality rates, food security, and HIV statistics. All of these issues have seen significant improvements in Malawi.

*The agriculture sector, which is the mainstay of most African LDCs' economies, has been characterized by underinvestment and low productivity, and has been unable to feed a large number of people, let alone provide decent jobs for the unemployed rural population. Do you feel that Malawi has turned its economy around, especially since it hopes to graduate from the LDC list?*

Malawi has made great advancement in improving its economy. Macroeconomic growth has improved significantly over the past couple of years. Excellent weather and the distribution of subsidized fertilizer have helped our agriculture-based economy grow. Economic growth has been achieved averaging at 7.5 percent annually. The main goal of Malawi's agricultural sector is to maximize contribution to economic growth by increasing production for national and household food security as well as agro-processing and manufacturing for both domestic and export markets. Our country is self sufficient in poultry production, and there has been growth in dairy production (15%), beef production (3%) and goat production (7%). ■

# Australia Assists Small Island States Adapt to Climate Change

*MediaGlobal's Nosh Nalavala interviews Ambassador Gary Quinlan, Permanent Representative of Australia to the United Nations.*



Photo by Kamma Thordarson

Ambassador Gary Quinlan, Permanent Representative of Australia to the United Nations

***This year Australia removed tariffs on good originating from Least Developed Countries. Do you feel that this will help boost imports from these countries and at the same time impact prices, income or jobs in Australia?***

Yes. We've long been committed to trade reform. In the mid 1980s we made some drastic changes in domestic economic policy to position ourselves for a globalised world. Tariff reform was one of the ways, internal financial reform was another and labour market reform was the third part of the tripod. Tariff reform worked for us and we've become one of the most successful economies of the world because we made those changes. So our own experience has shown it works, it makes countries domestically more efficient, economically. Because industries and businesses sort themselves out to become more competitive.

***You just mentioned the Istanbul Programme of Action, I'd like to come back to the Brussels Programme of Action, obviously Australia was one of the signatories. The developed countries have not kept their commitment to the LDCs. How does Australia figure in terms of their commitments?***

Number one: We need to do better. Number two: We've said that publicly. Number three: We are doing better. All of us have failed to meet various commitments we've made in the past, and we have to do better than that. In Australia's case we've doubled the aid budget over the last 5 years and we have committed to doubling it again by 2015.

In absolute terms, it's a big aid budget, currently about 4 billion Australian dollars. That will increase up to 9 billion by 2015. Historically, most of that has been focused on the immediate region, the Asia Pacific. About 60% of aid budget has gone to vulnerable countries in that region. What we've been doing over the last 4 years is diversifying that much more globally to take into account the fact that we recognise that we have greater responsibility, particularly in the case of LDCs and Africa where historically we've only had a small development programme.

We know we need to do better, it's part of a partnership. It is a big thing to increase aid budgets so consistently. In the face of big budget cuts we've quarantined the aid budget from any cuts, and it is the only part of government expenditure which will not be cut, it will be increased. There has been broad support for that in Australia.

***Even though Australia is in the Southern hemisphere, it is technically considered a developed country. In that context how do you view South-South cooperation?***

When you look at Australia, geography is different. We are in the South, obviously, but we're also surrounded by developing countries and small island developing states which gives us a slightly different perspective.

On South-South cooperation, the answer is; if you look at where the world is going in terms of trade growth and growth generally; emerging economies and developing economies are becoming a bigger and more important part of that. Overall the growth potential is far greater in the so called "South" than it is in the more mature economies in the North. New technologies from the South are also often more appropriate. South-South is therefore important but does not reduce the need for North-South cooperation.

***You are attending LDC-IV, what are you bringing to the table at LDC-IV? Are you bringing concrete financial assistance?***

Our main financial assistance is what we've committed to do in the budget, the overall doubling of our development budget.

The actual way in which that money will be programmed and dispersed obviously needs to take into account how developing countries themselves define their needs. This has to be a partnership, we want to programme our future increases to meet what LDCs themselves have defined as their priority needs through the new Istanbul Programme of Action. Clearly we would expect to continue to give a large amount of support to education and health. On current programming Australia will spend 5.6 billion dollars until 2015 on education. On health it's 1.6 billion on maternal and child

health. Most of this will go to developing countries and a lot of it will go to LDCs.

***Will your increased aid-budget focus on countries outside your region?***

Yes it's going to focus globally. At the moment 60% of the budget goes to countries in the Asian Pacific region plus now to Africa. We will never be a massive donor but we're a significant donor. We want to provide more but it's going to have to be in response to demand. We need to know what the needs are. Then we can see how we can allocate money effectively.

***You are aware of the constraints that Small Island Developing States face with the impact of climate change. Do you agree with the demand of the small islands that the global average rise in temperature be limited to less than 1.5 degrees celcius? What is Australia's stance on this, especially since your country faces the brunt of "environmental refugees"?***

In the context of Copenhagen we announced a fast start contribution of 599 million to start immediately. Our funds are available – 80% have been allocated already. This is a global commitment with at least 25% going to SIDS, African countries and LDCs. They are the groups in greatest need.

Prior to that we had already been giving substantial money through our development assistance programme on climate change adaptation but also some on mitigation, particularly to small island states in the Pacific. In August 2009 we announced, at the Pacific Islands Forum, a fund of 150 million dollars intended for small island states to help adapt to climate change. We've always seen climate change assistance for small island states as being essential.

On temperature, we have supported early scientific work on temperatures below 2 deg. Celcius so we can assess the impact and do more on remedial action. ■

# Eminent Persons Group Craft Strategic Message to Encourage Change for LDCs



UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon addresses the Group of Eminent Persons. Under-Secretary General Cheick Sidi Diarra is to his left.

**T**he Group of Eminent Persons held its second meeting in Belgium to discuss a draft report the Group sent to the Secretary-General of the United Nations Ban Ki-Moon. Organized by the Government of Belgium, the meeting also involved a brainstorm session on the Group's advocacy and communication strategy to ensure the highest level of participation at the Fourth

the Kingdom of Belgium, formally opened the meeting, underscoring that the Government of Belgium has always supported the LDCs and was pleased to host the second meeting of the Eminent Persons Group.

President Alpha Oumar Konaré thanked Mr. Achten, saying the Eminent Persons Group was pleased to have him at the

and common responsibility, as it is not only a question of interest for LDCs or their partners, but a shared endeavor and pledge.

Cheick Sidi Diarra, Under Secretary-General, High Representative and Secretary-General of LDC-IV, then briefed the group on preparations being made for the conference. Mr. Diarra focused on the status of the preparatory process for LDC-IV, the summary of the draft report of the Eminent Persons, and the key messages that will support advocacy.

In conclusion, the Group of Eminent Persons planned to finalize the report by March and present it to the UN Secretary-General in the last week of March. The Eminent Persons will also continue their key advocacy role to stimulate high-level participation at the LDC-IV. ■

**The message should evoke a sense of solidarity and common responsibility, as it is not only a question of interest for LDCs or their partners, but a shared endeavor and pledge.**

UN Conference on the Least Developed Countries (LDC-IV), scheduled to take place from May 9-13 in Istanbul, Turkey. The goal of the strategy is to sensitize and win over political commitment and public opinion.

Mr. Dirk Achten, the Secretary General of the Federal Public Service Foreign Affairs of

meeting and to be in Brussels, a symbol of international cooperation and solidarity in the world. He urged the Eminent Persons to come up with a strong political message that would inspire true change. Solidarity and openness to others is, therefore, vital. The message should evoke a sense of solidarity

# LDCs are Well Positioned for Added Private Sector Investment

*MediaGlobal's Nosh Nalavala interviews UN Global Compact's Executive Director Georg Kell.*



Photo by Kamma Thordarson

UN Global Compact's Executive Director Georg Kell

*At LDC-IV the Global Compact is operating a private sector track to "help identify concrete proposals on LDC-related issues of investment, enterprise development and finance." How do you propose to formulate these issues towards a successful Programme of Action?*

We are responsible for the private sector track, the good news here is that the private sector is constantly looking for opportunities to grow further. The emerging market paradigm is well understood now. Many new concepts are well practiced, such as base of the pyramid and frugal innovation. The nature of business is really to expand evermore. OECD markets are saturated in many ways, so the search is on for new frontiers and new opportunities. Our proposition for the Programme of Action is "New opportunities in the next year of emerging markets" – that is our lead theme. We believe that a number of Least Developed Countries are actually extremely well positioned for more private sector investment and business-led market solutions.

*How different will it be from the Brussels Programme of Action?*

Fundamentally different. I have no authority to speak about the political Programme of Action, but businesses have a much greater interest now in exploring new opportunities. Ten years ago the LDC conference was largely about official development assistance, the bargaining between the donors and the recipients. This time another question is equally important: How to get private sector activities going and how to get private sector led growth going to scale. We hope to get several hundred companies there, and be able to showcase opportunities of Least Developed Countries to promote investment. But we will also not shy away from the hard issues because businesses are saying that more than half of the LDCs are fragile states with very weak governments, and sometimes corrupt and abusive regimes. This is well known and businesses are reluctant to invest in environments where there is so much uncertainty.

*How does the Global Compact deal with LDCs that lack governance and are shunned by developed countries for their corrupt practices?*

It's a big issue, one of the biggest issues for getting business kick-started. It's well known that systematic corruption is rampant. There are also exceptions, where there are great opportunities. One way of getting it going is to create awareness about the costs of corruption and bad governance: Businesses don't invest because of high risks and high costs. If you can put in place good processes and sincere efforts to improve the enabling environment you reduce transaction costs and then businesses are more likely to come in and invest.

**Our mission is to integrate UN values into business transactions everywhere. Its about integrating environmental, social and governance issues into economic decision-making so that what economists call externalities are valued when decisions are made.**

*So where does the Global Compact step in?*

We have, under our anti-corruption programme, businesses which are very keen in reducing corruption because of its cost. It's like a tax. You can't become competitive in the global marketplace if you suffer back home from high corruption costs. So businesses have an interest in reducing it and we want to bring the voice of business out to convey this in a loud and clear voice to governments.

*How does the Global Compact judge governance in LDCs?*

We don't judge it, we rely on third parties. Peace is of course the most fundamental. In the absence of peace, no society can prosper. In

the absence of peace, no long-term investment will ever be made. With businesses and investors, a global dialogue continues on the importance of minimizing the negative impacts that feed into conflict and maximizing the positive ones. Employment is often the best answer to conflict. In many countries around the world where there is desperation and youth unemployment, offering employment opportunities is often the best investment you can make into peace promotion.

*Do you function as a funding agency as well?*

No, I firmly believe that idea power is far more important and I'm trying to keep money out of our organisation. We promote entrepreneurship, team performance, business growth, and pragmatic solutions to problems. Corruption is the source of so much evil in the world, and if it is not tackled, I think we will fail in our mission.

*So you plan to bring businesses together on a common platform to encourage investment in the LDCs?*

Yes, primarily to get business growth going, and to have a second look at LDCs to explore whether ongoing activities cannot be scaled up. To explore the notion of collective action where companies work together to reduce the risks and the entry barriers for investments, which traditionally is the main barrier. Also to bring the business voice out, to speak to governments on what needs to be done in order to improve the enabling environment for business to grow and get more private sector activities going.

*In the ten principles Global Compact has underscored, Principle 7, 8 and 9 focus on environmental responsibility. How do you implement your ideals?*

We are quite ambitious; we want to change global markets. Our mission is to integrate UN values into business transactions everywhere. Its about integrating environmental, social and governance issues into economic decision-making so that what economists call externalities are valued when decisions are made.

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*While the Global Compact is a policy initiative, how do you monitor environmental friendly technologies?*

There are two ways of engagement. One is that every company that joins, does so at the CEO level or the board for publicly listed companies. We expect every company that has joined the Compact to do an annual disclosure report.

*To what extent are you involved with environmental issues?*

Environmental issues are very important. The environmental issues have been dominating our agenda, next to corruption. Environmental issues raise fundamental questions, obviously. One is the impact of climate change: drought, water scarcity, unpredictable weather. Many companies all around the world are very nervous about securing supply chains. There is a heightened sensitivity about uncertainties and vulnerabilities. We introduced a new initiative dealing with water called the CEO Water Mandate.

*Are you involved with climate finance?*

Yes, we are making the case that low carbon, bottom-up innovation is possible.

We are supporting such innovation in many countries. One of our most successful initiatives now is called Low Carbon Leaders that identifies critical breakthroughs that meet poverty goals but are also environmentally friendly. We also have the world's largest climate business action platform called Caring for Climate with 450 companies engaged.

*You are also collaborating on an Expo and Trade Fair. What will this Fair showcase? And are you inviting LDCs to showcase their goods to attract potential trade buyers from developed countries?*

Yes, the Trade Fair is an Expo for LDCs to showcase to the international community opportunities of investment, opportunities for scaling up existing partnerships. To present to the world their policies on investment, how business growth is supported, and what opportunities exist there for partnerships.

*Partnership between the private sector and the UN is becoming increasingly popular. Do you see businesses with unfair trade practices joining the Global Compact to escape negative publicity and scrutiny? And how do you work through this process?*

There will never be a perfect answer. There

can only be efforts in place to minimize such intentions. This is an imperfect world; every organisation is suffering from deficiencies of some type or another. The point is really to put in place policies and procedures that aim at improvement and to introduce transparency and disclosure as a way of doing better. We have a very strict disclosure policy and if its not complied with, you get expelled. We have already expelled over 2000 corporate participants for failure to disclose on a regular basis, annually, of progress made. We reckon that about half of the companies that join the Global Compact are not able to fulfil their commitment to disclose at a regular basis their annual progress.

*You have become active with the LDC- IV upcoming Conference in Istanbul, but are you generally active with the LDCs during the year?*

Not in the political work here in New York but at the country level, yes. Wherever we can support the UN, we do. That is what brought us to the LDC-IV conference. We see it as an enormous opportunity to create awareness, to showcase opportunities, to kick-start a new level of private sector engagement. ■

## Civil Society Organizations Mobilize Participation in LDC-IV

As part of its efforts to constructively engage civil society organizations (CSOs) and non-governmental organizations (NGOs) in the lead-up to LDC-IV, UN-OHRLS partnered with LDC Watch – a Nepalese-based global CSO network focusing exclusively on LDC issues – the UN Regional Commissions and the UN Development Programme in the organization of regional CSO reviews of the implementation of the Brussels Programme of Action 2001-2010.

Three regional civil society assemblies have so far been successfully organised. The first of such CSO reviews took place at UN ECA in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia on March 4-5, 2010, in partnership with the UN Economic Commission for Africa (ECA) and the UN Development Programme (UNDP). The Pacific Assembly was held on August 3-6, 2011, in Port Vila, Vanuatu, in parallel with the official 41st Pacific Islands Forum meeting. The Asia Assembly took place on November 22-23, 2010 in Bangkok, Thailand, in partnership with the UN Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP).

**In accordance with Resolution A 63/227, civil society participation is a key component of the LDC-IV preparatory process and the Conference itself.**

In accordance with Resolution A 63/227, civil society participation is a key component of the LDC-IV preparatory process and the Conference itself. As such, the Civil Society Steering Committee was launched on October 19, 2010, in New York, with the participation of civil society representatives from Africa, Asia, Europe, North America and Latin America. The CSO Steering Committee comprises seven highly regarded global CSOs and, since its inception, has provided substantive guidance to facilitate the constructive participation of CSO representatives in the LDC-IV preparatory process. At each of the official pre-conference events of the Conference, two members of the CSO Steering Committee were supported

by UN-OHRLS and invited to address participants. To further ensure an interactive dialogue between Member States and CSOs in the lead-up to the Conference, the organization of the Civil Society Interactive Hearings proceeded in collaboration with the Office of the President of the General Assembly. ■

# “We are Calling for Immediate and Unconditional Cancellation of All LDC Debt”: Karki

Dr. Arjun Karki, Global Coordinator of the Civil Society Steering Committee, interviewed by UN-OHRLS



Photo by Kamma Thordarson

Dr. Arjun Karki, Global Coordinator of the Civil Society Steering Committee

**This campaign should be multifaceted in terms of LDC-specific advocacy, capacity building, research and resource generation that will contribute towards a sustained focus and attention towards pro-poor development in LDCs.**

*In your capacity as the global coordinator of the Civil Society Steering Committee, what do civil society organizations expect to come out of LDC-IV?*

In light of the upcoming LDC-IV, civil society organisations across the globe are gearing up to consolidate a strong pro-poor LDC agenda, focusing on the most vulnerable and marginalised LDC populations—bearing in mind that both poverty and vulnerability are endemic in LDCs and this fact is often carelessly overlooked by stakeholders. We have been mobilising our constituency and beyond towards LDC-IV and are receiving overwhelming support and solidarity in our collective cause towards defending LDC interests. It’s an ethical urgency to reverse the past four decades of development failure in LDCs that has unjustifiably cost the lives and livelihoods of the LDC peoples. We, as civil society, expect Istanbul to recognise this urgency. Istanbul is perceived as a historical point of departure in terms of a new progressive development action for the LDCs, truly paving the road for a constructive decade that will witness at least half of the LDCs graduating from their current status and eventually leading towards a world without LDCs!

*You were actively involved in LDC-III in 2001. How do you perceive the preparatory process and the outcome of LDC IV differently from past conferences?*

Definitely, the enhanced role of civil society in LDC-IV preparatory process is different from the past conferences. I believe this is due to the fact that the role of civil society has been recognised in UNGA Resolution 63/227, which lends the necessary legitimacy and credibility as a key stakeholder. Having said this, however, the enhanced policy space exercised by civil society will be gauged by the quality of the outcome document of LDC-IV, so we are looking forward to the conference being different in this regard. The organisation of pre-conference events this time has facilitated

necessary substantive dialogues on current, as well as future, challenges in LDCs.

Additionally, post-LDC-III saw the creation of the UN OHRLS for LDCs and currently as the Secretariat of LDC-IV. It definitely makes a positive difference. Nonetheless, I would like to underscore the point that the outcome of LDC IV must contribute to the capacity building of OHRLS, civil society, as well as other stakeholders defending LDC interests.

*What are the approaches that you would suggest the international communities adopt to address emerging challenges such as climate change and financial crisis faced by LDCs?*

As I mentioned earlier, the international community must aim for a radical shift in treating development action in LDCs as an ethical emergency. This means contributing to a holistic development that factors in human development in the real sense—productive capacities, social protection, equity, human security—going beyond the dominant market-led economic growth model that literally kills people and our already degrading environment. The international community must adhere to policy coherence and this in turn will bolster pro-poor policy responses by LDCs, thus marking genuine global partnership for development. The current trend of drastic cuts in official development assistance has and will further jeopardise development financing in LDCs, hence the international community must reaffirm and honour their oft-repeated commitment towards LDCs. New and additional Climate Adaptation funds for LDCs should be non-negotiable, given that LDCs are

the least responsible for the climate disaster, while unjustifiably most affected by it.

*Could you elaborate a little bit more on some specific and immediate actions that are most strategic and visionary to address the urgent challenges and priorities for LDCs?*

An immediate action at LDC IV should be an agreement for a dedicated mechanism to immediately follow up on the implementation of the Istanbul Programme of Action, drawing on the momentum of LDC-IV. In fact, such an agreement should be reached before Istanbul! A global campaign on LDCs—that has been missing until now—is the need of the hour! This campaign should be multifaceted in terms of LDC-specific advocacy, capacity building, research and resource generation that will contribute towards a sustained focus and attention towards pro-poor development in LDCs.

One of our key campaigns call for immediate and unconditional cancellation of all LDC debt, which would release the resources towards development financing in LDCs. We also support the calls for Crisis Mitigation and Resilience Building Fund and Currency Transaction Tax that would contribute towards addressing the developmental challenges in LDCs. ■

# Bringing Parliaments Together to Deal With LDC Issues

*MediaGlobal's Nosh Nalavala interviews with Alessandro Motter, Senior Adviser, Economic & Social Affairs of the Inter-Parliamentary Union.*



Alessandro Motter, Senior Adviser, Economic & Social Affairs of the Inter-Parliamentary Union

***Parliaments have not engaged sufficiently in advancing the LDC agenda over the last ten years, what reasons do you attribute to this apathy?***

When you say parliaments a distinction must be made between parliaments in the LDCs and those in developed countries and the rest of the world. The programme of action from Brussels was applicable to countries' governments and parliaments all over the world. Within the LDCs the main issues for parliaments come down to capacities and legal authority. In developed countries, the problem is more that parliaments there don't have the Brussels Programme of Action on their radar at all. They are concerned with 'development', especially with the MDGs and a larger and broader agenda, but they have not zeroed in on the needs of the Least Developed Countries.

"Apathy", as you say, has a strange connotation, such as unwillingness to get engaged, but in reality, within the LDCs' parliaments, there is almost a desperate situation in which parliaments simply are understaffed, don't have the resources and often operate in an environment in which they are overruled by the government while they are supposed to hold to account. There has been little discussion in parliaments on the LDC programme per se.

***Are parliaments in developed countries becoming more engaged in the LDC agenda, both as part of the larger development agenda and as an important expression of North-South partnership?***

When we looked at the last ten years we found little absorption of this agenda in the deliberations of parliaments in developed countries. It's not that they are unaware, but they have not zeroed in on the LDCs. There is a need for greater political will on their part as well as a stronger sense of partnership with the LDCs – including with the parliaments of the LDCs

***What is the mission of the IPU in relation to the Least Developed Countries?***

What we're trying to do is to create greater awareness of this programme and what will

come out of the Istanbul Programme of Action, in a way that we haven't done before. We did not participate in the Brussels programme in the way that we have now. We have now taken this to a higher level as part of a growing agenda for development at the IPU. We supported the national review processes that were part of the preparation for LDC-IV and then the regional and the global processes. Globally we are engaging with parliamentarians in our meetings around the world, we are raising awareness of the negotiations of the new Programme of Action, and then of course we are inviting MPs to participate actively in the conference and in a special parliamentary forum at the conference itself. In April our members will meet in Panama to discuss and adopt a parliamentary message that we will take to Istanbul. In all this, I must say we have been extremely lucky to have found a wonderful partner in Mr. Diarra, the High Representative for LDCs, and in fact his entire office.

***Is the mission of IPU to bring all the parliaments of various countries together like beans on one string towards a common agenda?***

Our role is parliamentary cooperation with respect to several agendas and the first one for us is democracy, which also provides the best political foundation for development. We definitely try to create a parliamentary common ground to build greater understanding among MPs – as policy-makers – of global issues. That is our larger mission.

***As parliaments make new policies and introduce new programmes to deal with the current economic crisis, does gender equality and political participation by women take on an important role?***

IPU is very strong on the issue of empowering women, one of our largest programmes is on equality of men and women in elected offices. So we keep statistics and raise awareness that we are far from 50-50 in the parliaments of the world except for a few, including some surprises like in Rwanda.

The economic empowerment of women is key to development and in more than one way

it must start at the political level of decision-making. If you don't have enough women politicians who are sensitive to the economic potential of women, then there is a good chance that decisions are taken that will not benefit women directly. The overall growth pattern is affected negatively in this scenario in which the potential gains of women's economic activity are not fully exploited. One very clear example of this linkage is in gender budgeting – doing the national budget of the country from a gender perspective. When you make the budget – ultimately a political exercise – you decide what money gets spent on certain enterprises where women might have a leadership role or sectors where women are either underrepresented or overrepresented.

***In most of the Least Developed Countries, development progress is slowing down. They may not make the MDGs and that is negatively affecting women. What roles should parliaments play in a situation like this?***

Development is not going as fast as it should, but it is not "slowing down" compared to, say, the last twenty years: there is progress. Generally, our position is that to advance development we need a stronger focus on *pro-poor* growth. This entails, among other things, proactive social policies and economic policies to support labour intensive industry. And it entails investing in women so that they can enjoy a better return on their labour. When it comes to financing small enterprises, for example, we know that women are often clients of microfinance and it is in part for this reason that we support the further development of microfinance through appropriate policies. When you improve the economic standing of women you also improve social conditions all around. ■

# “Assistance to LDCs has to be Considered as an Investment Towards the Betterment of the World”: Girmai

*Ms. Azeb Girmai, Member of LDC-IV Civil Society Steering Committee, interviewed by UN-OHRLLS*



Ms. Azeb Girmai, Member of LDC-IV Civil Society Steering Committee

*As a member of the LDC-IV Civil Society Steering Committee, what are the development issues you most want to bring to attention during LDC-IV?*

We are now faced with new global challenges that require urgent attention. In addressing those elements, the new program of action needs to build upon what has been achieved so far in the last 10 years. Impacts of climate change will hit the LDCs hard because they have the lowest capacity to adapt. Therefore, improving their adaptive capacity to increase resilience should be seriously considered. The global food crisis is another challenge that will overwhelm LDCs that are mostly net food importers. The ever-increasing food price at the international level is having a direct impact on LDC populations whose spending on food takes a huge share. The new program needs to focus on strengthening their agricultural sector, which for many years has been neglected for various internal and external reasons. This way, LDCs can become self-sufficient and improve the food security and nutrition of their society and improve their productive capacity.

The international community needs a responsible committee to facilitate support for LDCs' request for debt relief, to shift debt servicing toward current pressing issues. Climate financing for LDCs should be given special attention with adequate and additional finance to ODA for adaptation in developing countries, recognizing the damages that climate change has already caused and for the years to come when emission targets are not met. LDCs also need equitable trade agreements.

*With the preparatory work of the conference being well underway, what are your thoughts and concerns of civil society organizations in the lead up to the Fourth UN Conference on LDCs?*

Awareness of the Brussels Programme of Action (BPoA) is limited in all the LDCs, not only among the civil society but the society at large.

This was mainly because the BPoA had no explicit plan from the outset to involve civil society or other stakeholders in implementing, monitoring and evaluating the program. This will have an effect in drafting of the new Programme of Action, as critical assessment of the past BPoA will be limited. At this stage, the considerable effort made by UN OHRLLS to involve stakeholders – not only civil society but also the private sector and the parliamentary tracks – starting in the preparatory process for the Fourth UN LDC Conference (LDC-IV) will enrich the process and the final Programme of Action.

**We are now faced with new global challenges that require urgent attention. In addressing those elements, the new program of action needs to build upon what has been achieved so far in the last 10 years.**

*In which ways do you think that civil society could mobilize and campaign for more awareness and actions from the global community on LDCs and their challenges?*

Civil society should do its part to make the program effective. This, however, can only be possible if the roles and responsibilities of civil society are clearly and realistically incorporated within the program itself. At this stage, as many civil society members as possible have been sensitized through regional workshops, to prepare them to contribute to the realization of the new program in Turkey in May 2011.

*Civil society input is highly emphasized and expected to be incorporated in the outcome of LDC-IV. In what new, innovative ways do you see civil society organizations contributing to the conference and its outcome?*

I think UN-OHRLLS's trust, expectation and conviction to genuinely engage all potential stakeholders will strengthen the commitment of civil society organizations. As a result, now the civil society steering committee is including civil society in the preparatory process so that their voice can be incorporated in the outcome document. This will be done through the civil society hearing in April 2011 at the General Assembly. Furthermore, civil society is preparing to hold a parallel forum at the LDC-IV in Turkey where critical issues on the outcome document will be discussed and forwarded to influence the negotiations.

*In order to ensure that LDC-IV is a meaningful success, it requires strong collaboration of all stakeholders in LDC issues. From the perspective of civil society, what are the expectations on the level of commitment and partnership from the international community?*

The advancement of the LDCs should be taken as a common goal at an international level. As a result, support and assistance to LDCs has to be considered as an investment towards the betterment of the world where all will benefit from a win-win situation in the near future. At this point in time, the international community should be aware that the LDCs are becoming subject to multiple crises, for which they are no culprit. Exacerbating their situation risks reversing all the efforts made through years of development partnership. The genuine and full commitment of all to come up with a realistic and practical new program will be the only way to end – in a relatively short time – the very category of LDCs and convert them into a vibrant, self-sufficient nations. ■

# The LDCs Group has Submitted a Very Good Draft for the Outcome of LDC-IV

*MediaGlobal's Nosh Nalavala interviews Ambassador Michel KAFANDO, Permanent Representative of Burkina Faso to the United Nations*



Ambassador Michel KAFANDO, Permanent Representative of Burkina Faso to the United Nations

***Burkina Faso has often raised the issue of raising ODA. Do you feel that that would be a tangible solution to alleviating poverty and achieving the MDGs?***

I have to say that ODA is not a matter of charity from developed countries. It is first and foremost a matter of political responsibility, a matter of respect of international commitments, a matter of our common future and even survival. I think that if ODA had been sufficiently delivered and non-binding, the developing countries would not still be at this low stage of development.

When the UN General Assembly met at the highest level in September 2010, to review ten years of MDGs achievement, it was clear that some of the member states, particularly in sub-Saharan Africa, would not achieve the MDGs without external contribution.

***How has the financial crisis hit LDCs?***

Developing countries, including the LDCs, have been the most affected by the financial and economic crisis while they are not responsible for it. In a globalised world, our common interest is to not leave anyone behind. We have a common destiny and the same interests.

***Do you feel that LDCs are not making progress because they have not developed viable statistics systems, mobilized financial resources and become more involved in global governance; a sentiment echoed by the UN Secretary-General as well?***

In fact, we noted that in his 2010 Report on the implementation of the Brussels Programme of Action, the United Nations Secretary General, after identifying the problems and challenges of the Least Developed Countries, called for the benefit of these countries, inter alia, the development of viable statistics systems, the mobilization of additional financial resources, and greater involvement in global governance. We believe that these are actually relevant recommendations, which should be taken into account on the way to, and after, Istanbul.

For some time now, issues of resource mobilization and global economic governance are regularly discussed at the UN General Assembly. The Monterrey Consensus urges developed countries to devote 0.7% of their GNP for ODA and to allocate part of 0.15% to 0.20% for Least Developed Countries. This issue has been many times highlighted, including at the Conference of June 2009 on financial and economic crisis, and the Summit of September 2010 on the MDGs.

***What agenda is Burkina Faso coming with at LDC-IV?***

Our agenda is basically that of the whole Group. The 48 Least Developed Countries have decided to speak with one voice at this Conference. We have decided that Nepal, as chair of the Group, and also entrusted by the Group of 77 and China, will be our spokesperson throughout the process. We support and encourage our chair in the excellent work they are doing. We will not go to the Conference with a personal agenda, but for a common cause.

Everyone knows that in 1971 the Least Developed Countries were defined by the UN as the "weakest and poorest" of the international community. And since then, only three countries, Botswana in 1994, Cape Verde in 2007 and more recently the Maldives in 2010, graduated from the Group. We must therefore adopt more robust and targeted measures in Istanbul, measures that will actually cause the graduation of a larger number of LDCs in the next ten years. And for that, we need everyone's help, at all levels.

***What kind of outcome do you expect in Istanbul that would differ from the Brussels Programme of Action?***

We commend the excellent preparatory work of the Conference done by the Office of the High Representative for the Least Developed Countries, Landlocked Developing Countries and Small Island Developing States, Ambassador Cheick Sidi Diarra. We also appreciate the role played by Turkey in its

capacity as host country of the Conference.

We learned from the failures of the Brussels Programme of Action. What we expect particularly from the Programme of Action to be adopted in Istanbul is ambitious but realistic commitments, strong and efficient monitoring mechanisms of these commitments at all levels.

The LDCs Group has submitted a very good draft for the Outcome, and the first meeting of the Intergovernmental Preparatory Committee for the Fourth United Nations Conference on the LDCs has decided that this document, to be enriched with the contributions from the partners, will serve as the basis for negotiations. It contains action-oriented, practical and realistic targets.

The destiny of more than 800 million people is at stake. In Istanbul, we have a unique opportunity to make history. Let us not miss it.

***At a preparatory meeting for LDC-IV, in a statement, the representative from Burkina Faso indicated that at LDC-IV, attendees "must highlight the major concerns of least developed countries and their need for ownership of the development process." What exactly would that mean?***

Let me, first of all, thank you for giving me the opportunity to share our views, through MediaGlobal, on such an important issue in the agenda of the United Nations that is the Fourth UN Conference on LDCs.

As you know, the Brussels Programme of Action has come to an end, and the international community is preparing a new Programme to be adopted in Istanbul in May 2011. We believe that the voice of the Least Developed Countries must be heard on this occasion since it is their destiny that is at stake. We have a capital of experience in political governance and socio-economic management. We have the primary responsibility for our own development. We know the path. However, technical and financial constraints are hindering our progress. That is where we need partnership. ■

# Finland Supports LDCs in Areas of Education and Human Development

*MediaGlobal's Nosh Nalavala interviews the Ambassador Jarmo Viinanen, Finland's Permanent Representative to the UN of Finland.*



Photo by Kamma Thordarson

Ambassador Jarmo Viinanen, Finland's Permanent Representative to the UN of Finland

**Ambassador, you are preparing the outcome document. What exactly does that entail?**

It is a document that outlines the basis for negotiations. It details what we have on the table so far with inputs from other partners who have different views. It is very difficult to start negotiations line by line, paragraph by paragraph, based on preliminary documents. My draft is a comprehensive version.

**What are the main elements of the outcome document?**

The main element will be certain priority areas where the international community and the LDCs themselves need to take action in order to facilitate development in the LDCs. For example, one of the issues is how we can develop productive capacity in the LDCs? Concerning infrastructure in the LDCs? Agricultural development in the LDCs. And then there are issues of human development and gender resources. Also climate change and other environmental issues. All this will lead to the Istanbul Programme of Action.

**How different is this going to be from the Brussels Programme of Action which for all practical purposes has not been an overwhelming success?**

It is certainly not going to be very different from the Brussels Programme of Action. Of course, in the end it depends on the member states what kind of Programme of Action will come out of Istanbul. The difference will be the process it will take.

**The Brussels Programme of Action asked member states for a 0.7% commitment on their GNI. what are you asking for at LDC-IV?**

It is clear that many of the development partners are not ready to go over the existing commitments which are 0.7% to developing countries and 0.15% of GNI allocated for the LDCs. Most countries haven't reached that goal yet. And already in the first prep-com it was clear that many development partners are not ready to make any new quantitative commitments.

**Is Finland doing well with its commitment?**

Yes, we are on our way to achieve 0.7% in 2015.

**The enhancement of the Enhanced Integrated Framework (EIF) is probably the single most tangible outcome that the Global Aid for Trade initiative has produced so far. How was this fund dispersed and did Finland have a role in monitoring it?**

What I know about our national policy is that we put more and more emphasis on Aid for Trade because we recognize the fact that just with the ODA, there won't be enough development. We have to build the productive capacities of the LDCs and other development countries. Aid for Trade is one of the means of reaching that goal. There has been increased emphasis on that and its probably because our Development Minister is at the same time also the Minister for Foreign Trade.

**Finland has been steadily contributing to the UNCTAD Trust Fund for LDCs; in 2007 you contributed a million Euros. Are you continuing to contribute to the fund and what kind of assistance are you bringing to the LDCs, both generally and for the LDC-IV platform?**

In our development cooperation we have certain target countries where we target most of our assistance. Many of those are LDC countries; Nepal is one of them as also Mozambique and Tanzania. We have always been very strong on education and human development, and the funds we provide are quite big — for Mozambique its something like 30 million Euros a year and approximately the same amount for Tanzania.

**How much have you earmarked for funding for LDCs?**

We have surpassed the 0.15% of GNI target. In total, Finland's ODA to LDC in 2009 has reached 0.19% of GNI, that is almost \$446 million.

**You mentioned Nepal, the Nepalese ambassador recently talked to us about the problem of not having enough funding to counter deforestation in Nepal. Are you**

**directing any of the funds towards climate change issues?**

Yes, more and more to the climate change issues. Forestry has always been important for us, we have a lot of forests, we have the experience and expertise in that field. Forestry is one of the key issues we are working on.

**Among the key issues brought up by LDCs at the various sessions that you have had, good governance has assumed importance. Is good governance within developing countries a prerequisite for developed countries to extend financial assistance as also honouring the commitment of 0.7%?**

I don't think that it's a prerequisite. I think that in order to have development, there needs to be good governance. It's an integral part of the development process.

**Have these issues been raised in your deliberations? Issues about good governance and pervasive corruption?**

There is a little bit of a different emphasis always, from the development side we always emphasize good governance in order to have the funds provided and institutions built. Then from the developing countries side the emphasis is that they would have a voice in matters that concern them. These are always very difficult matters, especially corruption.

**'Everything But Arms' provides duty free access to products from LDCs with a few exceptions for agricultural products to Finland and other countries of the North. Is Finland an active trading partner of the LDCs?**

The part of the LDCs in our total foreign trade is very limited. But 'Everything But Arms' provides an opportunity for LDCs to trade with European countries and also with Finland. That's partly because there isn't enough productive capacity in the LDCs. And LDCs themselves are very different in character, for example the biggest LDC, Bangladesh has a very big and booming textile industry, but then you also have some small island states where there isn't any productive capacity, so they are unable to participate in international trade.

*continued on the next page*

**Will LDC-IV change anything in terms of more North-South dialogue?**

I hope that it will change something; I hope that there will be renewed attention to the vulnerabilities of LDCs and especially on the dire conditions of the people in these countries.

**As president of the "Prep Com", are you pushing any agenda that you feel strongly about?**

I probably feel the strongest about the productive capacity building in the LDCs. We, the development partners, really have to see that its important to have emphasis on the social sector or the education sector but there has to be more emphasis on the productive capacities. Roads, ports, infrastructure. We have to invest there and help the LDCs to invest there.

**The issue of climate change is an important one, is Finland taking a leading role in assisting LDCs in facing this crisis, especially towards SIDS, many of whom are LDCs?**

First of all we have been helping them by providing them with resources to participate in the negotiations. We have hired one or two persons to help the SIDS to participate in the climate change negotiations. We have also provided a separate trust fund within UNDP for women's participation in the climate change negotiations.

For the delegations coming to the negotiations from the LDCs or other developing countries, if they add one more person who is a woman, we will pay the expenses. Then we have bilateral cooperation with many of the countries, especially in the field of weather services and predicting weather conditions and so on.

Climate change financing is one of the fields that is going to increase in the future. This is a major issue, especially for the SIDS and they need a lot of assistance.

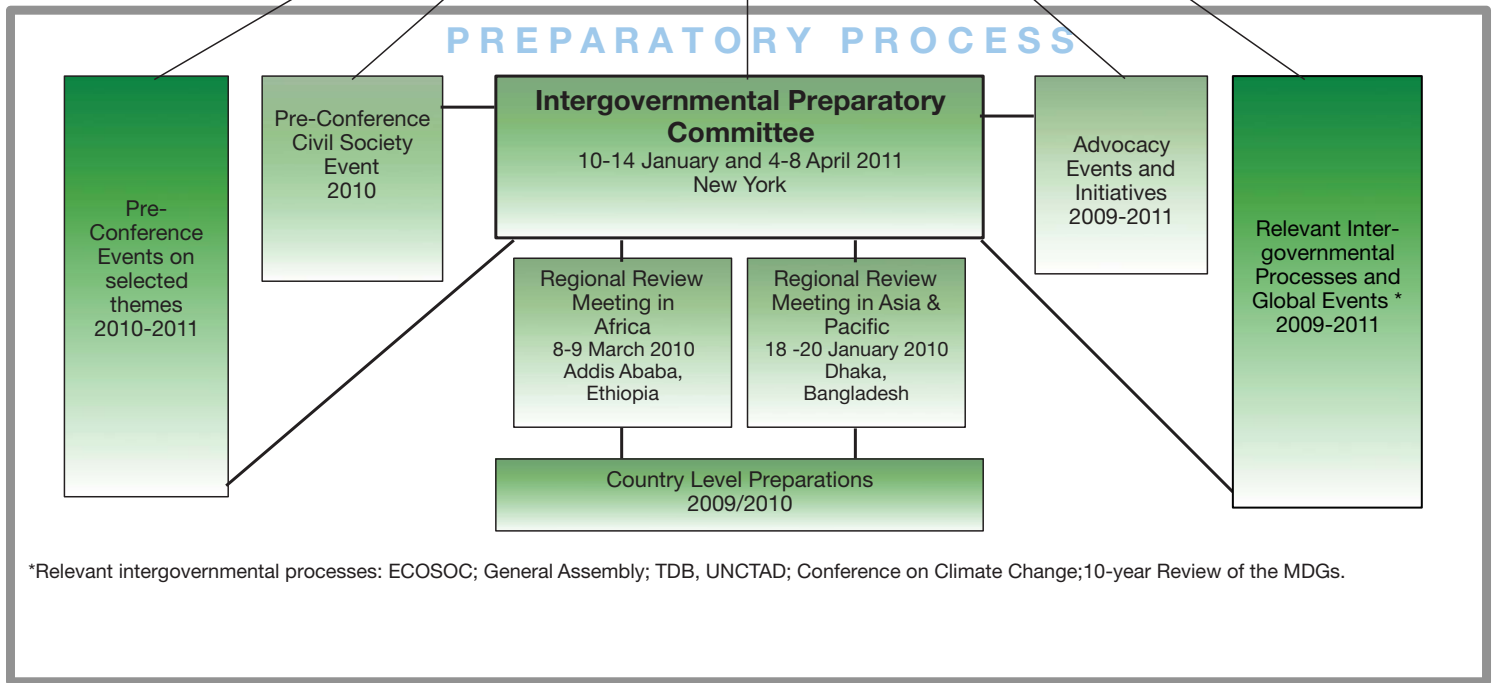
**You have 48 LDCs, you have SIDS and LLDCs, a number of LLDCs and SIDS are also LDCs, why are their issues not being brought up in a forum like LDC-IV?**

I think they have been brought up but one has to see that when you have 48 LDCs, they are very different in character. They have certain similar characteristics but many LDCs have very different challenges. SIDS have immediate challenges from the rising sea-level, many of them do not have the potential to ever be able to participate in international trade. We have to find a way to make a difference in the lives of the poorest people in the poorest countries. ■

Office of the High Representative for the Least Developed Countries, Landlocked Developing Countries and Small Islands Developing States (UN-OHRLLS)					
SATURDAY, 7 MAY					
CIVIL SOCIETY FORUM (ALL DAY) Off-Site (TBD)					
SUNDAY, 8 MAY					
CIVIL SOCIETY FORUM (ALL DAY) Off-Site (TBD)	CIVIL SOCIETY FORUM (ALL DAY) Off-Site (TBD)	EU Meeting (TIME) LOCATION (TBC)	HIGH-LEVEL PARLIAMENTARIANS FORUM (ALL DAY) Conference Centre	Summit of the LDC Group (ALL DAY) Conference Centre (TBC)	
  <p><b>fourth united nations conference on the Least Developed Countries</b> 9-13 May 2011 - Turkey</p>					
<b>INAUGURAL CEREMONY 9 to 10:30 a.m.</b> (Anadolou Auditorium)					
<b>Intergovernmental Track</b>	<b>Anadolou Auditorium</b>	<b>Rumeli Upper Level Grand Ballroom Rooms A + B</b>	<b>Private Sector Track</b>	<b>Investment and Partnership Summit on LDCs Development</b> (Monday, 9 May in Rumeli, Rm C from 1-3 p.m.)	<b>Side Events</b>
	<b>Monday, 9 May (All Day)</b> 1 <sup>st</sup> Plenary: Procedural matters and establishment of the Committee of the Whole (Cluster I and II) Opening of General Debate	Monday, 9 May (3 to 6 p.m.) COW (cluster I) Room A COW (cluster II) Room B		<b>Tuesday, 10 May to Friday, 13 May (All Day)</b> Business Forum/ Expo -Trade Fair (Off-Site TBD)	
	<b>Tuesday, 10 May (All Day)</b> General Debate: general statements	Tuesday, 10 May (All Day) COW (cluster I) Room A COW (cluster II) Room B	<b>Rumeli Upper Level Grand Ballroom Room C</b>	9 May (3 -6 p.m.), 10 May to 12 May (All Day), 13 May (10 a.m. -1p.m.) CIVIL SOCIETY FORUM (TBD)	
	<b>Wednesday, 11 May (All Day.)</b> General Debate: general statements	Wednesday, 11 May (All Day) COW (cluster I) Room A COW (cluster II) Room B	<b>Tuesday, 10 May (10 a.m. to 1 p.m.)</b> Resource mobilisation for LDCs' development and global partnership	Market volatility and Commodity Dependent LDCs Making trade work for women in LDCs Access to and the Adequacy of Special International Support Measures for LDCs Aid for Trade for LDCs Regional Integration for Human Development in LDCs Delivering for Development in Conflict-affected LDCs Employment generation and sustainable poverty reduction in LDCs Enhancing social protection in Asia and the Pacific: Challenges and opportunities Integrating migration and remittances in LDC national and regional planning	
	<b>Thursday 12 May (All Day)</b> General Debate: general statements	Thursday, 12 May (All Day) COW (cluster I) Room A COW (cluster II) Room B	<b>Tuesday, 10 May (3 to 6 p.m.)</b> Enhancing productive capacities and the role of the private sector in LDCs	Aid for Trade for LDCs Regional Integration for Human Development in LDCs Delivering for Development in Conflict-affected LDCs Employment generation and sustainable poverty reduction in LDCs Enhancing social protection in Asia and the Pacific: Challenges and opportunities Integrating migration and remittances in LDC national and regional planning Gender and Migration: savings mobilization, safe remittances and investments Roundtable Discussion on the implementation of the BPoA in Asia Pacific LDCs	
	<b>Friday, 13 May (All Day)</b> General Debate: general statements	Friday, 13 May (All Day) COW (cluster I) Room A COW (cluster II) Room B	<b>Wed, 11 May (10 a.m. to 1 p.m.)</b> Harnessing trade for LDCs' development and transformation	Build on Broadband: A Winning Formula for attaining the Millennium Development Goals Forum on Intellectual Property Population dynamics and poverty reduction in LDCs Localizing the MDGs in the LDCs: Innovative Approaches in Local Development and Microfinance Universal access to HIV prevention, treatment care, and support in LDCs Achieving MDGs with equity in LDCs Monitoring tools to track progress in implementation of new PoA Sustainable Agri-food supply chains and food security New realities, challenges and opportunities for rural development in LDCs Aid quantity and quality in LDCs - framework for accountability and coherence Tourism Development, Poverty Reduction and Decent Work International commitment to reduce the cost of remittances and their importance to LDCs'	
			<b>Wed, 11 May (3 to 6 p.m.)</b> Human and social development, gender equality and empowerment of women	Side events proposed by the Host Country authorities Innovative Sources of Financing for LDCs	
		<b>Thursday, 12 May (10 a.m. to 1 p.m.)</b> Reducing vulnerabilities, responding to emerging challenges, and enhancing food security in LDCs			
		<b>Thursday, 12 May (3 to 6 p.m.)</b> Good governance at all levels			
<b>CLOSING CEREMONY- Friday, 13 May 3 to 6 p.m.</b> Adoption of Istanbul Declaration and the Istanbul Programme of Action (Anadolou Auditorium)					



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\*Relevant intergovernmental processes: ECOSOC; General Assembly; TDB, UNCTAD; Conference on Climate Change; 10-year Review of the MDGs.



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