

## **UN LDCs IV CONFERENCE ISTANBUL 7-13 MAY 2011**

### **REPORT**

The Conference had a CSO track, along with a private sector, a parliamentarian and the usual inter-governmental track. It is the first time the UN organised a Conference asking for the official presence and contribution of the Civil Society, fact that was welcomed by the CSOs. However, many CSOs complained that their presence did not actually contributed to the outcomes of the Conference, meaning the decisions taken by the governments, as when they arrived in the Conference the biggest part of the Istanbul Programme of Action (IPoA) was already written and concluded. This is evident in the CSOs declaration ([http://www.ldcwatch.org/index.php?option=com\\_content&view=article&id=197%3Athe-ldc-civil-society-forum-istanbul-declaration&catid=24%3Acsf-announcements&Itemid=44&lang=en](http://www.ldcwatch.org/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=197%3Athe-ldc-civil-society-forum-istanbul-declaration&catid=24%3Acsf-announcements&Itemid=44&lang=en)).

The Conference's main outcomes are the IPoA ([http://www.ldcwatch.org/attachments/198\\_Istanbul%20Programme%20of%20Action.pdf](http://www.ldcwatch.org/attachments/198_Istanbul%20Programme%20of%20Action.pdf), Français: [http://www.ldcwatch.org/attachments/198\\_IPoA\\_Fr.pdf](http://www.ldcwatch.org/attachments/198_IPoA_Fr.pdf)) and the political declaration (we will share a copy when it becomes available). The Civil Society felt excluded from the processes that concluded these two texts. They also criticised the informal access to the actors in these processes (countries' delegations). Many participants proposed that other UN Conferences should hold their Civil Society sessions earlier so that their results can be taken into account when the governmental decisions and final texts are written.

The CSO track of the Conference was particularly rich in sessions and different issues raised and analysed. The participation from LDCs was strong, and some CSOs from 'development partners' countries were also present. The unions participated with 5 representatives from African LDCs, including ITUC Africa, one from an Asian LDC, two staff from ITUC in Brussels, as well as 2 representatives from DISK Turkey. Most of them were engaged with CSO activities, while some of them dedicated most of their time in engaging with government and coordinating action with other CSOs and the UN-Non-governmental Liaison Service (UN-NGLS).

The unions feel that their participation helped raising awareness of other CSOs and governments on issues important for labour, including the poor application of Core Labour Standards, the increasing informalisation of work and the unions' programme on Climate Change and Just Transition. Some of the representatives had the opportunity to raise these issues –and other- as panellists or as participants, and our contribution was visible in the final CSO declaration.

### **DAILY REPORTS**

**The May 9 report:** concerned the role of the civil society in development, development in conflict and post-conflict LDCs, Human Rights, and gender issues of development in the LDCs.

In the session on the role of civil society in development, the issues highlighted included the funding of the NGOs and capacity building, especially for the grass-roots, to engage with developmental problems. The unions raised the issue of organisation and alliances between different components of civil society, as well as the importance of trade union leadership.

In the session on development in post-conflict LDCs, the speakers presented on the causes of conflict and its impact on the population. One important aspect of conflict is that it breaks the social fabric and therefore developmental policies should provide for measures to build up the destroyed social cohesion. Such measures include involvement of all stakeholders in decision-making and implementation, as well as trust building processes.

The gender aspects of development were analysed in a workshop which focused on rural women. Women do not have access to finance, even if the primary investors in family. Usually, women who work in farms have to sell their products and take care of the household's needs, such as children raising. The speakers proposed that governments should provide women with equal rights, especially property rights, in countries where women do not enjoy them. Furthermore, they need to empower women through skills and access to land, finance, and job opportunities. The unions underscored the lack of ownership of collaterals which bars women from accessing finance, coupled with limited land-property rights. As women are usually in the informal economy, they are the first to be adversely affected by trade opening and more competitive products easily marginalise their merchandise. The unions also pointed that urban women face worsening conditions and examples were made of the situation in EPZs.

In the inter-governmental branch of the UN LDC IV Conference, a coalition of unions and NGOs spoke with several Ambassadors putting pressure for changing the language of the political declaration. The country delegates did not open this issue yet, so more news is to be expected the coming days. The coalition is also making a strong statement for the Duty Free Quota Free access of 100% of LDC products to other markets and has already engaged with several Ambassadors, including the Nepalese one, who represents G77 in the Committee of the Whole - even if he refused to make any promises.

The Committee of the Whole was dismissed right away as LDCs have not yet concluded a common position on the Duty Free Quota Free access. For the moment, it seems that countries that already enjoy the benefits of AGOA would not like to allow the extension of Duty Free Quota Free to other LDCs.

### **The May 10 report:**

The ITUC participated as a panellist in three sessions organised by the ILO (Employment and Social Protection), BetterAid (CSOs' way to Busan) and IBON (Perspectives on Green Economy). Another session concerned strategies for eradicating poverty.

In the "CSOs' way to Busan" workshop the union speaker, Mamadou Diallo, highlighted the importance to give central space to issues related to Decent Work Agenda, internationally recognised labour rights, gender equality and environmental sustainability. The workshop called for the reinforcement of the role of CSOs in the development policies and processes.

In the session on green economy, the union panellist, Mamadou Diallo, emphasised the need to develop policies focused on creating green jobs and ensuring a just transition to the low carbon economy linked with technology transfers and capacity building, including human capital development. Unions also stressed the necessity to lobby and advocate for an FTT in order to generate more resources for the just transition in the LDCs. The unions called on the CSOs to promote these issues towards Rio+20.

Kouglo Lawson Body, highlighted the problems connected to employment and the working conditions in Africa, in the ILO session on employment. Problems include the weak link between vocation and employment, lack of resources and investments in education, absence of country policies on employment, as well as poor monitoring of labour standards by law enforcers. The union speaker also explained the ITUC - Africa strategies to tackle these problems. He also added that "growth is not for the sake of growth, but for the creation of decent work that will allow everybody individually to have a decent life and the societies as a whole to be healthy."

A session on strategies for eradicating poverty stressed the importance of reinforcing ownership of policies and projects and the need to empower actors with leadership. A speaker noted that "the lack of common effort towards a national vision is another cause of national poverty and strategies planned and implemented with the participation of civil society, unions and business would deliver more."

In the intergovernmental track the unions worked with CSOs in creating a document with few proposals on the Istanbul Programme of Action and the political declaration. The Istanbul Programme of Action had two issues that were not yet concluded: trade and ODA. The common position was calling for Duty Free Quota Free access for all the products of all LDCs to other markets. It also proposed new wording of the paragraph on the inclusion of civil society in the political declaration, as the current one is deemed to be weak. Unions and CSOs engaged Ambassadors and national delegates, before the LDCs closed-doors meeting, to make them aware of the input paper. A small delegation led by unions also succeeded to distribute the input paper to all the G77 delegations after the kind assistance of the Chair (Argentina). Unions also tried to engage the Turkish government which prepared the political declaration.

### **The May 11 report:**

In a session under the title "Is success sustainable in Africa" organised by the World Bank, speakers presented some successful examples from three African countries. The panellists noted that political and economic stability is very important for promoting growth and development in African LDCs. Moreover, two more elements are necessary to impulse development in Africa: competitiveness and employment, as well as resilience to vulnerability. But for these two elements to develop there are needs to have a framework of political stability and good governance. However, the session recognised the complexity of developmental issues in Africa and the success of these three countries do not guarantee success in Africa. The discussion on employment focused on how to provide jobs to young people, rather than on how to deal with precarious jobs.

A session on the deficiencies of aid provision to LDCs explored the problems that the humanitarian agencies face in LDCs. These include and permit problems, logistical difficulties, especially material transportation, as well as problems of cooperation between governments, local and international NGOs. The recommendation that emerged from the session was improved access to trainings for LDC actors, including local administration and NGOs, and communication networks that would enable governments and NGOs from LDCs to better cooperate with donor countries and actors.

Other sessions concerned the right to access to sanitation and water, climate justice, EPAs and a day-long ICTSD Symposium on trade which analysed various aspects of the trade-related problems that the LDCs face. More reports on these sessions will become available soon.

In the intergovernmental track, after a long inexplicable wait (over an hour and a half), the Istanbul Programme of Action (IPoA) was adopted by the Committee of the Whole and will be brought to Friday's Closing Plenary session for adoption (the Committee of the Whole adopted the final text but it needs further adoption by the Plenary to become official UN Programme of Action). The Duty Free Quota Free (DFQF) issue was concluded as "DFQF for all LDCs" consistently with the Hong Kong Declaration. The initial wording was: "DFQF for products originating from all LDCs". The deletion of the reference to products allows interpretation that will not cover 100% of the tariff lines. Therefore, Bangladesh -which was insisting on this point-, came out defeated. LDCs got recognition that trade obstacles they face are not only tariffs and barriers but include supply-side constraints such as lack of infrastructure and modern technologies and energy deficiency.

In ODA, the goals of Brussels were reiterated with the addition of a subparagraph which asks that donors review their ODA commitments in 2018 and consider further enhancing the resources available to LDCs. It is not clear why 2018 was chosen or if it was a mistake (since the Secretariat then wrote 2015) but if confirmed, such a date seems arbitrary. The Committee of the Whole concluded with a few speeches on the merits of reaching the agreement, and the Holy See expressing its reserve on the reproductive health section. Discussions on the political declaration are ongoing and will likely be fully concluded today after the Committee of the Whole convenes in afternoon. The morning session of the Committee was cancelled because the G77 were still in session and Turkey will distribute a new draft, hopefully including the unions-CSOs' input.

Unions continued engaging delegations and managed to distribute the input paper to several LDC representatives. With the help of Christian Aid Denmark and 11.11.11 the input paper reached some European delegations.

Also on May 11, a session on "Ensuring universal access to HIV prevention, AIDS treatment, care and support by 2015 – Country Level Perspectives" raised several issues around the HIV/AIDS prevalence in LDCs. Main causes of the virus' proliferation are poverty, societal attitudes and taboo, as well as practices related sometimes to religious and cultural principles. The session also examined the impact of HIV/AIDS in LDCs and tried to rethink the ways forward.

Another May 11 session analysed the responses to crises and building resilience. The session recognised the climate change, the financial and jobs situation, food insecurity and HIV/AIDS as crises that affect the world and their particularly adverse impacts have been felt in the LDCs. Some crises cause loss of economic growth, cash flows and employment opportunities; others threaten the lives of millions more directly. Some panellists and audience then proposed ways forward, including by positioning the IFIs and other instruments of global economic governance better in the developmental effort of other international organisations and promote coherence with each other's' work.

### **May 12 report:**

In a private sector session on Organised Industrial Zones and other forms of Special Economic Zones (SEZs), the union representative brought up the issue of labour rights, labour inspection and participation of unions in trainings organised by administrative authorities of the zones. The Under-Secretary of the Turkish Ministry for Industry replied that in Turkey there are “no sales or discounts” when it comes to applying the law in SEZs. He argued that workers in zones are formal and are protected by the laws as well as covered by the social security systems. He referred to the 80.000 registered workers of Gaziantep zone. The Under-Secretary provided with information on environmental standards application in the SEZs, when he was asked by another participant.

In the inter-governmental track, the CSOs and the unions continued their efforts to make the proposed changes text known to as many delegations possible. The governments concluded to a political declaration, not too different from the initial text. The CSOs and the unions felt that their opinions and contributions were not reflected in the political declaration.

The Civil Society Committee presented the last CSO strategy session the structure and logic of the CSOs declaration. The union representatives had provided in writing their contribution on issues that should be addressed by the final CSO declaration and also raised issues in the strategy session.

### **May13 report:**

The CSO plenary was presented the CSO declaration  
[\(\[http://www.ldcwatch.org/index.php?option=com\\\_content&view=article&id=197%3Athe-ldc-civil-society-forum-istanbul-declaration&catid=24%3Acsf-announcements&Itemid=44&lang=en\]\(http://www.ldcwatch.org/index.php?option=com\_content&view=article&id=197%3Athe-ldc-civil-society-forum-istanbul-declaration&catid=24%3Acsf-announcements&Itemid=44&lang=en\)\)](http://www.ldcwatch.org/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=197%3Athe-ldc-civil-society-forum-istanbul-declaration&catid=24%3Acsf-announcements&Itemid=44&lang=en) and after its endorsement the CSO Conference closed.

**DAY 1:**

**YOUTH FORUM OPENING – SIDE EVENT; 8<sup>th</sup> May 2011**

- Welcome remarks and background by secretariat- Moderator
- Statement by H.E. Amb. Elshad Iskandarov, SG of ICY-DC



- - The revolutions in the north of Africa should be noted
  - The need to realise that the youth are not only used but allowed, heard and felt
  - Youth should be in the forefront of development
  - There will be a number of issues we will address these two days and I implore on you to make the most of the sessions
  - Some of our presentations can be used as the model for addressing the challenges of the Youth.
  - Young people should be empowered by skills, knowledge and funds to be different entrepreneurs as they intend to hire and engage others thereby decreasing un employment
  - Our coming together can be resonance of Martin Luther kings' I have a dream speech- but with an understanding that Dreams are coming true- so let's work together.
- Minister of youth and sport
  - The forum is being held at the right time when we are also hosting the formulae 1 grand prix
  - As a ministry we do carry a number of programmes as we realise that the Youth are the future leaders
  - Our successes in the second world war and the need to empower our citizens including travel facilities to visit one another are some of the programmes that we introduce with a view to empower our youth.
  - Sweden, Switzerland, European youths, japan, china and Indonesia and we have exchange programmes for the youths as a way of encouraging culture and identity towards selfhood.
  - Sudan ,morocco and Tunisia are our African partners
  - We see them as a guarantee of our future and we believe we need to give them support towards their future
  - Best wishes that all the youth of the world may live in peace and happiness- thank you very much

- Mr. Ihsan Karaman- President of the Doctors world wide
  - Youth is dynamism, the future, sincerity the experience expressed during childhood
  - We do not inherit wealth from our ancestors, we borrow it from our youth
  - We are telling the youth that we will not lay off their hand as Doctors world wide
  - Each year passing is so different from the passing one as technology runs at the pace of speed, dictators being removed but the biggest power behind the changes are the youth
  - Distances have died out
  - Tunisia young street seller triggered a moment of change that has spread to the world
  - Constituted all the key elements of change- youth
  - We expect the Youth to play their dynamic role in building a future as they did in the past
  - I call on everyone to heed and understand yourselves and move forward- don't hold your dynamism but explore your potential
  - Continue in exploring long-term strategies not short lived benefits
  - Build strict solidarity
  - Childhood and youth prepare youth to life
  - CSO are a very important organ for this rehearsal
  - CSO a useful ground for opportunity to prepare youth for life, improve yourselves, generate your ideas and follow your dream
  - Together you will achieve allot

PANEL1: MDG's mostly related to LDC's and Youth issues through MDG perspective  
 H.E. Cuneyt Cuneyt Yuksel- MP

Cultural diversity, youth, education and MDGs in LDC

- 8 goals
- You can't achieve the MDG's by excluding one or more groups of the society- you need an inclusive action oriented response
- Review of the goals in line with status on the ground
- Goal 8 difficult to achieve towards a more just and equitable global society
- Holy Quran 49:13
- Islamic Conference for Youth
  - TOT Training, small corporations (1 to train 10)
  - Document the impact, Scale up and replicate for health and environmental issues
  - Partnering with Governments
- Un international years for youth and international development- with this meeting then it means we are working
  - Education increases tolerance yet the educated nations we have fighting- why is this so?- it's kind of education, agree with you

- Media can be a partner what can be done to empower them in other countries where they are suppressed- citizen journalists being considered for support now as the media personnel are always among the victimized.
- We the youth are being used politics, private sector etc., how can we achieve MDG 8 in this regard? -

Dr Thomas Uthup, Research and education Manager, UN alliance for civilizations

- Your knowledge helps governments to develop programmes to meet and address the people's needs
- If we are to half the poverty and hunger, reduce child mortality is an ambitious programme
- The capacity for CSO is fundamental for provision of basic needed actions
- We work and support youth programmes as represented in almost all countries
- 240million youth live in poverty, 472 thousand youth live in less than 2usd a day
- 133 million youth are illiterate
- Youth represent 40% of the world unemployed
- 1 billion young people will enter the job market
- The cost of youth exclusion 53billion inn Egypt
- The challenges faced by youth are not only critical for the youth but for development-
- New technologies means new opportunities, we can not only hope for the future, we must act now.
- We must fulfil our skills to use and uplift ourselves towards becoming an active role in the society
- UN has long standing commitment to your people
- Holistic and people centred development agenda
- Develop a comprehensive strategy by member state
- Youth should be given a chance to anticipate-
- 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the youth – participation, development and youth!
- GA high level assembly of youth
- Plenary
  - 5000 youth in Dakar Senegal were on the ground moving forward
  - Mobilize the hip hope groups as they have a voice and should be organised
  - We need decent and paying jobs
  - Illegal migration needs to be considered as it has done us more harm than good
  - Where are the young girls
  - The need to rethink the age of the youth at UN level which is at 25
  - Quality and relevance of jobs needs to be considered

- Final session: “Role of Youth in the Brussels plan of action”

- Mr. Demba Moussa Debele, President of LDC Watch
  - Senegal became LDC 2001
  - Conditionalities of IFI's contributed to country falls
  - It's unfortunate that most countries will not achieve halving the poverty levels by 2015 due to capitalist fundamentals, crisis etc.
  - Presented key programme objectives as adopted

- As a way forward, we need more youth participation and call for action after the conference by the youth
  - Raise awareness in countries so that we all know what the plans are talking about for joint action as previously even Ministers didn't know about the plan
- Mr. Shahid Husain- Special Adviser, special unit for south-south cooperation, the UN development programme
  - Addressed the route to the south-south cooperation
  - Gives a historical background to the cooperation, challenges the holding of senior positions in local countries
  - Today the companies are being managed by nationalists and the companies have grown changing for the better.
  - Credit goes to institutions that have fought for this goal
  - Increased number of outsourcing is the example of challenges LDC are faced with
  - Inter dependence rather than dependence and aid rather than Trade have become order of the day
- Prof. Dr. Gulfettin Celik, Vice rector and dean of faculty of Political sciences at Istanbul Civilisation University
  - 1 out of 10 people live in least development countries
  - Aid extended to LCD's is not in tune with the possibilities and capacities of the countries
  - ODA between 1990 to 2010 has not been attained as only 5 countries managed to meet the target of 7% allocation to LDC's
  - In terms of export and sector support,
- Q and A
  - How can the participation of youth be enhanced
  - How do we review the aspect of AGE
  - What have you done and what strategies have you put in place after the Brussels plan of action failed
  - Adjourn

DAY2: 9<sup>th</sup> May 2011

PANEL3: Youth participation in economic and entrepreneurship opportunities in LDC

Dr. Sameh Hussain- IDB

- We provide Micro financing through Governments
- We pay to an agent and that agent pays to the entrepreneurs- technology forums have also been organised by the bank
- We want innovating entrepreneurs to approach the banks, help them start own projects etc.
- We also use the internet to incumbent ideas

Mr. Rizanur Meral, President TUSKON

- E=Capital formation and wealth creation in country and reduces unemployment and path to prosperity
- Youth Entrepreneurs are future leaders in their countries

Mr. Sefa Yasin Okumus, Vice President of Young Musiad

- Future of society depends on youth
- A youth that provides employment is essentials
- Government needs to increase number of universities thereby increasing intake, remunerate education staff
- CSO's are essential as they improve individual wellbeing potential, Wide network means more intervention and information, cross trade ensures knowledge and link to real issues it is also a bridge between youth and government
- Gives example to IYEC and MUSIAD activities i.e. link with government, holding of youth forums etc.

Mr. Nedim Kaya, Director General of Islamic conference of young entrepreneurs network (ICYEN)

- We can work in any country especially LDC's
- Gave a background info on ICYEN with a view to have young entrepreneurs to have a network to overcome their obstacles and enable them to flourish
- He then gave objectives of entrepreneurs and membership of their organisation
- We will have databases and website to even allow you to apply online and join etc.

## Q & A

- Why we didn't discuss on social entrepreneurship
  - What is stopping this network from developing in Africa-Guinea Conakry
- What steps can we take to ensure that the situation if adopted from bottom to the top- social entrepreneurship
- How do you link youth as in other countries youth are 25 while in others its 40 and 45
- How do we access info which you are telling us here as ICT in Africa is not advanced
- How do we access funds- bank should help us
- ICYEN mobilize funds to mobilize young people
- Country coordinator is supposed to get an accreditation from Ministers of finance- this is not possible where corruption and the state is cramping down on cso, is there another alternative?= You give a copy to Chamber of commerce hence we can solve the problems at individual basis.

PANEL 4: Making LDC's Voice heard. Youth Participation in International CSO actions, network and alliance-building at national, regional and global levels.

Prof. Dr. Mehmet Bulut, Prof of economics and economic history

- Presents historical background to challenges and differences and link to Ottoman empire
- We need to look at a world without LDC
- We need to find qualified and skilled persons, contribute to smaller communities that contribute to this community.
- We need a person who will pioneer these kind of notions, eliminate unemployment, idleness, stop waiting for the support of others, eliminate abusing communities, fight corruption, solve issues with Management, contribute to spiritual world, empower women and this will be a pioneer.
- We need to reface the theory of education including putting the right people in the field of health, education structures.
- Activities should have more women and people participating
- Solve problems without causing more problems
- LDCs don't require one skilled persons only but more skills in all other aspects
- We need to train people in LDCs and CSOs should contribute in this regard- TOTs
- Youth should be encouraged to improve their skills
- We will see Asia getting powerful than the rest of the world(education is the core of development)

#### Q & A

- What can be done to influence LDC's Policies
- The creation of a new person does it mean we need a new person or we need to exclude some people
- Can we develop education and health where people are fighting
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Prof Daniel Yusuf, Lecturer at the department of political science, international Islamic university of Malaysia

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#### ROUND TABLE: topic 1 and 4 merged

- Strength of youth
- Collective action for youth help to promote interest of all
- Youth faces several challenges
- Have limited access to resources and social protection, corruption
- Break down of social order, youth criminality, religious and political indoctrination
- Access to ICT are other aspects
  - Way forward
    - Good governance
    - Merit based social economic opportunities
    - Increased participation in policy implementation
    - Minimum social thresholds

- Employment of youth
  - Capacity building
  - Gender equality
  - Institutional arrangements
  - Networking
  - Quarters for youth at least 40%
  - We need UN Youth agency
  - We need to stop talking but action
  - National Youth councils to be independent
- ***The declaration will be reviewed by UN experts to ensure it conforms to the standards of declarations and shall be circulated by email to all participants***
  - ***Youth Forums was declared closed at 17:45 hours***

**The LDC Civil Society Forum Istanbul Declaration  
13 May 2011**

1. We, representatives of civil society organisations, who have met here in Istanbul on 7-13 May 2011 at the Civil Society Forum of the Fourth United Nations Conference on the LDCs, have very much appreciated the opportunities throughout this process to express our views on the challenges to LDCs and the development of the Istanbul Programme of Action and the Istanbul Political Declaration.
2. However, it is with deep disappointment that, at the conclusion of this process, it is clear our voices have not been heard and reflected in the conference outcomes. The negotiations started with analyses of the failings of the Brussels Programme of Action, also reflected in UNCTAD's LDC report 2010. These showed that development partners failed to deliver their commitments to provide adequate aid, reform unjust trade rules, remove the burden of debt and build the capacity of LDCs.
3. More importantly, various analyses also pointed to flaws and shortcomings of the model of development promoted by dominant players in the international community. Export-led growth has been inequitable and unsustainable, resulting in LDC commodity dependency, de-industrialization, environmental damage and socio-economic marginalization. These failures and the flawed paradigm have contributed to the growth in LDCs from 24 to 48, and graduation of only three LDCs over the last three decades. More than half the women and men in LDCs still live in abject poverty. There is widespread violation of human rights. Social justice and peace have remained a dream.
4. From the beginning we stated clearly that this is unacceptable. The development paradigm must be changed. Our calls echoed proposals for a New International Support Architecture, and gone further in calling for a more fundamental transformation of the relations between rich and poor, powerful and powerless, men and women, the elites and those without resources, the dominant and the marginalised. We have urged for this conference to mark a turning point towards a more just, more equitable and more sustainable world. We are deeply disappointed that the Istanbul Programme of Action has failed to meet these challenges.
5. We strongly believe that it is important to base development on LDCs' strengths and not on their weaknesses. Countries may be categorized as 'poor' according to UN criteria, but they are rich in many important aspects – in community cohesion, in natural resources and being able to live in harmony with our natural world, in diverse cultures and in human dignity. And especially in the growing numbers of young women and men who have huge potential and hopes for a better future. In many ways, our societies are the most developed countries, not the least developed.
6. But the LDCs are economically disadvantaged, exploited and marginalised. As part of the

preparation for this conference, civil society engaged in an extensive process of listening to the concerns of the people in the LDCs through local, national and regional consultations in Africa, Asia and the Pacific. These highlighted the greater burdens that the marginalized and vulnerable peoples of LDCs have had to face in the last decade, with new crises of food, water and energy, the impacts of the financial crisis, and the intensification of the climate crisis. There is deep fear over an uncertain future even as there is determination to survive.

7. The conference has failed to meet our expectations and the UN General Assembly mandate. The UN General Assembly Resolution A/RES/63/227 calls on governments “to mobilize additional international support measures and action in favour of the least developed countries, and, in this regard, to formulate and adopt a renewed partnership between the least developed countries and their development partners”. This has not happened. Civil society is frustrated that, having caused massive costs in the LDCs through financial and food speculation, unjust trade rules, illegitimate loans with onerous conditionality, and ecological damage, including climate change, the developed countries have not even committed to provide more aid to LDCs. Even worse, many donors are either reducing their aid or diverting it to pay for climate change damage, despite their commitments in UNFCCC negotiations to provide new and additional funding for climate finance. Current levels of aid are dwarfed by the mounting costs of the damage done to LDC economies and their people.

8. We recognise the strong efforts of LDC governments and the Turkish government to develop tangible commitments in the Programme of Action, but the UNGA resolution’s call for a renewed partnership has been undermined by the developed countries systematically having removed any targets, timetables and delivery mechanisms that may have been used to hold them to account. They have refused to accept commitments beyond those already agreed in other forums like the Millennium Summit, WTO and climate change negotiations. And they have used these negotiations to try to drive divisions between developing countries by calling for some developing countries to accept the same obligations as developed countries. South-south cooperation will be crucially important for the future of LDCs, but developing countries need to contribute according to their common aims but differentiated responsibilities. Support for LDCs from the south should complement but not substitute for the agreed obligations of developed countries.

9. We welcome the attention paid to enhancing productive capacity in the Programme of Action. This is crucial to create jobs for the growing numbers of young people through inclusive policies that capture more value from resources, diversify the economy and build on the strengths of LDCs. We also welcome the recognition that governments need to lead the development process, not donors or the private sector, and we welcome the establishment of a technology bank.

10. But the approach adopted in the Programme of Action relies heavily on economic liberalisation repackaged in new ways. Market-led approaches have been replaced by private sector-led approaches. The Programme of Action calls for the removal of impediments to the private sector, without recognition that governments need to regulate to protect workers, consumers, the environment and local communities. Civil society accepts that the private sector can play a useful role, but our experience is of companies that have unsustainably exploited minerals, fish and forests; land grabs that have stolen the resources and livelihoods of local people; biofuel plantations that have destroyed forests and agricultural lands; food dumping that has destroyed farmers’ livelihoods; and projects that leave local people with no water and a polluted environment. Intellectuals meeting here have reminded us that the LDCs must not remain the MECs – the most exploited countries.

11. In a number of areas, the Programme of Action calls for public finance to be given to the private sector in the forms of guarantees, investment promotion schemes and incentives.

But these subsidies hand over public money to the private sector in the hope that the market will deliver public benefits. International experience with public private partnerships demonstrates the need to avoid the public sector paying for the costs while the companies reap the profits. Funds needed to overcome poverty and injustice, including education, health care, water and sanitation, gender equity, social inclusion and community development are being diverted to subsidise companies. There is grossly insufficient funding now to meet the needs of the resource poor, without more being diverted from donors and governments to companies. Expropriation of the public purse is unacceptable.

12. We are calling for the Istanbul consensus to constitute a clear rejection of the Washington consensus. Government policy should be based on participative national development strategies that focus on each country's vision and core strengths. We must build jobs and opportunities for the sustainable use of our oil, our mineral wealth, our land, our forests, our fish and other natural resources, protecting the rights of traditional owners and users of the resources, adding value and insisting on fair prices. Diversification of our economies will require government leadership to build a strong domestic economy, with particular emphasis on creating opportunities for cooperatives and social enterprises, small and medium companies and women-led organisations. The rights of vulnerable and marginalised people must be put at the centre of economic decision-making, with stronger mechanisms for transparency, integrity and accountability.

13. In particular, LDCs should pursue an environmentally sustainable and equitable growth strategy that is labour intensive, that provides decent work opportunities to a wider range of people especially the large numbers of young women and men, coupled with opportunities to gain new skills and improve their livelihoods. LDC governments should uphold and guarantee core labour rights, including freedom of association, and prepare national plans for the implementation of the ILO Global Jobs Pact with the meaningful participation of social partners and representative civil society organisations.

14. Export-led growth was an important component of LDCs' development strategies in the Brussels Programme of Action, but LDCs still account for only around 1% of world exports. A decade ago, there were expectations that trade reform would be possible as part of a Doha Development Agenda. But 'development' has been erased from the agenda, and negotiations are stuck because of the unwillingness of developed countries to agree to reform the major trade distortions in the system, notably due to inequitable rules on agriculture. Civil society is calling for an end to unjust trade agreements and for LDCs to resist efforts by developed countries to negotiate reciprocal trade agreements. Special and Differential Treatment and policy flexibility for LDCs need to be made operational according to a given country's stage of development (rather than limiting it by time) within the WTO and regional and bilateral agreements, so that LDCs can adopt development strategies that reflect their specific needs and opportunities.

15. We call for the promotion of economically viable, socially acceptable and ecologically sustainable farming practices so that food sovereignty of LDC people is strengthened. Agricultural research that builds on seed diversity and socio-cultural farming practices needs to be supported and new and additional financial resources must be mobilised to support adaptation and strengthened resilience to climate change-related impacts. Agrarian reform policies must support the needs, strengths and rights of smallholder farmers, particularly women, and support them to organise into producer associations or cooperatives and to add value to their indigenous production systems.

16. We urge governments of LDCs to promote and implement women's rights and gender equality, and to guarantee in their development strategies the enjoyment by women of their rights, as stated in domestic laws and international and regionally-agreed standards.

Governments must ensure the effective participation of women in the formulation of policies

and decisions, implementation, monitoring, follow-up and evaluation of strategies aimed at the realization of the Istanbul Programme of Action.

17. All countries need to respect the human rights of migrants, migrant workers, their children

and their other dependants. The right to “movement with dignity” must be ensured. An effective regulatory mechanism must be set up to prevent sexual exploitation and forced labour, particularly for women and children who are highly vulnerable to these deprivations. Countries must provide access to basic services and amenities and ensure effective social security systems for migrant workers. International efforts to combat ongoing incidences of human trafficking must be stepped up with provisions of severe penalties for people who engage in the trafficking of human beings.

18. Public investment in human development must not be sidelined in implementation of the Istanbul Programme of Action. Education is crucial for citizens of LDCs to be able to participate fully in economic, social and political life. But formal education levels remain low in most LDCs. Although many LDCs are making progress towards the MDG targets for primary education, this has not translated into opportunities for continuing education at the secondary and tertiary level. This is essential if young women and men are to have the skills to participate as citizens and as skilled contributors to LDC economies.

19. Similarly, the need to strengthen health systems and infrastructure and to ensure functional

health systems at all levels is critical to achieving the health related goals of the MDGs. Governments need to allocate sufficient resources to provide the infrastructure, salaries, human resources and training for education, and increase public health expenditure.

20. We call for governments and donors to give a new priority to water and sanitation for all by

2020, and to the global Sanitation and Water for All partnership as a global platform to deliver national commitments on sanitation and water. The urban poor are particularly neglected. Service delivery plans must meet the growing needs for water and sanitation in cities and towns. The problem is not one of water scarcity but of political will. Government needs to develop mechanisms for social protection to be available to all citizens, greater accountability for the delivery of all essential services and the adoption of a rights-based approach. Civil society rejects the privatisation of essential services under the guise of public private partnerships or otherwise.

21. We call for immediate and unconditional cancellation of all debts of LDCs and a moratorium

on debt payments by LDC governments pending debt cancellation. An international process with counterpart national processes should be established, aimed at a rigorous study of illegitimate debt, including case studies, in order to come up with policies that lead to full and unconditional debt cancellation and changes in lending and borrowing policies and practices. Immediate changes must be pursued in the practices of lending and borrowing to move towards sovereign, democratic and responsible financing.

22. Industrialised countries must commit to deep, drastic, unconditional cuts in carbon and GHG

emissions through domestic measures, to be expressed in international, legally binding agreements within the Climate Convention that contain targets based on science and equity. The pursuit of false solutions must cease. They also need to commit to obligatory, predictable, condition-free, additional, non-debt creating public finance to cover the full costs of adaptation in countries of the South, as well as the costs of shifting to sustainable systems – to be part of international legally binding agreements within the Climate Convention. Action is urgent to avoid catastrophic climate change. The Istanbul target to

reduce the numbers of LDCs needs to occur because they graduate not because they burn or drown due the impacts of climate change.

23. We call for more and better ODA which must be directed towards development effectiveness

rather than the dominant aid effectiveness approach. ODA must respect sovereignty and support people-owned policies and programmes, rather being undermined by conditionality. Adequate and predictable sources of finance are needed, such as from a Financial Transactions Tax levied on the transactions of the major banks and financial institutions.

24. Civil society must be given a stronger role as a partner in development. Real ownership by LDCs of their development strategies requires not only ownership by governments but by society as a whole. States need to have the political space to decide on their own development, and strategies need to be discussed democratically, approved and monitored. In that regard, the primary accountability of governments should be to their own societies and parliaments, not to donors, investors or international agencies like the World Bank, IMF or WTO. Civil society should play a key role in supporting public participation and should be included as a core partner in all decision making processes. And governments should create space for civil society to have an independent voice.

25. An effective follow-up strategy to the UN-LDC IV Conference needs to be created, implemented and monitored. We call for regular reviews of progress to renew commitments and generate political will. The mechanisms should not only rely on UN processes but include civil society, the private sector and other actors. There must be opportunities for objective assessments of progress, including the submission of reports by civil society, and mechanisms to hold governments, including both LDCs and development partners, to account for their role in fulfilling the aims of the Istanbul Declaration.

26. The participants in the Civil Society Forum have raised their voices and expressed their hopes for the future. They have expressed the need for immediate and effective follow-up to ensure results and delivery on the commitments made in the Istanbul Programme of Action. The remarkable amount of active participation on the part of Civil Society, and their commitment to continue working together for various issues long after the conference, demonstrates their interest and ability to influence change.

27. We will continue our work over the forthcoming decade. We will educate and raise awareness about the crucial challenges facing LDCs and the need for people-centred approaches to development. We will support and mobilise local communities and other citizens to challenge unjust and unsustainable policies and practices. We will play our part in ending the injustice of poverty and suffering. We will continue to work collaboratively with those who share our aims.

28. We conclude by expressing our thanks for the great contributions from our fellow participants here in Istanbul; the Civil Society Steering Committee; Cheick Sidi Diarra, the Secretary-General of this conference, and the staff of UNOHRLLS; Doctors Worldwide, host of the Civil Society Forum; LDC Watch, the Government of Turkey and the people of this lovely city of Istanbul; and the Chair and members of the LDC Global Coordination Bureau.

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