



PRESS RELEASE:

Foreign minister says 'Poverty will not be eradicated until injustices prevail in LDCs'

Asia Regional Consultation on Least Developed Country (LDC) Issues

8-9 November 2008

Organized by LDC Watch

The Asia regional consultation on LDC issues was held on 8th November 2008 to assess the effective implementation of the BPoA including other internationally agreed development goals towards achieving the overarching objective of poverty reduction and sustainable development in the Asian LDCs. The consultation started with the message that an increase in number of the Least Developed Countries (LDCs) from 24 in 1971 to 49 today, and ironically, after three decades of special development attention, three UN LDC consultations and three specific Programmes of Action, clearly proves the failure of existing development paradigms to effectively address the development challenges and constraints in these poorest countries. There are now 33 LDCs in Africa, 15 in Asia and 1 in the Caribbean that house 750 million people.

The inaugural program was chaired by **Dr. Arjun Karki, the International Chair of LDC Watch**. The Chief Guest of the programme was **Honorable Minister of Foreign Affairs, Upendra Yadav**.

Honorable Minister Mr. Upendra Yadav, the Chief Guest of the programme and Foreign Minister of Nepal, said that despite various efforts being made for reduction of poverty and improving the socio-economic status of the people living in abject poverty, the socio-economic status has not changed as they are trapped in the vicious cycle of poverty and destitution. The international donor community and other stakeholders need to work towards forming an equitable society and bridge the digital divide. Due to injustices in resource sharing, the LDCs are not able to carry out programmes on their own. Integrated and holistic approach is necessary for eradicating poverty and eliminating injustices from LDCs. 'Poverty will not be eradicated unless injustices prevail in LDCs', Mr. Yadav opined. He further stressed that Government of Nepal is committed to work collectively with the civil society to address the LDC issues.

Mr. Gauri Pradhan, member of NHRC said that the consultation is an important step towards promotion and protection of human rights to create a world free of exploitation. He added that the traditional and conventional implementation strategies have failed to stress food crisis, mass poverty, gender disparity, worst forms of child labours which are so pertinent that such situation has created crisis and instability. He further said that LDCs are suffering from Neo-colonialism and feudalism. There is inability of the translation of BPoA at national government and international community levels.

Dr. Arjun Karki, International chair of LDC Watch said that the first two LDC conferences were held in Paris (in 1980 and 1990), but failed to gain much attention from different stakeholders. The third conference, which was held in Brussels in 2001 came up with a Brussels

International Secretariat:

P.O. Box 8130, Gairidhara, Kathmandu, Nepal

Tel: +977-1-4434165/4422153/4427823/4425755

Fax: +977-1-4418296 or 4443494

Web: www.ldcwatch.org

European Coordination Office:

115 Rue Stévin, Brussels, B-1000, Belgium

Tel: +322 231 1659

Fax: +322 230 3780



Programme of Action (BPoA) that comprised of seven basic goals. He also informed that the Government of Nepal will be holding the chair of LDC Government next year. He stated that the LDCs are not only poor, but also going through numerous political, social and economical crises. He further mentioned that there will be Africa LDC Civil Society Regional Consultation in the year 2009 and global LDC Civil Society Conference in 2010 where the UN Secretary General and LDC Chair, have already consented for their participation.

Ms. Thida Khus from Cambodia, International Treasurer of the LDC Watch briefly explained about the seven commitments of Brussels Programme of Action and stated that this consultation will build up the LDC network into the global arena.

Mr. Stanikzai Abdul Khaliq from Afghanistan said that Afghanistan is in the phase of developing an Afghan National Development Strategy 2008-2013 which focuses on the issues of security, governance, economic development, poverty reduction and sustainable development through involvement of private sectors. Despite the efforts of the Afghani National army and police along with NATO trying to secure the security situation of Afghani nationals, the situation is getting worse. Issues like poverty, lack of opportunities and displacement are huge in Afghanistan

Ms. Rokeya Kabir from Bangladesh and member of South Asia Alliance for Poverty Eradication (SAAPE) stressed that the unprecedented rise in the price of goods has resulted worsening situation of poverty especially in the LDCs. She also stressed that the current paradigm of market led initiatives have failed and therefore needs to be revised. There is a need for discussion on redistribution of resources allocated around the world

Mr. Bakenebo Tamaroa from PIANGO, Kiribati further stressed that each LDC should focus and prioritize their own programs, which needs to be based on a realistic goal. He further stressed that the seven commitments of BPoA are extremely relevant to issues in the Pacific LDCs.

LDC Watch is envisaging the building up of a strong network of LDC civil society out of the national processes that will further engage in regional and international processes to advance the issues and concerns of the LDCs in the global development agenda urging LDC governments and their development partners to uphold their political commitments for a people-centred sustainable development in the LDCs.

Sarba Raj Khadka, PhD
Director

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International Secretariat:
P.O. Box 8130, Gairidhara, Kathmandu, Nepal
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