

(draft concept paper)

**National Consultation on the Implementation, Monitoring and Review of
the Brussels Programme of Action (BPoA) for the Least Developed
Countries**

20 November 2008, Port-au-Prince, Haiti

BACKGROUND

The increase in number of the Least Developed Countries (LDCs)¹ from 24 in 1971² to 49 today³, and ironically, after three decades of special development attention, three UN LDC conferences 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. The ever-increasing wave of neo-liberal globalization has further threatened the LDC economies characterized by debt burden, economic shocks, hunger, human rights violations including gender injustice, conflict, weak governance and inherent geographical and environmental vulnerabilities.

LDCs are home to about 750 million people of the global population and account for 32 of the 35 countries in the lowest category of the Human Development Index (HDI) measured in terms of life expectancy, literacy, standard of living and Gross Domestic Product (GDP) per capita. The poor, vulnerable and marginalized, including women, children and the youth who form more than 50 per cent of the population of the LDCs continue to live in a dream of sustainable development and peace.

The Third UN Conference on the LDCs (UN LDCIII) that took place in Brussels in May 2001 adopted the **Brussels Programme of Action (BPoA) for the LDCs for the Decade 2001-2010** which provides "a framework for a strong global partnership to accelerate sustained economic growth and sustainable development in LDCs, to end marginalization by eradicating poverty, inequality and deprivation in these countries, and to enable them to integrate beneficially into the global economy". The BPoA is based on the international development targets including those contained in the Millennium Declaration and contains

¹ Afghanistan, Angola, Bangladesh, Benin, Bhutan, Burkina Faso, Burundi, Cambodia, Central African Republic, Chad, Comoros, Democratic Republic of Congo, Djibouti, Equatorial Guinea, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Gambia, Guinea, Guinea Bissau, Haiti, Kiribati, Lao People's DR, Lesotho, Liberia, Madagascar, Malawi, Maldives, Mali, Mauritania, Mozambique, Myanmar, Nepal, Niger, Rwanda, Samoa, Sao Tome and Principe, Senegal, Sierra Leone, Solomon Islands, Somalia, Sudan, Timor L'este, Togo, Tuvalu, Uganda, United Republic of Tanzania, Vanuatu, Yemen, Zambia (33 in Africa, 15 in Asia and the Pacific and 1 in the Caribbean).

² The three principal criteria used to establish the first group of LDCs with 24 countries in 1971 were: (i) per capita GDP of US \$ 100 per person in 1968 or less; (ii) a share of manufacturing in total GDP of 10 per cent or less; and (iii) an adult literacy rate of 20 per cent or less.

³ See Annex 1

30 international development goals with indicators embedded in **7 commitments** of the LDCs and their development partners.

The 7 commitments are: (i) fostering a people-centered policy framework; (ii) good governance at national and international levels; (iii) building human and institutional capacities; (iv) building productive capacities to make globalization work for LDCs; (v) enhancing the role of trade in development; (vi) reducing vulnerability and protecting the environment and (vii) mobilizing financial resources. The BPoA lays down specific actions by LDCs and their development partners for its effective implementation and recognizes the important role that civil society has to play in its implementation and follow-up besides other stakeholders, namely; Governments, the UN system, World Trade Organization (WTO), the Bretton Woods institutions (World Bank and International Monetary Fund), other multi-lateral organizations and the private sector.

LDC Watch, as a global alliance of national and regional civil society organizations (CSOs), networks and movements based in the LDCs and supported by civil society from development partner countries, acts as a coordinating group for LDC civil society to advocate, lobby, campaign and network for the realization of the BPoA including other internationally agreed development goals such as the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). It has grown out of the international NGO Forum process that was held in parallel to the UN LDCIII in Brussels in May 2001.

LDC Watch, therefore, has been raising its voice and articulating its perspectives in a multi-stakeholder framework, engaging with the UN, LDC governments and their development partners, both, as a partner and a pressure group. In the process, it has been networking and working together with like-minded alliances and platforms, such as, the Social Watch, Jubilee South, Eurostep, South Asia Alliance for Poverty Eradication (SAAPE) and the World Social Forum.

Against this background, LDC Watch is facilitating a series of national multi-stakeholder consultations in the LDCs 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 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-centered sustainable development in the LDCs.

OBJECTIVES

The specific objectives of the national multi-stakeholder consultations are:

- ✓ **Awareness-raising** on the LDCs and the BPoA process among all stakeholders, namely, representatives from the government, CSOs including NGOs, the UN system, development partner organisations, the Bretton Woods institutions, other multilateral organizations such as the European Commission, media and the private sector.

- ✓ **Reviewing** the activities of the government, CSOs including NGOs, the UN system and other stakeholders along the lines of the 7 commitments of the BPoA.
- ✓ **Sharing** of issues and constraints confronting all stakeholders towards the effective implementation of the BPoA, along the lines of the 7 commitments.
- ✓ **Strategy planning** on effective implementation, monitoring and evaluation of the BPoA, for the final review in 2010 and the follow-up UN LDCIV conference in 2011
- ✓ **Networking, campaigning and advocacy** on the LDCs and the BPoA process with all stakeholders at all levels
- ✓ **Alliance-building** from national to regional to global levels on the LDCs and the BPoA process
- ✓ **Expanding membership** of LDC Watch

PARTICIPANTS

Around 20-30 representatives, of the government including the national LDC focal point at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, UN system including the UNDP Resident Representative, other multi-lateral agencies (European Commission), international NGOs (INGOs), national NGOs, CSOs including women and youth groups, media and the private sector will participate in the national consultation in Port-au-Prince.

ORGANISERS

LDC Watch in collaboration with La Plateforme haïtienne de Plaidoyer pour un Développement Alternatif (PAPDA) is organizing the national consultation in Port-au-Prince.

Annex 1

Criteria for identification for LDCs (Source: www.un.org/ohrls)

The list of countries as “least developed” is established by the General Assembly on the recommendation of the Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) and on the advice of the Committee for Development Planning. The list is reviewed every three years. In 1998, the Committee on Development Planning was reconstituted as the Committee for Development Policy (CDP) to continue the triennial review of the status of LDCs.

The CDP reaffirmed that the least developed country category should include countries with a low per capita income, a low level of human resource development and a high degree of economic vulnerability. As of end 2005, 50 countries are designated by the UN as the LDCs.

In its latest triennial review of the list of LDCs in 2006, the CDP used the following three criteria for the identification of the LDCs:

- (i) a low-income criterion, based on a three-year average estimate of the gross national income (GNI) per capita (under \$745 for inclusion, above \$900 for graduation);
- (ii) a human capital status criterion, involving a composite Human Assets Index (HAI) based on indicators of: (a) nutrition: percentage of population undernourished; (b) health: mortality rate for children aged five years or under; (c) education: the gross secondary school enrolment ratio; and (d) adult literacy rate; and
- (iii) an economic vulnerability criterion, involving a composite Economic Vulnerability Index (EVI) based on indicators of: (a) population size; (b) remoteness; (c) merchandise export concentration; (d) share of agriculture, forestry and fisheries in gross domestic product; (e) homelessness owing to natural disasters; (f) instability of agricultural production; and (g) instability of exports of goods and services.

To be added to the list, a country must satisfy all three criteria. In addition, since the fundamental meaning of the LDC category, i.e. the recognition of structural handicaps, excludes large economies, the population must not exceed 75 million. To become eligible for graduation, a country must reach threshold levels for graduation for at least two of the aforementioned three criteria, or its GNI per capita must exceed at least twice the threshold level, and the likelihood that the level of GNI per capita is sustainable must be deemed high.

With regard to the 2006 triennial review of the list, the CDP recommended that Papua New Guinea be included in, and Samoa be graduated from, the list of least developed countries. Equatorial Guinea, Kiribati, Tuvalu and Vanuatu were found eligible for graduation for the first time by the CDP. The General Assembly decided in its recent resolutions (59/209, 59/210 and 60/33) on the graduation of Cape Verde at the end of 2007 and Maldives in January 2011.

The CDP has drawn attention to the importance of smooth transition measures for graduated countries. As stressed in the report of its fourth session, the CDP considers smooth transition as a principle of paramount importance to the graduating countries, insofar as these countries are likely to remain dependent, to varying degrees, on external support.