



Regional Consultation of Asian LDC Civil Society Organizations on the Istanbul Programme of Action and Agenda2030

**Bangkok, Thailand
6-7 December 2017**

Declaration

We, the representatives of civil society organizations (CSOs) from LDCs in Asia (South and South-East), who met in Bangkok, Thailand, from 6-7 December 2017, at the ‘Regional Consultation of Asian LDC CSOs in the IPoA and Agenda 2030’, have reviewed and deliberated on the development challenges of Asian LDCs and their graduation from LDC category as agreed in Istanbul Programmes of Action (IPoA), adopted in 2011 during the Fourth UN Conference on LDCs (UN LDC-IV) in Istanbul, Turkey. We have intensively discussed on synergy and coherence between IPOA and SDGs 2030 to reach the full potential of sustainable development in Asian LDCs. Four main themes were covered in the Consultation: i. Poverty, Conflict and Development ii) Climate Change, Adaptation and International Support; iii) Trade, Technology Transfer and International Support; and iv) Food Sovereignty and Agricultural Productivity. Discussions resulted in the following declaration by the CSOs.

Global Calls

1. Least Developed Countries in Asia include the mountainous countries as well as coastal countries that are highly vulnerable to the impacts of climate change. There is an urgent need for financial and technical support from the developed countries and development partners for the achieving their targeted national development goals. We are intensely waiting for resources from climate funds, such as Green Climate Fund, Adaptation Fund, Global Environment Facility, Least Development Country Facility and other funds disbursed through global and bilateral programmes. It is urgent that developed countries fulfill their commitment of jointly mobilizing \$100 billion annually, and a major part of it should be mobilised for the sustainable development and protection of environment in LDCs. We reiterate that it is a matter of survival for the LDCs that the developed countries abide by the principle of Common but Differentiated Responsibilities and Respective Capabilities
2. Loss and Damage has been a huge consequence of climate change in Asian LDCs. We call for adequate financing of the Loss and Damage component of dealing with climate change.

3. As the result of the growing climate change, there are millions of victims and survivors who are compelled to leave their habitual place of residence either temporarily or permanently. We call for the protection of human rights of climate migrants by either revising the 1951 Refugee Convention and its 1967 Protocol or drawing up a new protocol.

4. Bilateral and multilateral development agencies should deliver upon providing predictable and accessible technical and financial resources to tackle climate change in the region. We call to reverse the recent decline in official development assistance (ODA) and call on Development Partners to fulfill their pledge to allocate the equivalent of 0.2 percent of their gross national product (GNP) to the LDCs.

5. All trade distorting measures in agriculture within the World Trade Organization need to be urgently rectified in order to protect the poor and vulnerable farmers from unfair trade systems. We call for the timely implementation of duty-free quota-free (DFQF) market access on a lasting basis reaffirming the provision of Special and Differential Treatment (SDT) for LDCs. Within SDT, it should be easy for LDCs to invoke Special Safeguard Mechanism, an instrument that allows curbing of unforeseen surges in the import of agriculture products from heavily subsidized countries in the North. Further, LDCs should have enough flexibility to designate appropriate number of products as Special Products and make these products eligible to flexible treatment.

6. Public procurement and Public Stockholding are invaluable instrumentalities to sustain the food security programmes in LDCs because it not only ensures cheap subsidized food to millions of urban and rural poor and hungry, but it also guarantees a price support mechanism to millions of its small scale resource poor farmers. It should not come under any kind of restriction.

7. We call on to all concerned to promptly utilize and implement the exemptions granted under intellectual property rights regimes under the World Intellectual Property Organization (WIPO) and the Trade-Related Intellectual Property Rights (TRIPs) Agreement.

8. To ensure the “access to affordable medicines and vaccines” for all in the context of realizing the SDG Goal No. 3 for healthy lives and promoting well-being for all at all ages, we call on the World Trade Organization (WTO) regime and on all concerned parties to protect the rights of LDCs, to use to the full the provisions in the TRIPs Agreement regarding flexibilities to protect public health, and, in particular, provide access to medicines for all. At the same time, we appreciate the further extension of the compliance deadline to 2033, since the circumstances upon which the extension is agreed upon still exist



9. We hope that the Technology Bank will spur innovation required to build productive capacity. We also hope that the Intellectual Property Bank will support Asian LDCs in building national IP and facilitation technology transfer.

10. Development partners and multilateral trading regimes such as WTO must ensure smooth transition of countries graduating from LDC category. The measures and benefits associated with the LDC membership status need to be phased out consistent with their smooth transition strategy, taking into account each country's particular development situation.

Regional Calls

11. We emphasize the importance of enhancing South-South Cooperation (SCC) for intra-regional trade as it is the key to sustainable development and particularly for food security. Regional blocs in Asia should work together to enhance smooth and fair trade and reduce and eventually eliminate non-trade barriers to create an Asian Common Market in future.

National Calls

12. Conflict and violence are one of the main causes of poverty; there is an urgent need to prevent conflict and peacefully resolve all kinds of conflicts. We urge Asian LDC governments to integrate conflict transformation and peaceful resolution, nation building and national reconciliation strategies into the mainstreaming national development plans.

13. Several manifestations of climate change, particularly drought, floods and elevated temperatures pose serious threat to agricultural production and food security in this region. We call on the governments to exert concrete efforts into the translation of political commitments and declaration into effective programmes on the ground.

14. We urge governments of Asian LDCs to promote gender justice and guarantee in their development strategies for the full enjoyment by women of their rights, as enshrined in domestic, regional and international laws. Their participation in entrepreneurship, innovation as well as in policy and decision making is crucial for women's empowerment and in the realization of national development goals.

15. We urge the Asian LDCs' governments and the development partners to develop a national strategy and time-bound and result-oriented guidelines taking into account of the effective implementation of SDGs 2030, Addis Ababa Action Agenda (AAAA), Sendai Framework for Disaster Reduction and Paris Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) to sustainable graduation from LDC category as indicated by the Mid-Term Review of the IPoA in 2016. We also call all LDC governments to reaffirm their commitment to the multilateral trading system and



underscore the need for the ongoing Doha round of trade negotiations for their development concerns.

CSOs are integral and independent development partners in their own right. Hence, we call on all the governments and development partners for continued and more policy space to enhance CSO participation and decision making in national, regional and international development processes. We will continue to engage in monitoring and follow-up and implementation of IPoA and SDGs. We conclude by extending our sincere thanks and appreciation to UN OHRLLS, our local host, Asia Forum, to LDC Watch and fellow participants for their contributions to the success of this Regional Consultation.