

# CSF Bulletin

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## 'International Community Should Not Fail The LDCs'



(From left) Barry Coates, Demba Moussa Dembele, Dr. Arjun Karki , Dr. Ihsan Karaman and Daphne Davies addressing the press meet

May 10, Istanbul- Leaders of the UN LDC IV Civil Society Forum have called on the international community not to fail the Least Developed Countries.

Addressing a press conference on the sidelines of the on-going fourth conference on LDCs in Istanbul on Tuesday, Chairman and spokesperson of the Civil Society Forum, Dr Arjun Karki, said LDCs were suffering from multiple crisis including climate crisis, debt crisis and food crisis. Referring to the United Nations General Assembly Resolution No. 63/227 adopted on March 10, 2009, Dr Karki called upon the developed countries to 'walk the walk.'

Responding to a query, Dr Karki said that the civil society representatives from around the world were closely watching the on-going negotiations in Istanbul. "We are angry. We are not happy. We are very much frustrated by the prolonged delay in negotiation process. Why waste time and resources if you don't agree to honour your own past commitments," he asked.

Chairman of the Doctors Worldwide Turkey, Dr M. Ihsan Karaman alleged that the global justice has turned out to be a lip service and commitment has not been fulfilled so far. "We can see

the post-modern pattern of neo-colonialism," said Dr Karaman adding, "Different kinds of dirty games are being played to extract natural resources of the LDCs. We have to emphasise on the development model based on justice, freedom, equality and human rights, he added.

Daphne Davies, CSF Media Coordinator said "Civil society must be allowed to play a key role in implementing the programme of action."

Demba Moussa Dembele, chairman of the LDC Watch, said the key message is that the development model of the past has failed. Hence, we need to shift to a new model.

Such a model should be based on three pillars of ownership, sovereignty and participation of civil society, said Dembele, who is also the president of Africa Forum for Alternatives. He further told the audience that LDCs had failed to benefit from the European Union's policy of 'Every Thing But Arms' due to restrictions associated with the 'Rules of Origin' provisions.

Responding to a query from the media, Mr Dembele said if the prevailing international environment, which he referred to as 'market fundamentalism,'

did not change, it will be difficult for LDCs in Africa to graduate even over the next decade. "Favourable international environment is more important for the LDCs compared to domestic environment. In that case, graduation of half of the LDCs in Africa is imminently achievable," he added.

Executive director of the Oxfam New Zealand, Barry Coates, alleged that developed countries were trying to dilute their role in assisting the Least Developed Countries (LDCs) by talking about emerging economies like Brazil, Russia, India and China. Developed countries must stand ready to shoulder their responsibility, he said, and LDCs should not be allowed to slip off the agenda of global development.

Mr Barry Coates added that LDCs were severely suffering from the impact of the climate change and it was a moral imperative for developed countries to help LDCs in their efforts to adapt to the impacts of the climate change.

Over 1,000 civil society delegates from around the world are taking part in the parallel civil society conference in Istanbul. The conference will conclude on Friday, 13th May, by adopting the Istanbul Declaration.

## Civil Society's Global Report calls for a "World Without LDCs"

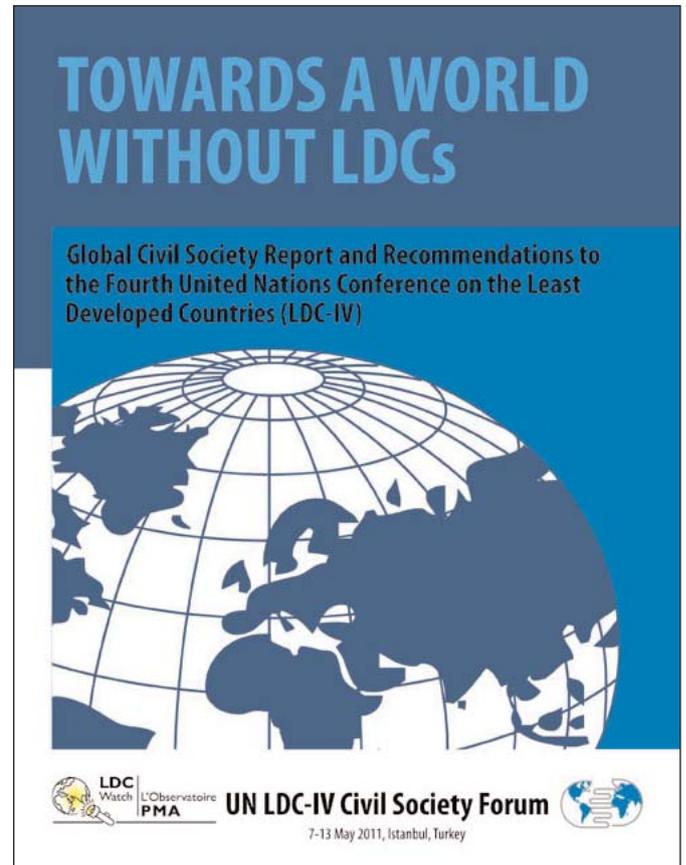
Istanbul, 10 May -- The Civil Society Forum's Global Report "Towards a World Without LDCs," launched at the fourth UN LDC Conference in Istanbul outlines an ambitious but deliverable plan of action to lift the world's 48 Least Developed Countries out of the spiral of poverty, vulnerability and insufficiency.

Timed to coincide with the UN LDC Conference, the civil society Global Report provides information and statistics that clearly illustrate how the Brussels Programme of Action, drawn up for the 3rd LDC Conference in 2001 failed to make a significant dent in the poverty and vulnerability in LDCs. For example, there are 4.1 million people with AIDS in sub-Saharan Africa, and only 22% of roads in LDCs are paved, compared to 88% in OECD member countries, and a child dies of malaria every 30 seconds.

More importantly, the Report outlines the major challenges that LDCs continue to face and offers a series of detailed, targeted recommendations towards LDCs' 'graduation' from the category of the world's most vulnerable countries.

Some samples of the report's recommendations:

- Strengthen the domestic economies of the LDCs partly by giving democratic ownership and control of resources and sustainable extraction.
- Ensure the necessary financial resources for equitable, just and sustainable development, through measures such as progressive tax and international tax justice and a financial transaction tax (FTT).
- Take bold steps to solve the debt problem, including 'illegitimate' debt, and transform the international financial system and rein-in speculation on commodities.
- Progress from food security to food sovereignty; examine the issues of climate debt and give LDC citizens the means to deal with the impacts of climate change.
- Ensure 100% duty-free quota-free market



access of LDC exports.

- Give women the means to develop their skills as their development benefits LDCs as a whole.
- To improve global governance set up the Global Economic Council within the auspices of the UN and carry out a massive overhaul of international institutions.
- Its closing chapter and section on civil society involvement argues that civil society involvement is vital to ensuring that the Programme of Action is carried out on the ground. Citizens must be closely involved in the follow-up and monitoring of the Istanbul Plan of Action if it is to succeed.

The Report argues that the agenda in the new Programme of Action must be visionary and strategic, and include specific steps towards immediate redress and progress. It argues that the Istanbul Programme must articulate a new agenda, a new development paradigm.

## 'There is a need to new and innovative approach to resource mobilization': Meles Zenawi

Meles Zenawi, Prime Minister, Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia, gave a key note speech at the opening of the thematic debate on 'Resource mobilization for the least developed countries development and global partnership'.

The prime Minister has said that, LDC's have failed to graduate because of lack of favourable global partnership, lack of enough investment on the acute infrastructural problems.

Climate change, the ongoing global economical crisis have also contributed their share to the present challenges according to his note.

Talking about domestic issues, the prime minister underlined that, getting one's house in order is primary, and top priority should be maximizing domestic resource mobilization through the promotion of savings and improved tax collection.

Addressing foreign savings, the Prime Minister said, much should be done to hold partners accountable and to improve the delivery of Official Development Assistance.

Through win-win and mutually beneficial mechanisms, addressing the resource constraints for development and climate change simultaneously is possible, according to the prime minister.

Addressing the global imbalances, "mountains of savings at one pole and lack of effective demand in the other is creating pressure to address the imbalance through retrench-



ment and austerity at a global level. Everyone is suffering as a result. We all know there is a key way out of the dilemma that has not been adequately explored. The LDC' can absorb a very significant part of these excess savings in a productive manner. That would increase global demand and address the problem of imbalances not through global retrenchment but through more inclusive global growth. This can be done by addressing the real and perceived risks to investment in LDC's. Such a solution would be in the interest of everyone, it would be a quintessentially win-win solution," he said.

In regard to South-South cooperation, the prime minister said "The economic map of the world is changing radically opening new opportunities for South-South cooperation. In this area too we need to build on already existing initiatives to deepen and broaden cooperation"

### 'The Progress of LDCs is Too Slow'

OUSMAN YARBO is the Executive Director of TANGO, the umbrella organisation of CSOs and NGOs in Gambia. He had some very interesting and pertinent things to say in conversation with GEORGE CHRISTENSEN between sessions during the breakout.

"I came to listen to other participants from LDCs and Civil Society. To assess the progress from the last LDC III in Brussels," said Ousman Yarbo.

Considering that the first UNLDC was 30 years ago and that targets have been way off course, Yarbo said since the last LDC Conference only three countries have made it out of that bracket. At that rate how long will it take for the remaining 48 countries to move up, he wondered.

"Progress is too slow and this is because of a combination of factors. The donor countries had pledged 0.07% of their GDP as development assistance. However the majority of countries have not honoured their commitments. New conditionalities and bureaucratic processes such as Zero Tolerance, a new index on Corruption have meant that LDC

countries have had to spend considerable time and resources in trying to meet the eligibility criteria," he said.

Mr Yarbo sees CSOs having a more pro-active part to play in the future. Umbrella CSOs have to build their capacities in order to assist the less able to involve in the process. They should uphold human rights, zero tolerance and other pertinent issues. At the same time, CSOs should actively engage developed countries and the donor community in refining the definitions that have so hampered the work. More resources should be targeted in the bilateral work between Government and CSO that would speed the delivery of services to intended recipients including water sanitation and education. He also sees an increasingly important part being played by the private sector. Most CSOs are struggling to maintain survival and their existence is vital to the work of LDCs and MDGs, he said.

However Mr Yarbo still thinks that the conference will show its resilience and come up with better ways to strengthen the process.

# 'Ecological Balance and Livelihood of 30 Million People Are At Stake'

- Mohiuddin Ahmed

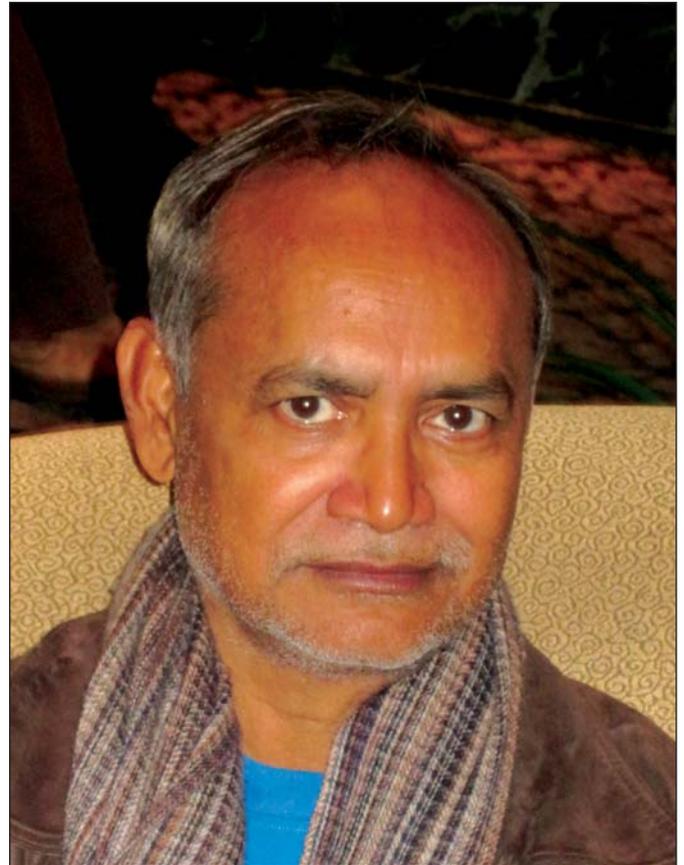
**MOHIUDDIN AHMED is a Bangladeshi activist and a member of the LDC Watch. Follows excerpts of an interview with him:**

## **How has the climate change affected poor people of Bangladesh?**

Bangladesh is considered as the most vulnerable country in terms of climate change. This fact is already acknowledged by the international community. The greatest challenge is the global warming and the consequent rise in sea level that threatens one-fifth of our country that lies one meter below the sea level. More than 30 million people live in this region. All our major infrastructure including two ports, airports as well as Sundarban - the largest mangrove forest - lies in that region. Therefore, it could ruin the infrastructure and the ecological balance. In fact, the sea level rise is already being felt. It has affected the mangrove forest and there is increase in the level of salinity. Because of numerous water control structures built by India and China in the upstream, the upland flow is declining while the salinity is increasing. Many plants are dying in the Sundarban. Not only ecology but the livelihood of 30 million people is at stake.

## **How can the international community help countries like Bangladesh cope with the challenges of climate change?**

This problem is actually created by other parts of the world by releasing high degree of CFC gases in the atmosphere. But the poor people of Bangladesh are paying the price and they are suffering. So, there is a moral obligation on the part of the international community to support. There must be two-pronged strategy. First, the international community must decide and act to lower the CFC level significantly. Second, they must provide effective and meaningful support to the people of Bangladesh so that they can enhance their capacity to cope and make use of adaptation and mitigation measures. This second idea



can provide only short-term solution. In the long run, the industrialized north must lower their CFC emission.

## **People from developing world have been calling for climate justice. What does that mean and how can that be ensured?**

Actually, by saying climate justice, we who belong to civil society mean that, first of all, the industrialized north must admit that it is due to their actions that we are being made to suffer. Then we can have dialogue. There are demands that they should compensate for their past sins and mistakes. So, we want assistance not in the form of more loans or simple ODA but in the form of climate reparations. They should then gradually reduce the CFC emissions. They must meet the targets set up in different conferences such as in Kyoto or Copenhagen. They have to assist us to develop our capacity to mitigate the problem.