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Enabling poor rural people
to overcome poverty

Istanbul Programme of Action for the Least Developed Countries for the Decade 2011-2020

Note to Governors

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For: Approval

Recommendation for approval

The Governing Council is invited to approve the draft resolution on page 4.

Istanbul Programme of Action for the Least Developed Countries for the Decade 2011-2020

1. The Istanbul Programme of Action for the Least Developed Countries for the Decade 2011-2020¹ was adopted by the Fourth United Nations Conference for Least Developed Countries in Istanbul, Turkey on 13 May 2011. The programme aims to overcome the structural challenges faced by the Least Developed Countries (LDCs) in order to eradicate poverty, achieve internationally agreed development goals and enable graduation from the least developed country category. Its objective is to improve the living conditions of more than 880 million people in 48 LDCs. The Programme of Action provides the framework for a strong global partnership to accelerate economic growth and sustainable development in LDCs for the next decade, with a strong focus on developing their productive capacities. Guiding this overarching goal are the following specific objectives set for the next decade:
 - Achieve sustained, equitable and inclusive economic growth in LDCs by strengthening their productive capacity in all sectors through structural transformation;
 - Build human capacities by fostering sustained, equitable and inclusive human and social development, gender equality and the empowerment of women;
 - Reduce the vulnerability of LDCs to economic, natural and environmental shocks and disasters, as well as climate change, and enhance their ability to meet these and other challenges through strengthening their resilience;
 - Ensure enhanced financial resources and their effective use for LDCs' development, including through domestic resource mobilization, official development assistance, external debt relief, foreign direct investment and remittances;
 - Enhance good governance at all levels.
2. The Programme of Action recognizes LDCs as representing the poorest, weakest and most vulnerable countries in the world. They are characterized by low per capita income, a low level of human development and economic and structural constraints on growth that affect their resilience. LDCs have made some progress since the adoption of the Brussels Programme of Action (2001-2010), showing growth in economic performance between 2005 and 2007. Some economies grew at an average of 8 per cent per year, and even in 2009 (a year of economic crisis), they still grew at over 4 per cent. The percentage of poor people (those living on less than US\$1.25 a day) in LDCs also declined.
3. However, despite these notable gains, LDCs still face enormous challenges: considerable variance in the performance of individual countries; persistence of food insecurity – of the 33 countries in a permanent state of food insecurity, 22 are in the least developed category; rising population – projections suggest that

¹ The full text can be found under the following links: <http://www.unohrrls.org/en/ldc/898/> and <http://www.un.org/Docs/journal/asp/ws.asp?m=A/CONF.219/3/Rev.1>.

population is set to double in LDCs, from 670 million in 2000 to 1,300 million by 2030; bulk of population resident in rural areas; notable weak development of productive capacities, hence unable to overcome economic vulnerability; limited results in terms of poverty reduction and achievement of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) – 75 per cent of the population in LDCs still live in poverty; high proportion of young people – 60 per cent of population are under 25.

4. The Programme of Action is based on commitments, accountability and partnership between LDCs and their development partners to undertake concrete actions in a number of interlinked areas. Each LDC will translate policies and measures set out in the Programme of Action into concrete measures by integrating the Programme of Action into their national and sectoral development strategies and plans.
5. Agriculture, food security and rural development represent a priority area for action under the programme. The Programme of Action highlights agriculture as a crucial sector in almost all LDCs, both in promoting food security and as the main economic activity for much of the population. Therefore, this area is directly linked to the eradication of poverty and hunger; rural development; and gender equality and empowerment of women; production of exports and commodity; production diversification, and agroprocessing capacity. Despite its high potential for economic growth and food security, progress in the sector has been hampered by under-investment in physical infrastructure, scientific and technological development and research, and limited access to agricultural extension services. The Programme of Action also highlights the adverse impact of climate change, natural resource degradation and other environmental concerns on the agricultural sector. To address these issues, the Programme of Action sets out a plan to promote sustainable, resilient and profitable small-scale farming.
6. In relation to agriculture and rural development, the Programme of Action calls on development partners to: provide enhanced financial and technical support for the development of the agricultural sector; deliver on commitments made to achieve global food security and sustainable agricultural development, and provide adequate and predictable resources through bilateral and multilateral channels – including through the commitments made under the L'Aquila Food Security Initiative; and support efforts aimed at increasing agricultural production and productivity.
7. With respect to IFAD's mandate, other priority areas of relevance include human and social development, and multiple crises and other emerging challenges. On human and social development, the Programme of Action highlights the crucial role played by women and young people in the development of LDCs. It also recognizes that poverty is likely to persist in LDCs over the coming years and that both poverty and hunger are multidimensional. Regarding the section on multiple crises and other emerging challenges, the programme focuses on the vulnerability of LDCs to a variety of shocks, including food, fuel, financial and economic crises, and natural disasters and highlights the need to secure equitable, inclusive, and sustainable economic growth and development in LDCs.
8. Paragraph 153 of the Programme of Action invites the governing bodies of United Nations funds and programmes and other multilateral organizations, including the Bretton Woods institutions and international financial institutions, to contribute to the implementation of the Programme of Action and to integrate it into their work programmes, as appropriate and in accordance with their respective mandates. Organizations are invited to participate fully in reviews of the Programme of Action at the national, subregional, regional and global levels.
9. The Permanent Representative of Nepal to the United Nations, the World Trade Organization and other international organizations, acting in his capacity as the Chair of the Global Coordination Bureau of the Least Developed Countries, by letter to the President of IFAD (attached hereto as an annex), has formally requested

IFAD to integrate the Istanbul Programme of Action into the IFAD workplan and contribute to its implementation. In light of the foregoing, the Governing Council may wish to adopt the draft resolution herewith included.

Resolution .../XXXV

Endorsement of the Istanbul Programme of Action for the Least Developed Countries for the Decade 2011-2020

The Governing Council of IFAD,

Taking into account articles 2 and 7.1(e) of the Agreement Establishing IFAD;

Welcoming the endorsement of the Istanbul Declaration and the Programme of Action for the Least Developed Countries (LDCs) for the Decade 2011-2020 by the United Nations General Assembly on 17 June 2011 and the Economic and Social Council on 7 July 2011;

Recalling paragraph 153 of the Istanbul Programme of Action, which invites international organizations to contribute to its implementation and integrate it into their work programmes, as appropriate and in accordance with their respective mandates;

Noting the resources allocated to LDCs on highly concessional terms and the various initiatives undertaken so far by IFAD to assist LDCs;

Endorses the Istanbul Programme of Action and decides to integrate it into the work of the Fund;

Invites the President to report on IFAD's work in LDCs and contribute to relevant policy forums for poverty and hunger reduction in rural areas of LDCs.



Ambassador/Permanent Representative

**Permanent Representative of Nepal
to the United Nations, WTO and other
International Organisations**

31, rue de la Servette, CH - 1202
Geneva, Switzerland

17 October 2011



Excellency,

I have the honour to write, in my capacity as the Chair of the Global Coordination Bureau of the Least Developed Countries.

As you are aware the Istanbul Programme of Action for the Least Developed Countries for the Decade 2011-2020 (IPoA), adopted by the Fourth United Nations Conference on the LDCs held in Istanbul, Turkey, in May this year, contains clearly-set priority areas of action and pledges from the international community to help LDCs overcome structural impediments and address development challenges and enable half the number of 48 LDCs to meet the criteria for graduation by 2020.

I would like to draw your kind attention to the Paragraph 153 of the IPoA (A/CONF.219/3/Rev.1), which invites the governing bodies of the UN funds and programmes and other multilateral organizations to contribute to the implementation of the Programme of Work and integrate it into their work programmes, as appropriate and in accordance with their respective mandates. Both the United Nations General Assembly Resolution (A/RES/65/280) of June 17, 2011 and UN Economic and Social Council Resolution (E/2011/L.31) of July 07, 2011 have endorsed the Programme of Action and have called upon all relevant stakeholders to commit to its implementation.

In this context, I would request you to have the Istanbul Programme of Action integrated into the work program of the International Fund for Agricultural Development and contribute towards its implementation. Please find enclosed herewith a tentative draft resolution/decision for consideration to formalize the process of integration of the IPoA into the International Fund for Agricultural Development's work programme.

I avail of this opportunity to express LDC Group's sincere appreciations for your continued attention to the problems faced by LDCs in multiple dimensions of development and for the International Fund for Agricultural Development's continuous involvement in various initiatives beneficial to the LDCs.

Please accept, Excellency, the assurances of my highest consideration.

Dinesh Bhattarai

His Excellency
Mr. Kanayo F. Nwanze
President,
International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD)
Rome.

Annex

Draft Resolution/Decision

Integrating/Mainstreaming the Istanbul Program of Action for the Least Developed Countries for the Decade 2011-2020 into the International Fund for Agricultural Development's programs

The (relevant governing body) of International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD)

Welcomes the endorsement of the Istanbul Declaration (A/CONF.219/L.1) and the Program of Action for the Least Developed Countries for the Decade 2011-2020 (A/CONF.219/3/REV.1) by the United Nations General Assembly on June 17, 2011 and the Economic and Social Council on July 07, 2011;

Recalls paragraph 153 of the Istanbul Program of Action (IPoA) which invites international organizations to contribute to its implementation and integrate it into their work programmes, as appropriate and in accordance with their respective mandates;

Extends appreciation for the various initiatives undertaken so far by the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD) to assist Least Developed Countries (LDCs);

Invites the President to integrate/mainstream the relevant parts of the Istanbul Program of Action (IPoA) into the various programs of the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD).