



**STATEMENT BY DR. ARJUN KARKI, INTERNATIONAL COORDINATOR AT  
THE MINISTERIAL MEETING OF ASIA- PACIFIC LDCs ON GRADUATION  
AND THE POST 2015 DEVELOPMENT AGENDA  
16-18 December 2014  
Kathmandu, Nepal**

Mr Chairperson Honb'le Minister Mahendra Pandey, Rt. Honb'le Prime Minister of Nepal, Honb'le Minister Ram S Mahat, Honb'le LDC Ministers, UN Officials, Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen!

I would like to extend sincere appreciation to the organisers, the Government of Nepal for hosting the **LDC Ministerial Meeting of Asia-Pacific LDCs on Graduation and Post 2015 Development Agenda**, in Kathmandu and for giving me this opportunity to express myself as the International Coordinator of LDC Watch. As Istanbul Programme of Action (IPoA) targets to graduate at least half of the LDCs by 2020, I would also like to take this opportunity to congratulate the organisers for bringing all of us together to discuss and debate on the very crucial issue of graduation of LDCs, especially in the context of the Post-2015 Development Agenda. This is also a very opportune time as Post-2015 is important not only for LDCs but also for the entire international community as we are negotiating and devising the next-generation development agenda with the completion of the Millennium Development Goals and, not to forget, the midterm review of the IPoA scheduled in 2015.

Honb'le Chairman, Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen,

As you all know, LDC Watch campaigns and advocates globally for defending LDC interests in and around the issues of poverty, hunger, aid, debt, trade, climate change, human rights and sustainable development issues including the effective implementation of the IPoA. Since the establishment of LDC Watch in 2001, we have been calling for speedy graduation of LDCs. This very crucial issue was also highlighted during the 3<sup>rd</sup> UN LDC Conference held in Brussels in 2001, where some of you including honourable minister Dr Ram S Mahat, representing the government of Nepal, and I in the role of civil society spokesperson and negotiator had actively participated.



However, even after four UN Conferences and four specific Programmes of Action for addressing special development challenges of LDCs, the number of LDCs has doubled from 24 in 1971 to 48 now. Only four countries have graduated out of the LDC category so far, which is most disappointing to all of us. Hence, it is critical that LDCs and development partners act with greater political will to materialise their commitments defending LDCs' interests and development priorities.

Honb'le Chairman, Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen,

There are many issues that we the people of LDCs and the governments face, that stand as roadblocks to graduation. The dominant development paradigm and the current international Aid Architecture, which overwhelmingly prioritises profits and markets ave failed addressing the development challenges faced by LDCs. The developmental role of the states must be reinforced, balancing the role of the states and the markets as emphasised in the IPoA. The current development model is perpetuating inequality and inflicting injustices in LDCs. The factual revelation - that the richest 66 people have the same amount of wealth as the bottom half of humanity; the wealth of the 1% richest people in the world amounts to US\$110 trillion, which is 65 times the total wealth of the bottom half of the world's population, is unacceptable. Therefore, in order to enable LDCs to graduate, LDC Watch calls upon development partners to cancel all LDC debts, double ODA, use country systems and ensure country ownership in financing development in LDCs. Let us remind ourselves that the Ministerial Conference on New Partnerships for the Development of Productive Capacities in LDCs in Benin in July 2014 calls for “total and unconditional cancellation of all LDC external debt” – LDC Watch is happy to note this Call as it has been one of our long-standing campaigns, hence we are eagerly waiting to see this commitment realised immediately!

The development partners' commitment of allocating 0.15-0.20% of GNI as Official Development Assistance (ODA) is far from being materialised even when it was committed in the Brussels Programme and is reiterated in the current Istanbul Programme. The IPoA states that development partners should review their ODA commitments in 2015 and consider further enhancing resources –



we are waiting and watching to see whether this commitment is revisited and promises kept!

Hon'ble Chairman, Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen,

It is essential that LDCs intensify and accelerate their efforts towards improving the conditions of the youth and women, comprising largest number of LDC populations and are mostly unemployed, under-employed and marginalised, even when they possess high productive potentials and capacities to deliver to the LDCs' development. The UNOHRLLS report (2014) - "State of the LDCs" points out that low levels of education, the limited employment generation capacity and underdeveloped social protection meant that large number of youths and women were underemployed or involved in low income self-employment, informal jobs or unpaid works in our part of the world. Social Protection is an essential priority for our poor and marginalised peoples and the IPoA has recognised it as one of the key elements under Human and Social Development. In accordance with the IPoA, LDCs (i) "mainstream social protection into national development strategies and strive to strengthen country-led social protection policies and programmes" and (ii) implement social protection policies by ensuring allocation of adequate resources, capacity building and appropriate financial infrastructure for the functioning of social protection systems such as cash transfers with maximum efficiency".

Similarly, climate change has imposed a major hindrance to LDC graduation, undermining our poor peoples' lives and livelihoods. The coastal zones are severely affected by rising sea levels and increased frequency of storms and cyclones. In addition, the Himalayan melting with glacial lake outburst floods (GLOF) and increasing desertification in Sub-Saharan Africa, home to majority 34 LDCs, are of equal concerns. The 2014 UNCTAD State of the LDCs Report states - "from January 2010 to July 2013, two-thirds of the global human casualties associated with climate-related events occurred in the LDCs, although they have just over one-tenth of world population". The IPCC's most recent Fifth Assessment Report (AR5) states that LDCs are systematically more vulnerable to climate change than rest of the world. Although LDCs have least contributed to climate change, they are disproportionately placed in the frontlines of the climate catastrophe, with devastating impacts on



food security and livelihoods. Where, therefore, is Climate Justice?

Hence, we've been calling for development partners to acknowledge their historical responsibility and equity under the UNFCCC and provide immediate, new and additional debt-free climate finance in order for us to adapt and build resilience against climate change impacts on LDCs. In this context, let us also underscore the fact that we're already facing Loss and Damage, which therefore must definitely be considered a separate pillar in addition to Adaptation. We are witnessing everyday climate change havoc, and hence, Adaptation is too late in our countries. I was in Lima together with honourable VC of NPC Dr. Govind Pokharel at the recent COP20 where we, alongside LDC governments, fought for Loss and Damage to be anchored in the upcoming 2015 Paris Agreement which takes effect post-2020. However, we lost the fight since it is now only mentioned in the Preamble of the final Lima decision text - the Lima Call for Climate Action – and not in the operative Paragraph 4 along with mitigation, adaptation and other means of implementation. This means, we have a tough battle ahead as we approach Paris CoP21– we must fight collectively for Loss and Damage to be anchored in the Paris Agreement otherwise we will be left battered with the everyday climate change devastations with no finance and means of implementation to cope with it!

Speaking of trade justice, we must fight for the full implementation of duty free quota free access to LDC products which was committed by development partners way back in 2005 in Hong-Kong. We must urge development partners to immediately remove both tariff and non-tariff trade barriers to ease access of LDC products to development partner countries. I was there in Bali, too, at the 9<sup>th</sup> WTO Ministerial last year, fiercely fighting for the adoption of the LDC package which is already weak with its non-binding nature. LDC must now claim for their rights, which have been long committed by development partners, but yet remains unrealised. Let us remember that the current Doha Round negotiations have a specific “development” mandate with special and differential treatment to LDCs, which we must claim and defend collectively! Similarly, access to modern, affordable and IPR free technology should be provided to LDCs in accordance with Article 66.2 of the TRIPS Agreement which is committed in the IPoA as one of the actions of development partners



under Trade as a priority area for action.

Honb'le Chairman, Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen,

Regarding Post-2015 Development Agenda, as negotiations will start in January next year, we must collectively demand a stand-alone goal demanding special global development partnership for the LDCs premised upon their special situations and vulnerabilities. We can't think of poverty eradication and sustainable development while ignoring the development needs of the most poorest and vulnerable LDCs. It is critical that LDCs should be at the centre of the Post-2015 Development Agenda. We, LDC Watch, have been campaigning and advocating for **NO MDGs without LDCs** and currently, we are calling for **NO SDGs without LDCs and No Post 2015 Agenda without LDCs!!!!**

Thank you for your attention.

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