

**7th UNIDO Least Developed Countries (LDC) Ministerial Conference
Vienna, 23 - 24 November 2017**

Ministerial Declaration:

“Building global partnerships: Enhancing growth and inclusiveness in LDCs”

Vienna, 24 November 2017

We, the Ministers of Industry, Trade and/or Commerce, and/or Heads of Delegation, participating in the seventh UNIDO Least Developed Countries (LDC) Ministerial Conference,

Gathered here in Vienna, Austria, from 23 to 24 November 2017, to provide strategic guidance for the implementation of inclusive and sustainable industrial development (ISID) through building global partnerships for LDCs within the framework of the Istanbul Programme of Action (IPoA), the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, and the Addis Ababa Action Agenda,

Guided by the Charter of the United Nations and the principles set out in resolution 70/1 adopted by the United Nations General Assembly at its seventieth session, entitled “Transforming our world: the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development”, and its recognition of the shared responsibility for people, planet, prosperity, peace, and partnership,

Recalling the IPoA, adopted at the Fourth United Nations Conference on the LDCs and endorsed by the General Assembly in its resolution 65/280 of 17 June 2011, in which the Assembly calls upon all relevant stakeholders to commit to implementing the Programme of Action to enable graduation from the LDC category,

Recalling the Political Declaration adopted by the Comprehensive High-level Midterm Review of the Implementation of the IPoA for LDCs covering the Decade 2011-2020, held in Antalya, Turkey, from 27 to 29 May 2016, and endorsed by the General Assembly in its resolution 70/294 of 25 July 2016,

Taking note of the Ministerial Declaration for the high-level segment of the 2017 session of the Economic and Social Council and the High-level Political Forum on Sustainable Development, convened under the auspices of the Council, adopted on 14 July 2017,

Taking note of the Ministerial Declaration of LDCs during the General Assembly on 22 September 2017,

Welcoming with appreciation the reports by the Secretary-General surrounding the implementation of the Programme of Action for the LDCs for the decade 2011-2020, as well as the flagship report of the United Nations Office of the High Representative for LDCs,

Landlocked Developing Countries and Small Island Developing States (UN-OHRLLS), entitled State of the LDCs 2017,

Emphasizing the importance of the outcomes of all recent major United Nations conferences and summits in the economic, social, environment, and related fields, *including:*

- *the Third International Conference on Financing for Development;*
- *the Paris Agreement under the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change; and*
- *the six previous LDC Ministerial Conferences organized by the United Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO) and UN-OHRLLS,*

Recognizing that eradicating poverty in all its forms and dimensions, including extreme poverty, is the greatest global challenge, and that manufacturing and industrialization are dynamic forces in fostering inclusive and sustainable socio-economic development,

Reaffirming that all countries and all stakeholders, acting in collaborative partnerships, should take the bold steps that are urgently needed to accelerate LDCs' path to graduation and pledge that no country will be left behind in the process as reiterated in the Lima Declaration,

Taking note of UNIDO's major achievements in support of LDCs, following six years of implementation of its LDC Operational Strategy, and four years after the endorsement of the UNIDO Lima Declaration,

Taking note also of the achievements by UN-OHRLLS in facilitating coordinated implementation and consistency in the follow-up and monitoring of the IPoA, as well as the work of all related United Nations bodies in this regard,

Endorse the Declaration of the 7th UNIDO LDC Ministerial Conference hereby contained in Annex 1.

Annex 1:

2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development

1. National development efforts within the context of the 2030 Agenda need to be supported by viable partnerships for sustainable development in a mutually beneficial scenario at global and regional levels to achieve the priorities cited in the Istanbul Programme of Action (IPoA);
2. We take note with appreciation of the progress made towards the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) by several least developed countries (LDCs) and emphasize that much more is required in order to proceed towards achieving the SDGs across all LDCs;
3. We reiterate that the LDCs' path to graduation requires enhanced focus on inclusive and sustainable industrial development (ISID) as a catalyst for structural transformation, economic diversification, and decent employment, within the framework of the SDG targets in general, and SDG 9 in particular;
4. We recall the political declaration of the IPoA Midterm Review re-stating that development partners should align their national development cooperation strategies with the Programme of Action, by complying with the official development assistance targets set in the IPoA, in order to fully achieve its overarching goals and thus contribute to the realization of the SDGs;

Technical cooperation and advisory service programmes

5. We urge UNIDO to continue pursuing its technical cooperation programmes, advisory services and global forums geared towards LDCs at contributing to poverty eradication;
6. We reaffirm our commitment to implementing the IPoA by integrating the provision of ISID into our national policies and development frameworks in order to assist each of the remaining 47 LDCs to graduate;
7. We request that UNIDO expands and/or mainstreams its Programme for Country Partnership (PCP) model, initiated and piloted in Senegal and Ethiopia, to other LDCs in all regions, taking into account lessons learnt from the recent mid-term evaluation and best practices;

Partnership-development

8. We reiterate that the collaboration between UNIDO, the United Nations Secretariat, and in particular UN-OHRLLS, UN sister agencies, and other development partners/agencies, to support LDCs on their path to graduation is vital and should be strengthened. In particular by intensifying technical assistance and capacity-building activities, while identifying

sound financial and innovative investment schemes/mechanisms that will facilitate the implementation objectives and actions set by the IPoA;

9. We extend congratulations to the United Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO), the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa (UNECA), the Office of the Special Adviser on Africa (OSAA), and the African Union Commission (AUC) for their efforts in the implementation of the Third Industrial Development Decade for Africa (IDDA3), especially for the development of a roadmap as well as the mobilization of crucial partners for its implementation. In this regard we call upon the United Nations General Assembly to endorse that such industrialization schemes be developed for the Asia and the Pacific region with particular emphasis placed on LDCs;
10. We recognize the importance of building productive capacity being a critical enabler for the development and graduation of LDCs and emphasize that the development of physical infrastructure is an important prerequisite for sustained economic growth and development. Significant amounts of investment and technology are essential to bridge the existing savings-investment gap in LDCs, including through private-public partnerships, innovative financing, regional integration, and setting up appropriate institutions and regulations;
11. We strongly acknowledge the need to deepen and upscale North-South, South-South, and triangular cooperation, through a more institutionalized and innovative approach to collaboration that will positively impact the implementation process of the IPoA;

Investment-promotion

12. We emphasize the important role of multi-stakeholder partnership-building in the area of investment-promotion. In this regard, we encourage the relevant UN agencies to establish a Capacity Development Program for LDCs in order for Investment Promotion Agencies to attract, diversify and retain sustainable Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) and derive maximum benefit from it and, to foster private sector development in LDCs, thereby contributing to their sustainable graduation;
13. We welcome the decision contained in the Addis Ababa Action Agenda and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development to adopt and implement investment-promotion schemes for LDCs. These include the provision of financial and technical support for the preparation of projects and negotiation of contracts, advisory support in investment-related dispute resolution, access to information on investment facilities and risk insurance and guarantees, such as utilising the Multilateral Investment Guarantee Agency;
14. We commit to strengthen the underlying investment climate, with enhanced support provided by development partners and international financial institutions, including through improving predictability, governance, and transparency, as well as in procurement practices and policies;

Energy, infrastructure, and innovation

15. We stress the importance of building resilient infrastructure, including renewable energy and information and communications technology for productive purposes, along with fostering innovation through the transfer of knowledge and technology, which are critical to effectively engage in the new industrial revolution (Industry 4.0), allowing LDCs to prosper and progress on their path to graduation;
16. We welcome the analytical work that UN-OHRLLS and other UN entities have undertaken with respect to enhancing access to sustainable energy in LDCs and call for stronger partnerships and new financing models to push forward sustainable energy-transition in a way that enables LDCs to develop and deploy new and cost-effective energy sources and technologies;
17. We welcome the establishment of the Technology Bank for LDCs by the General Assembly, and appreciate the critical contributions by UN-OHRLLS and the Government of Turkey towards its operationalization in 2017, as set out in the 2030 Agenda under target 17.8. We further call upon other development partners to make substantial contributions to the successful start-up of the Bank and its effective functioning;
18. We take note of the need to strive towards circular economic production in order to design products for durability and recyclability with the view to mitigating industrialization's environmental impacts, and to engage in new transformation methods;

Youth, women, and entrepreneurship

19. We acknowledge the necessity to foster the inclusion of vulnerable segments of our populations, especially youth and women, who represent untapped potential which needs to be actively involved in the inclusive and sustainable industrial development of our countries with the objective being the acceleration of our graduation from the LDC category;
20. In this regard, we encourage and pledge to support the striving youth, and female entrepreneurs in LDCs to assume their role as agents of development, change, and modernity, thus accelerating sustainable development;

Conflict mitigation and resilience-building

21. We stress that the particular challenges faced by some LDCs in post-conflict situations, including human, economic, and social implications, need to be recognized in order to promote and enhance their stability with a view to achieving sustainable development, specifically SDG 16;

22. We stress the importance of working together with all stakeholders to further develop and implement concrete measures at the national and international levels in order to build the resilience of LDCs to withstand economic shocks and mitigate their adverse effects to endure and overcome the harsh effects of climate change, to enhance sustainable growth and protect biodiversity, and to withstand natural hazards in order to reduce the risks of disasters, as agreed upon in the IPoA;
23. We take note with appreciation of UNIDO's support to Small Island Developing States (SIDS) to respond to the challenges of climate change and their needs for economic development as demonstrated by the Pacific Centre for Renewable Energy and Energy Efficiency (PCREEE) was inaugurated on 26 April 2017 in Tonga with the support of UNIDO, SIDS DOCK s and the Government of Austria.

Food security

24. We are deeply concerned that the world is facing one of the largest food crises in 70 years, with 20 million people in four countries¹ at risk of facing famine. Of the 23 countries in which the severity and magnitude of acute food insecurity is very high, 18 are LDCs with a combined population of around 72 million;
25. We note that food insecurity is a result of low agricultural productivity. We thus call upon the international community, especially our development partners and the private sector, to elevate their partnership efforts and build more synergies to help increase agricultural productivity and rural incomes in order to eliminate emergencies once and for all;

Multilateral Trade Agreements

26. We underline the necessity for multilateral trade agreements to support the design of effective production and export initiatives of goods and services in LDCs in order to accelerate and foster their graduation process.

The way forward

27. We strongly call upon all countries and all partners to ensure adequate financing for the development and implementation of country-specific and regional operational strategies, projects, and programmes for the eradication of absolute poverty;
28. Finally, in the three years remaining to achieve the goals set out by the IPoA, robust synergies and complementarities between the Programme of Action, the 2030 Agenda, and other recent frameworks need to be aligned at regional, national and global levels, to ensure growth and inclusiveness for all.

[Adopted in Vienna, Austria, on 24 November 2017]

¹ Somalia, South Sudan, Yemen, and north-eastern Nigeria