

STATEMENT BY MRS. VIPLOVE THAKUR, MEMBER OF PARLIAMENT, ON AGENDA ITEM 22 – GROUPS OF COUNTRIES IN SPECIAL SITUATIONS [A] FOLLOW-UP TO THE FOURTH UNITED CONFERENCE ON THE LEAST DEVELOPED COUNTRIES [B] SPECIFIC ACTIONS RELATED TO THE PARTICULAR NEEDS AND PROBLEMS OF LANDLOCKED DEVELOPING COUNTRIES; OUTCOME OF THE INTERNATIONAL MINISTERIAL CONFERENCE OF LANDLOCKED AND TRANSIT DEVELOPING COUNTRIES AND DONOR COUNTRIES AND INTERNATIONAL FINANCIAL DEVELOPMENT INSTITUTIONS ON TRANSIT TRANSPORT COOPERATION AT THE SECOND COMMITTEE OF THE 66TH SESSION OF THE UNITED NATIONS GENERAL ASSEMBLY ON OCTOBER 20, 2011

**Mr. Chairman,**

India aligns itself with the statement delivered by Argentina on behalf of the G-77.



At the 4<sup>th</sup> United Nations Conference on the Least Developed Countries, the world clearly recognized the acute development challenges faced by the LDCs. We saw high political commitment and expression of support to help the poorest and the most vulnerable of the international community.

The Istanbul Program of Action adopted at the conference spells out a clear roadmap to help the LDCs lift themselves out of hunger, poverty and disease. It specifically stresses on the need to build productive capacity, infrastructure, institutional base and strong domestic economy sustained and strengthened by international trade.

At Istanbul, the LDCs set themselves an ambitious target to bring 50% of the countries to the threshold of graduation by the end of the Program. In their aspiration, Mr. Chairman, they have legitimate expectations from us, and we must not belie them.

We believe that with a strong commitment from the global community combined with accelerated domestic action, the LDCs can achieve this target.

**Mr. Chairman,**

With the program clearly defined and targets visibly outlined, it is time now for action and implementation. The promises made in Istanbul must be fulfilled at the earliest.

Mobilization of adequate resources to fill the huge financing gap for development in LDCs should receive our highest attention. In this regard, we call upon the countries to fulfill the commitments made by them to provide 0.15-0.20 % of GNI as ODA to LDCs. Transfer of technology, capacity building and strengthening economic support measures are equally crucial to strengthen their resource base.

Integrating and enhancing the participation of LDCs in the global trading network through full implementation of the duty free and quota free market access needs urgent action.

We must also push for a balanced and development oriented outcome of the DOHA Round to create greater trade policy space for the LDCs

The global financial and economic crisis has worsened the debt situation of LDCs. We call upon the international financial institutions and developed countries to provide immediate debt relief and make available concessional finance to spur economic growth and investment in the LDCs.

Climate Change poses a serious challenge to development in these countries. They need immediate financial and technology support to undertake adaptation strategies.

**Mr. Chairman,**

India remains fully committed to the needs of the LDCs. As part of South-South Cooperation, we are pleased that India-LDC partnership has gone beyond technical assistance to include trade, investment and humanitarian assistance.

In keeping with our WTO commitment, we have extended duty free tariff preference scheme to all LDCs. Our Lines of Credit worth 4.8 billion US Dollars to LDCs since 2003 and Aid for Trade programs have led to expansion in India-LDC trade from

16.7 billion US Dollars in 2008-09 to 20.5 billion US Dollars in 2009-10, with the balance of trade being in favour of the LDCs.

We have separately announced US Dollars 1 billion as Lines of Credit in support of the Istanbul Program. We urge the LDCs to make productive use of it. The additional 250 training slot for capacity building announced at the India-LDC Ministerial Meeting in Delhi has already been implemented. We have also kept a grant of US dollar 5 million for follow up activities of the Istanbul Program.

South-South Cooperation no doubt will play an important part in supporting the LDCs but it cannot be a substitute for North-South Cooperation.

**Mr. Chairman,**

The inherent geographical difficulties of landlocked developing countries have placed them at a distinct disadvantage as far as international trade and economic linkages are concerned.

The global economic crisis has hit the LLDCs hard. They need external support to help them overcome their development challenges including building resilience against external shocks.

The Almaty Programme of Action has resulted in a clear acknowledgement of the special needs of landlocked developing countries, Equally important is the understanding that any effective solution must address the constraints and challenges faced by the transit developing countries that neighbour landlocked developing countries.

We must work to provide efficient transportation and communication services to LLDCs including reliable logistic chain to offset transit and access difficulties and costs. According to UNCTAD, LLDCs, on an average, spent two times more on payment of transport and insurance services for their exports in comparison to other developing countries and three times more than the developed economies.

India has special bilateral cooperation agreements with its landlocked neighbours for easy transit of their goods through India. We accord the highest priority to further strengthening our ties with these countries including through regional initiatives. We will continue to contribute economic and technical support to their development efforts as well as of other landlocked and transit developing countries, as part of South-South cooperation.

We would also urge cooperation for meeting special transit requirements of landlocked regions within a country, which due to geography or political boundaries have similar difficulties in accessing international markets as LLDCs.

**Mr. Chairman,**

India, as always, remains fully committed to strengthening its partnership with LDCs and LLDCs.

Thank you

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