



**STATEMENT ON BEHALF OF THE GROUP OF 77 AND CHINA BY MRS. CHULAMANEE CHARTSUWAN, AMBASSADOR AND DEPUTY PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF THE KINGDOM OF THAILAND TO THE UNITED NATIONS, AT THE PREPARATORY MEETING OF EXPERTS IN PREPARATION FOR THE HIGH-LEVEL MIDTERM REVIEW OF THE ISTANBUL PROGRAMME OF ACTION FOR LEAST DEVELOPED COUNTRIES (New York, 28 March 2016)**

Co-facilitators,

1. I have the honour to deliver this statement on behalf of the Group of 77 and China.
2. At the outset, please allow me to express, on behalf of the Group of 77 and China, our appreciation to both of you for convening this meeting in preparation for the midterm review of the Istanbul Programme of Action (IPoA) for the Least Developed Countries (LDCs).
3. With 47 out of 48 countries officially listed as LDCs being members of the Group of 77, we cannot overemphasize how important the midterm review of the Istanbul Programme of Action (IPoA) for the Least Developed Countries (LDCs) for the Decade 2011-2020 is for the Group. The Group reiterates its full solidarity with and support to our LDCs friends in this endeavour. We look forward to constructively and substantively engaging with you and all Member and Observer States in the deliberation of the outcome document during the upcoming months.

Co-facilitators,

4. Please allow me, on behalf of the Group of 77 and China to reiterate important issues as we embark on this important task to strengthen support for LDCs during the rest of this decade.
5. First, the Group would like to emphasize that international cooperation is crucial for ensuring effective development and eventual objective of graduation of LDCs. Although development partners have committed to provide at least 0.15 to 0.20 per cent of their GNI as ODA to LDCs for more than a decade, very few developed countries have fulfilled their commitment. In the Addis Ababa Action Agenda, developed countries have been encouraged to reach the target of 0.20 per cent of GNI as ODA to LDCs. We call upon the development partners to fulfill their commitment urgently.
6. Second, LDCs are the major victims of climate change. In addition to that these most vulnerable countries are frequently affected by major health crises, natural calamities, price fluctuations of commodities, and external financial shocks. The Istanbul Programme of Action stressed on the importance of building resilience of the least developed countries. However, although LDCs have been struggling to cope with climate change and other shocks, no visible international support has been devoted to build resilience of the LDCs. The Group is of the view that it is time that the international community, including both development partners and LDCs, work on resilience-building mechanism to help LDCs address and overcome the multiple crises they face.
7. Third, another area where the IPoA puts high importance is foreign direct investment in LDCs, in order to enable them to build strong economic bases. Unfortunately, investment in LDCs is still at a very insignificant level - less than 2 per cent of global FDIs have been directed to LDCs. And yet

this low level of investment is mostly focused on extractive sector. It is important to have investment in a manner that will result in structural transformation, productive employment generation, and equitable and sustainable growth. The Member States acknowledged the importance of foreign direct investment in LDCs in the Addis Ababa Action Agenda, and resolved to work on investment promotion regimes for LDCs. It is time that we build on that committed platform set by the Addis Agenda, and create investment support centre for LDCs that will provide support to investors and to LDCs to draw FDIs through various instruments, including through the use of insurance and investment guarantees.

8. Fourth, the Group is of the view that it is important to let LDCs participate in the global economic activities, including international trade without any obstruction, to help them strengthen their economic base. In the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, Member States unequivocally called for not imposing unilateral economic measures that impede social and economic development. Therefore, no LDC should be subjected to any unilateral measure that will adversely affect their development efforts.

9. Lastly, high ratio of external debt is another major obstacle that many LDCs are facing in their respective development planning. It is of key importance to exercise maximum flexibility regarding debt recovery for LDCs, with low interest loans, and exemption of arrear interests and loans in case of HIPC LDCs. Access to concessional and preferential loans for their development must also be emphasized.

Co-facilitators,

10. The Group of 77 and China looks forward to engaging constructively with all relevant stakeholders in the upcoming processes leading up to the midterm review scheduled for this May in Antalya, Turkey. Once again, let me emphasize the Group's solidarity with LDCs in their endeavour towards their eventual graduation targeted by the IPoA by 2020.

I thank you.