



Post-2015 High-Level Panel Report Marginalises the Least Developed Countries (LDCs)

The much awaited High-Level Panel (HLP) Report on the Post-2015 development agenda is deeply disappointing for LDC civil society. While setting the ending of extreme poverty as a core objective, and an aspiration to ensure every person achieves a basic standard of well-being, it ignores existing agreements that focus particularly on the world's poorest and most marginalised LDCs.

The HLP Report ironically gives no "special attention" to the LDCs, as called for in previously agreed development efforts. It is even regressive in the spirit of global partnership, as the new Goal 12 **Create A Global Enabling Environment and Catalyze Long-Term Finance** proposed by the HLP only includes the already agreed aid target of 0.15-0.20% of GNP for LDCs, whereas the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) carry specific targets on trade, aid and debt issues in relation to the LDCs in the eighth goal. It ignores and undermines trade justice and debt cancellation which are critical development issues of the LDCs and its peoples.

The 49 LDCs - 34 being in Sub-Saharan Africa - have been identified as such because they face acute development challenges resulting from persistent poverty and vulnerability and hence, marginalising the LDCs is a grave oversight in terms of the so-called **bold yet practical** post-2015 development agenda. More than 75 per cent of the nearly 900 million LDC populations live in poverty and the LDCs are the most off track in achieving the internationally agreed development goals (IADGs), including the MDGs. They consistently occupy the bottom rung of the Human Development Index (HDI) rankings. Geographical factors and environmental constraints are major contributors to their vulnerability. Out of the 49 LDCs, 17 are landlocked developing countries (LLDCs), 10 are small island developing states (SIDS) and 20 are mountainous countries. Most of the LDCs are characterised by conflict, post-conflict and politically unstable situations with 24 of them being categorised as fragile states. As a group they have much in common, which is the principal reason for the recognition of the LDC category by the United Nations (UN) in the first place. The UN post-2015 development agenda must therefore not only recognise the need for special development attention of LDCs, but ensure that these are at the centre of any strategy for implementing the agenda.

For most LDCs, their vulnerability is increased by the effectiveness of climate change. The target on **holding the increase in global average temperature below 2°C pre-industrial levels, in line with international agreements** is also less ambitious than the science-based predictions that it would be prudent to aim well below 1.5°C or even 1°C, in line with the cautionary principle. The HLP Report's acceptance of the less ambitious target goes against the spirit and fight for climate justice based on the principles of historical responsibility and common but differentiated responsibilities. Moreover, it is totally unacceptable to the LDCs whose very survival is at stake with increasing desertification, glacial melting, sea level rise and other extreme weather events that our people are battling with, when they are least responsible for the climate catastrophe. That the number of people in LDCs affected by extreme weather events has almost doubled is a stark warning of what is likely to come. Rising from 100 million during the period 1970-1979 to 193 million over the period 2000-2010, this is exacerbating the massive issue of climate-induced migrants. The post-2015 development agenda must therefore carry bold and ambitious non-negotiables on emission cuts, climate finance and climate technology if indeed we are talking about a truly sustainable development agenda.

LDC civil society also expresses its concerns on the reinforced credibility and legitimacy given to businesses and the private sector as drivers of growth and sustainable development. The Report underlines the **potential of private business to create more value** and further states, **the Panel noted the huge potential to use public money to catalyse and scale up private financing for sustainable development**. Yes, small and medium-sized businesses have been an important part of any communities' development. However, the dominant neo-liberal paradigm that promotes increased privatisation, corporatisation and financialisation of development is aggressively pursued. We cannot accept an approach that uses public finance to leverage private financing for a development model that is liable to promote the interests of a minority more than the majority. We totally oppose the proposed privatisation of essential services that all too often results in the effective denial of these services for significant sectors of society. The Report explicitly states that **the most important source of long-term finance will be private capital, coming from major pension funds mutual funds, sovereign wealth funds, private corporations, development banks, and other investors.....** whose record to date all too often promotes an anti-people development paradigm that tramples upon people's rights and planetary boundaries.

We are also critical of the promotion of the World Trade Organisation (WTO) as a **fair and development-friendly trading system** and that it is the **most effective tool to increase the development impact of trade**, for in reality; the very development dimension is missing in the WTO negotiations. The current battle in Geneva between the LDCs and development countries over the waiver of the Trade-related Aspects of Intellectual Property Rights (TRIPS) to LDCs within the ambit of the TRIPS Agreement is a glaring example in this regard. The LDCs' request for an unconditional waiver until they graduate from the LDC status, based

on sound and valid grounds, is being opposed and negotiated for an impractical short-term transition period coupled with the conditionality like the no-roll back clause that would prevent LDCs from reducing their existing levels of intellectual property protection albeit adverse to their development needs.

Clearly, there is complete lack of policy coherence for a ***transformative, people-centred and planet-sensitive development*** as envisioned by the HLP Report. Furthermore, from the development perspective of the LDCs and its peoples, the Report has failed to integrate the voices of the very most marginalised and poorest section of the international community who have special needs and hence, require special development attention. We therefore call for a Post-2015 sustainable development agenda that will genuinely and meaningfully support, as well as sustain the development interests of the LDCs and its peoples. We call for a Post-2015 sustainable development agenda which will duly integrate and bolster the newly adopted Istanbul Programme of Action (IPoA) for the LDCs for the Decade 2011-2020; thereby, realising its overarching goal to overcome the structural challenges faced by the LDCs in order to eradicate poverty and to enable graduation of at least half of the LDCs by the end of the decade.

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