

**Distinguished Representatives of Civil Society,**

**Ladies and Gentlemen,**

I am delighted to welcome you all to Antalya.

Full and effective implementation of the Istanbul Programme of Action can only be achieved if all countries and stakeholders act together in the spirit of partnership and solidarity.

The role of civil society is key.

Civil Society Organizations are crucial partners for Least Developed Countries (LDCs) in their efforts to achieve sustainable development.

Your specialized knowledge of local population and regional issues help Governments and United Nations agencies to reach out to people who are in need of assistance.

Civil Society Organizations also play a crucial role in cooperation with other stakeholders by advocating issues of priority importance.

Your contributions are essential in policy making on sustainable development both at national and global levels.

As you all know, the United Nations Charter begins with the words “We the People”.

Today, sustainable development challenges require the contribution of all stake holders to make a better, more prosperous world for all people.

The voice of Civil Society Organizations must be better heard.

Through your active engagement, the implementation of the Istanbul Programme of Action can be a more transparent process based on accountability and fairness.

### **Distinguished Participants,**

Effective implementation is based on three key elements: partnership, ownership and accountability.

Istanbul Programme of Action provides a comprehensive road map of actions that need to be taken by LDCs and Development Partners to achieve sustainable development.

You can have a very good framework, which looks good on paper. But if you cannot properly implement it, it will stay on paper forever.

This cannot be our objective.

Civil Society Organizations need to work with Governments and other stakeholders in a spirit of true partnership.

Civil Society Organizations are true partners in sustainable development. The views expressed in this forum are very important for our work in the intergovernmental process.

Partnership is key. But it is not enough for effective implementation.

Strong sense of ownership by all is needed to achieve success.

In this respect, the role of Civil Society Organizations is indispensable.

Your direct contact with people in need on the field through various projects help to strengthen the ownership of all stakeholders.

Your work also helps ensure that Governments and the international community better understand the realities on the ground.

While implementing the Istanbul Programme of Action, we should also have a transparent process based on accountability.

We must be accountable for the commitments we have made.

Active engagement of civil society will secure this accountability.

**Ladies and Gentlemen,**

Our efforts to date have produced good results in several areas.

But we must not be complacent.

We should work even harder to achieve the ambitious but doable Sustainable Development Goals.

LDCs will be a showcase whether Sustainable Development Goals will be achieved or not.

Action speaks louder than words.

Turkey recognizes the importance of Official Development Assistance (ODA) for Least Developed Countries.

Decline in ODA going to LDCs in recent years is a cause of concern.

In 2010, Turkey provided ODA of around 1 billion US Dollars. Last year, our ODA reached 3.9 billion US Dollars. This amounts to 0.54 per cent of our Gross National Income.

We also announced an “Economic and Technical Cooperation Package” for LDCs in Istanbul in 2011.

The package commits 200 million US Dollars annually for technical cooperation projects as well as scholarships for LDCs.

So far, Turkey’s support exceeds its commitment and reached more than 1.5 billion US Dollars in total for five years.

We are strongly committed to do our share in supporting sustainable development efforts of LDCs.

The success depends on shared responsibility by both LDCs and Development Partners.

The world economy cannot grow stronger with enduring poverty, hunger, lack of basic infrastructure and education. These continue to be hard realities for hundreds of millions of people.

Turkey fully supports the active engagement of civil society in the global sustainable development agenda.

The Civil Society Forum in Antalya is a landmark event in this respect.

We need to create synergy and coherence between the Istanbul Programme of Action and the Sustainable Development Goals.

Together, we must raise awareness on the urgency of taking collective actions to leave no one behind for global economic and social development.

We should learn from each other on new and innovative ways to cope with challenges.

We should strengthen our partnership, develop new initiatives and ensure ownership.

We should improve monitoring and effective implementation of our common goals.

In all this work, Civil Society has a leading role.

**Ladies and Gentlemen,**

This Midterm Review is of critical importance in tracking our progress in reaffirming our commitment to LDCs and ensuring coherence between the Istanbul Programme of Action and the Sustainable Development Goals.

I am sure that this meeting will draw wider appeal from international community in the very aftermath of successful World Humanitarian Summit in Istanbul and it will have a distinct practical focus and impact in this regard.

With these thoughts, once again I would like to welcome you all to Antalya and Turkey, and I wish you success in this meeting.

Thank you for your attention.