

Mr. President, Excellencies, Distinguished Delegates, Ladies and Gentlemen,

On behalf of the delegation of the host country, I would like to once again extend our warm welcome to all the participants of the Mid Term Review in Antalya.

The Istanbul Programme of Action (IPoA) is a comprehensive document including many elements which are instrumental for sustained economic growth and sustainable development of LDCs.

It also draws a robust framework to enhance cooperation between LDCs and their development partners.

Effective and timely implementation of the IPoA is critical for graduating half of LDCs by 2020.

There have been significant accomplishments in the eight priority areas of the IPoA over the five year implementation period.

We are looking ahead to the next five years, which is the preliminary phase of the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

The Political Declaration to be adopted in Antalya will pave the way for further action, together with our dialogue and exchange of ideas.

We thank all delegations for their constructive efforts for the conclusion of a strong Political Declaration in New York. The Declaration reflects the collective commitment of the international community to support the development endeavours of LDCs.

We consider the Declaration has yielded several tangible deliverables such as;

- Study by the UN General Assembly on crisis mitigation and resilience building for LDCs,
- Consideration of the Investment Promotion Regimes by the Secretary General of the UN in Chief Executive Boards and in the Financing for Development Follow-up Forum of ECOSOC,
- Commitment to increase Aid for Trade both in absolute and proportionate terms to LDCs,
- Comprehensive review of the LDC criteria by the Committee on Development Policy taking into account all relevant development agendas,
- Strong commitment to operationalization of the Technology Bank, and urge to developed and developing countries to provide financial and technical assistance for sustained functioning of the Bank,
- Study by the Committee on Development Policy on the reason and consequence of non-application of LDC category by some UN agencies,
- Commitment to continue exploring ways to improve the effectiveness of food reserve mechanisms for LDCs.

Mr. President,

The MTR is an opportune moment to present the progress made individually and collectively

in the implementation of the IPoA.

I would like to share with you several highlights from our relations with LDCs that have accelerated in recent years in many areas, ranging from trade to education, investment to political dialogue mechanisms, agriculture to health.

First and foremost, last year, Turkey placed development at the heart of its G20 Presidency agenda, with a particular focus on inclusiveness. We aimed to advance the strong commitment of the world's major economies to support global sustainable development efforts, including the SDGs.

Turkey is endeavouring to contribute to raising the living standards of the people of LDCs. Our keen interest in achieving globally the Millennium Development Goals remains unabated in the SDGs.

Turkey's development cooperation with LDCs focuses on the objectives, principles and priorities of the IPoA, but also goes beyond in many fields.

During the 4th UN Conference on LDCs in Istanbul in May 2011, Turkey announced a comprehensive "Economic and Technical Cooperation Package" and committed to providing assistance of 200 million US dollars annually to LDCs by 2020.

Turkey provided 3.9 billion US dollars Official Development Assistance (ODA) in 2015.

Our ODA GDP ratio is 0,54 per cent, getting closer to 0,7 per cent benchmark every year, despite the persistent humanitarian crisis in our region. I would like to note that Turkey has deployed 10 billion dollars to our Syrian guests since 2011.

I am pleased to state that Turkey has exceeded its commitment to date, marking 1,5 billion dollars assistance to LDCs, which corresponds to 300 million dollars annually. Preliminary data for 2015 show that 442 million dollars of assistance was allocated to LDCs.

Excluding humanitarian aid, approximately 20 per cent of the Turkish ODA was delivered to LDCs.

Turkish ODA contributes to achieving long-term debt sustainability in LDCs.

Our relations with LDCs are built on the basis of equal partnership and mutual benefit. Our assistance is not ever conditional on anything. It is demand-based and it is delivered without any discrimination.

Among LDCs, the post-conflict nations of Afghanistan and Somalia have been the biggest recipients.

However, such assistance is never sufficient.

Hopefully, these figures can encourage other development partners to be more generous and active.

Mr. President,

In the context of the Economic and Technical Cooperation Package of Turkey, our

Government, private sector and civil society have been taking various actions in many sectors to address the structural challenges of LDCs as well as to eradicate poverty.

The Turkish International Cooperation and Development Agency (TIKA) is the principal institution delivering our development assistance.

Following the 2011 Istanbul Conference, TIKA has engaged in a new programme of action for LDCs and has made important strides on the ground.

TIKA has opened new regional offices in various parts of the world to reach out to LDCs, and 12 of its programme offices are located in LDCs.

TIKA has taken action in 29 LDCs in line with Busan Partnership for Effective Development Cooperation, and has implemented a lot of important projects on social, economic, administrative and physical infrastructure and services.

Many of these projects are aimed at building productive capacities and addressing the structural challenges of LDCs.

Direct investment and concessional loans, in addition to ODA, have been important instruments of our cooperation with LDCs.

Investments of Turkish entrepreneurs particularly in Africa increase every year in the framework of the “Cotonou Agenda for Productive Capacity Building in LDCs”.

21 business councils were established with LDCs to strengthen bilateral links.

The 389 km long railway line project for passenger and freight transport connecting Awash-Kambolcha-Hora-Gebeyo is an important example of Turkey’s investment in developing infrastructure in LDCs. As part of the financing of the project, 300 million dollars has been pledged by the Turkish Eximbank.

Turkish corporations have been active in building and operating airports in a number of LDCs.

Training programmes have been realized for private sector development by the relevant Turkish authorities.

4195 students from LDCs are benefiting from scholarships provided by the Turkish Government. 2612 of those students are at the undergraduate, 1093 are at the masters and 455 at the doctorate levels. They are distributed across a wide variety of subjects such as engineering, medicine, and agriculture.

In addition, a large number of government experts from LDCs have been trained in a wide range of fields.

Turkey imports non-agricultural products from LDCs on a “duty-free quota-free” basis with the same conditions of the European Union.

Several actions have been taken for the social protection of displaced persons in LDCs.

Training programmes for women have been put in place to improve technical skills, education and business development. Equipment and machinery have been donated for small businesses run by women.

Supplying water, especially opening wells to supply safe drinking water to rural populations, is one of the most frequently utilized modes of cooperation in 15 LDCs.

Afforestation, erosion control, dry-land restoration and solar power generation are other areas of our cooperation which also contribute to combating climate change.

Mr. President,

I would like to make a special emphasis on the Technology Bank and Science, Technology and Information supporting mechanism dedicated to LDCs.

As the host country, we reaffirm our commitment to fully operationalize the Technology Bank in 2016 in view of fostering productive capacity, structural transformation, poverty eradication and sustainable development by LDCs through its potential.

We welcome the appointment of the members of the Governing Council of the Technology Bank and establishment a Trust Fund to attract voluntary funding from Member States and other stakeholders.

We strongly believe that generous and sustained support is essential to ensure the success of the Technology Bank.

In this context, Turkey will do its share and provide financial support to the initial work of the Governing Council of the Technology Bank.

Mr. President,

If we work together, we can achieve a more equal and prosperous world.

I am confident that the international community will act in unity and solidarity in achieving sustainable development for all with the motto “leave no one behind”.

Turkey will spare no effort to contribute to this objective. We are committed to take further our strong support to LDCs in all possible areas of cooperation.

Thank you.