

AFRICA

Angola
Benin
Burkina Faso
Burundi
Central African Republic
Chad
Comoros
Democratic Republic
of the Congo
Djibouti
Equatorial Guinea
Eritrea
Ethiopia
Gambia
Guinea
Guinea-Bissau
Lesotho
Liberia
Madagascar
Malawi
Mali
Mauritania
Mozambique
Niger
Rwanda
São Tomé and Príncipe
Senegal
Sierra Leone
Somalia
South Sudan
Sudan
Togo
Uganda
United Republic
of Tanzania
Zambia

ASIA AND THE PACIFIC

Afghanistan
Bangladesh
Bhutan
Cambodia
Kiribati
Lao People's Democratic
Republic
Myanmar
Nepal
Samoa
Solomon Islands
Timor-Lesté
Tuvalu
Vanuatu
Yemen

LATIN AMERICA AND THE CARIBBEAN

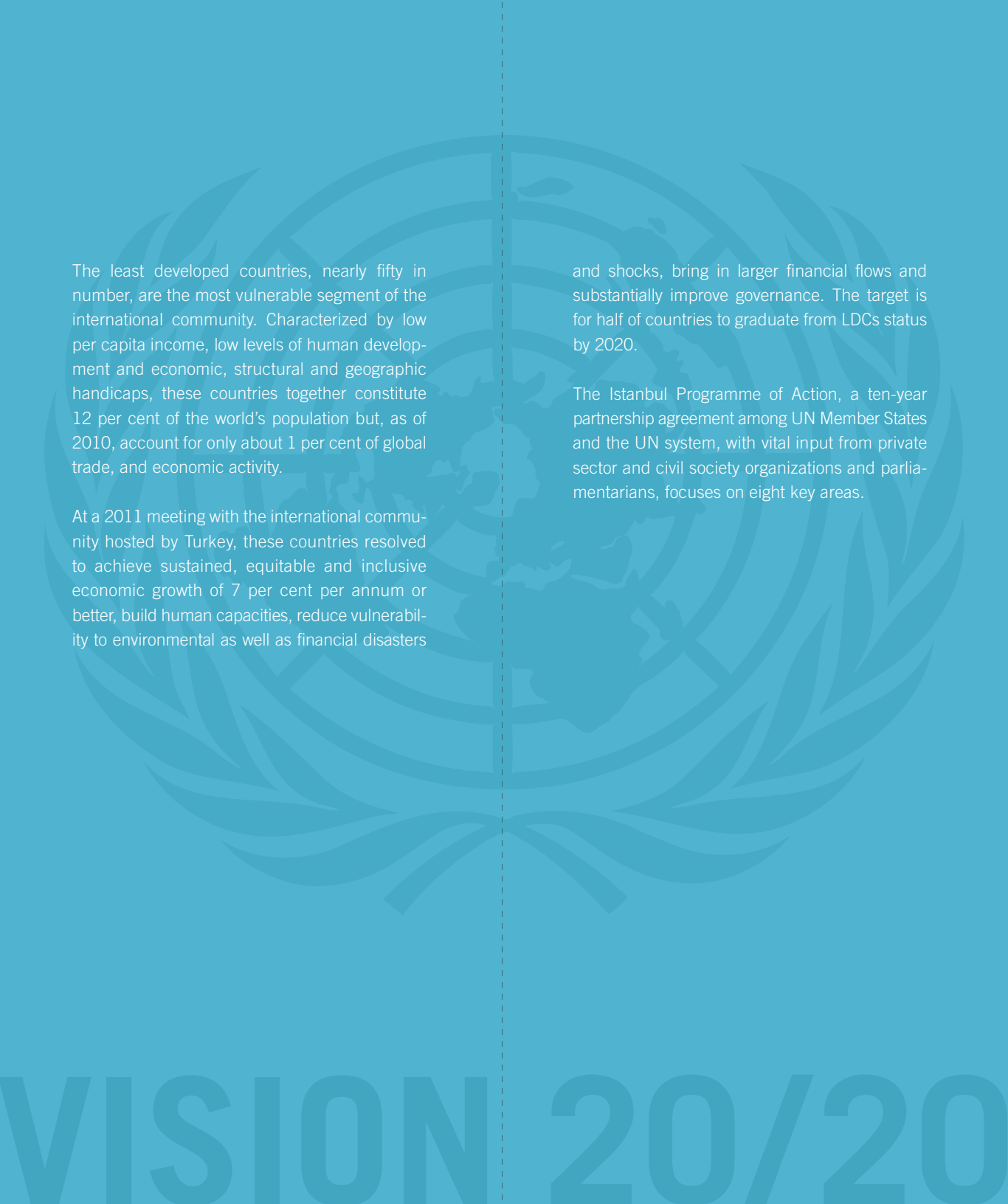
Haiti

VISION 20/20 THE ISTANBUL PROGRAMME OF ACTION FOR THE LEAST DEVELOPED COUNTRIES 2011–2020

For further information:
UN-OHRLLS
Public Information Unit
Tel: (917) 367-6006
Fax: (212) 963-0419



United Nations Office of the High Representative for the Least
Developed Countries, Landlocked Developing Countries and
Small Island Developing States (UN-OHRLLS)



The least developed countries, nearly fifty in number, are the most vulnerable segment of the international community. Characterized by low per capita income, low levels of human development and economic, structural and geographic handicaps, these countries together constitute 12 per cent of the world's population but, as of 2010, account for only about 1 per cent of global trade, and economic activity.

At a 2011 meeting with the international community hosted by Turkey, these countries resolved to achieve sustained, equitable and inclusive economic growth of 7 per cent per annum or better, build human capacities, reduce vulnerability to environmental as well as financial disasters

and shocks, bring in larger financial flows and substantially improve governance. The target is for half of countries to graduate from LDCs status by 2020.

The Istanbul Programme of Action, a ten-year partnership agreement among UN Member States and the UN system, with vital input from private sector and civil society organizations and parliamentarians, focuses on eight key areas.

VISION 20/20

1 PRODUCTIVE CAPACITY

Building a critical mass of internationally competitive capacity in agriculture, manufacturing and services is essential if the LDCs are to benefit from greater integration with the global economy.

Viable productive capacity depends on improvements in physical infrastructure, transport networks, scientific and technological skills, digital capabilities, access to dependable and efficient energy sources and managerial abilities in both public and private sectors. LDCs will intensify investment in productive capacity and tailor their rules and economic structures to attract more private sector resources. Official development assistance should be more closely geared to strengthening productive capacity.

2 AGRICULTURE, NUTRITION AND RURAL DEVELOPMENT

Farming plays a crucial role in the LDCs. It builds food security, provides by far the largest source of livelihoods and bolsters exports. But this sector is hampered by very low productivity. Agriculture moreover is under constant threat of natural disasters and volatile weather patterns—risks that are likely to intensify with oncoming climate change.

More investment in this sector will be sought from international and national, public and private sources, while responsible policies for investment are adopted and enforced. Small-scale farmers—most of whom are women—require social safety nets for their families. High-yield seeds and fertilizers, access to dependable and efficient irrigation, installation of modern transport and storage facilities, and enforceable property rights will also be sought for farm communities. Nutritional base lines for the overall population, urban or rural, will be supported and raised.

To galvanize modernization and efficiency, creation of small and mid-scale enterprises will be supported. To take advantage of economies of scale, improve job opportunities and reduce pressure on stressed cities, the rural economy will be progressively diversified, allowing for new service and industrial enterprises.

3 TRADE

Trade is a traditional pathway to successful development, adding to wealth and investment stock through exports and meeting needs through import of products and new ideas. LDC merchandise trade has taken off in the 21st century, but remains limited relative to current economic targets, and is very unevenly distributed among countries.

LDCs aim to double their share of global exports by diversifying the commodities on offer and upgrading productive capacity, product standards and legal and physical infrastructure. The international community endorses timely implementation of duty-free-quota-free access to markets, in accord with previous WTO agreements; simple, transparent and fair rules of origin for LDC imports; and aid-for-trade support.

4 COMMODITIES

For most of the 21st century, LDCs have been buoyed by rising commodity prices. But dependence on primary commodities in general, and often on only one or a few farm or mineral products in specific, holds back job growth and economic development, and induces vulnerability to shocks from world markets or forces of nature.

Good places for LDCs to begin to diversify economies are value-added processing of existing mainstay commodity exports and improved marketing. Development partners recognize the full sovereignty of LDCs over their wealth, natural resources and economic activities, and will work to enhance corporate transparency and accountability and transfer of technology in interactions with the LDCs.

5 HUMAN AND SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT

The greatest assets of the LDCs are their people. Poverty, disease, illiteracy and hunger pose serious constraints to progress, and have reached tragic dimensions among the 900 million people residing in the LDCs.

The LDCs will pursue Millennium Development Goals for universal enrollment in primary school education and elimination of gender disparity in education and training; reduction in mortality rates of mothers by three quarters and of children of five years or less by half; halving the share of the population without access to fresh, clean water or to sanitation facilities; and promoting women's advancement and gender equality. These goals will be mainstreamed into national budgets and development plans, and into financial and technical assistance from development partners.

Various standing TRIPS agreements providing for access to pharmaceuticals are to be maintained and respected. Special support is to be provided for young people to achieve full employment and decent work, and for access to affordable housing for all.

6 MULTIPLE CRISES AND SHOCKS

Extreme difficulty in absorbing and recovering from external shocks, civil conflicts and natural disasters is one of the definitions of LDC status. Economic shocks have come recently in the form of economic recession and fuel and food price spirals. Nearly all LDCs are located within the tropical zones, and the effects of global warming threaten them more than any other grouping of countries, even though they are least responsible for human inputs to climate change.

LDCs will make their economies more stable and broad based and societies more inclusive, and build in risk management strategies and mechanisms. Financial institutions and development banks will stand ready to provide concessional lending in response to emergency situations. Donors will replenish and expedite resources for the LDC Fund and other UN Framework Convention on Climate Change adaptation mechanisms. LDCs are to prepare publics and local governments to protect themselves from natural disasters, and will be enabled to link to regional and international early warning systems and information sharing.

7 FINANCIAL RESOURCES

With low-performing economies and lack of domestic financial infrastructure, LDCs are highly dependent on external inflows.

To reduce dependence, they will boost savings rates, build fair and more effective tax systems, carry out fiscal reforms, battle corruption and strengthen banking institutions, including micro-credit at a grass roots level. The international community shares responsibility to control corruption, help LDCs recover stolen assets and improve transparency in financial flows and international markets.

Steps also will be taken to maintain and enhance incoming finance flows. Donors are to meet commitments for official development assistance and to continue providing timely and adequate debt relief. They will provide guarantees and information sharing that will encourage private firms to invest in LDCs, while the LDCs improve the domestic investment climate. In terms of migration, both sending and receiving countries will improve terms for sending remittances home to LDCs.

8 GOOD GOVERNANCE

Many LDCs have made progress on the rule of law, protection and promotion of human rights, democratic participation, transparency and institutional capacity. This progress needs to be enhanced and extended on a priority basis.

Development is dependent on peace and security. LDC governments need to build and maintain durable peace and stability, with the assistance of development partners as appropriate, and reduce the scope of internal conflicts.

Good governance is required at the international level as well. International development institutions will promote policy coherence and coordination as applied to the special needs of LDCs.