

21 June 2012

**Statement of H.E. Mr. Nassir Abdulaziz Al-Nasser,
President of the 66th Session of the General Assembly,
at the Side Event on “LCDs and RIO+20” during the UN Conference
on Sustainable Development (UNCSD)**

Your Excellency Mr. Baburam Bhattarai, Prime-Minister of Nepal and Chair of the groups of Least Developed Countries,
Your Excellency Mr. Recep Tayyip Erdogan, Prime-Minister of Turkey,
Your Excellency Mr. Elio di Rupo, Prime-Minister of Belgium,
Your Excellency Mr. Ban Ki-moon, United Nations Secretary-General,
Excellencies, Heads of State and Government,
Ladies and gentlemen,

Boa tarde!

At the outset, let me pay tribute to the leadership of Nepal for their commitment and leadership as the LDCs global coordinator.

Successfully organizing this gathering, with focus on the Rio+20 agenda and LDCs and with the presence of His Excellency the Prime Minister Bhattarai, is another clear testimony to that leadership.

Since assuming his office, Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon has been a great champion of the most impoverished countries. For this, I am sure all of you would join me in thanking him whole-heartedly.

I am encouraged to see the presence of so many LDCs high-level leaders here in this successful Rio+20 summit.

Their sincere engagement regardless of the many challenges they face, creates the most essential foundation for an effective implementation of the Istanbul Programme of Action (IPOA), adopted in 2011, for the benefit of forty-eight countries classified by the United Nations as “least developed”.

They indeed need to receive adequate support from the international community. For the UN development system, there can be no higher commitment than to work, in a comprehensive and coherent way, for the benefit of these countries.

Since I took over as the President of the General Assembly, the cause of LDCs has received priority attention in my work.

The United Nations General Assembly resolution adopted under my Presidency last December reaffirms "the over-arching goal of the Istanbul Programme of Action", leading to the graduation of LDCs from that category.

This same resolution entrusted me, as the President of the General Assembly, to establish an Ad Hoc Working Group devoted for that cause.

I am pleased to inform announce that, under my vigilant guidance, the Ad Hoc Working Group, co-facilitated by Ambassador Grauls of Belgium and Ambassador Bowler of Malawi, has successfully completed its work. A report is now ready with specific recommendations, consistent with IPOA.

As the world leaders have come together here in Rio, twenty years after the Earth Summit in 1992, to craft the roadmap for "the future we want", we should not forget that the LDCs are least able to provide for their growing population.

Grave matters that of concern facing the LDCs are multifaceted, such as the environmental consequences of Climate Change.

We should bear in mind that many of these nations are primarily dependent on agriculture, suffer from lack of sufficient water, or are affected by land degradation and de-forestation.

The combined population of LDCs is expected to nearly double between now and 2050, rising from 880 million to 1800 million.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

The combination of extreme poverty, population pressures and environmental degradation is a powerful de-stabilizing factor for these countries.

It is sad that these countries do not attract the world's attention unless they suffer a disaster or crises. This shouldn't be the case. We certainly have the tools to change this fact.

Half a dozen Pacific and Indian Ocean small island LDCs, as well as heavily-populated countries, like Bangladesh, are threatened by rising sea levels.

While we are delighted with the successful conclusion of this Rio +20 summit, I urge all of you to realize that we can apply its outcome for the benefit of the LDCs.

Let as all remember that millions of people in the LDCs are hoping for a better life.

Let us remember, moreover, that the LDCs offer prospects of significant returns for those who invest in them.

I thank you for your attention.

Muito obrigado.