



THE PRESIDENT
OF THE
GENERAL ASSEMBLY

16 March, 2016

Excellency,

I have the pleasure to enclose herewith a letter dated 15 March 2016 to Member States from the co-facilitators of the inter-governmental consultations on all issues relating to the comprehensive high-level midterm review of the implementation of the Programme of Action, H.E. Ms. Bénédicte Frankinet, Permanent Representative of Belgium and H.E. Mr. Jean-François Régis Zinsou, Permanent Representative of the Republic of Benin, transmitting the zero draft of the outcome document, which will be considered at the preparatory meeting of the experts to be held in New York on 28-31 March, 2016.

Please accept, Excellency, the assurance of my highest consideration.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Mogens Lykketoft', written in a cursive style.

Mogens Lykketoft

To all Permanent Representatives
and Permanent Observers to the United Nations
New York



New York, 15 March, 2016

Excellency,

We have the honor to refer to the letter of 5 November 2015 from the President of the General Assembly informing you about our appointment as co-facilitators to conduct inter-governmental consultations of the General Assembly's midterm review of the implementation of the Programme of Action of Istanbul, to be held in Antalya, Turkey, on 27, 28 and 29 May 2016.

In line with the General Assembly decision A/RES/69/231 adopted on 19 December 2014, we have been requested to present a draft outcome document in the form of a political declaration, in advance of the preparatory meeting of experts to be held between 28 and 31 March 2016.

In this regard, we are pleased to attach the zero draft of the outcome document, which will be put for consideration to the meeting of experts.

We look forward to your continued support for the review, as well as your constructive engagement in the negotiation process.

Please accept, Excellency, the assurances of our highest consideration.

H.E. Mrs. Bénédicte Frankinet
Co-Facilitator
Permanent Representative of Belgium
to the United Nations

H.E. Mr. Jean-François Régis Zinsou
Co-Facilitator
Permanent Representative of Benin
to the United Nations

All Permanent Representatives and
Permanent Observers to the United Nations
New York

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MAR 14 2016

By: _____
Office of the PGA

Midterm review of the Program of Action of Istanbul (IPoA)

Outcome document (Draft 15 March, 2016)

Preamble

1. We, the Heads of State and government and heads of delegation participating in the comprehensive mid-term review of the IPoA, gathered here in Antalya from 27 to 29 May 2016, to further strengthen the global partnership for development for LDCs in all priority areas of the Istanbul Program of Action in order to ensure the timely, effective and full implementation of the Program of Action during the remainder of the Decade, while taking into account the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, the Addis Ababa Action Agenda on financing for development (AAAA), the Paris Agreement on Climate Change and the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction as overarching frames of reference for moving forward on IPoA commitments.
2. We recognize that over the past few decades the world has witnessed remarkable socio-economic progress with most of the goals and targets of the MDGs achieved globally. However, we are deeply concerned that the bounty of global progress did not benefit all countries equally. LDCs, which constitute the poorest and most vulnerable segment of the global society, were largely bypassed in the achievement of the MDGs and the majority of them were not able to achieve most of the MDGs. In particular, more than half of the world's extreme poor continue to live in these countries.
3. We recognize that despite many challenges and constraints, LDCs represent an enormous human and natural resource potential for world economic growth, welfare, prosperity and food and energy security. Therefore, a successful, renewed and strengthened global partnership that effectively addresses the special needs of LDCs will contribute to the cause of peace, prosperity and sustainable development for all. Further strengthening of our collective actions towards enabling LDCs' young populations and women will more effectively contribute to equitable and inclusive development, poverty eradication, job creation and social justice.

I. State of progress and lessons learned in the implementation of the IPoA

4. LDCs continue to face multiple structural challenges and constraints, which are further affected by new and emerging challenges, such as fragility and high vulnerability to various kinds of shocks and crises including climate change, disasters and public health emergencies; narrow production and export base, low commodity prices and stagnant trade flows; rising capital outflows; stagnant investment and diminishing productivity growth; widespread poverty and hunger; and institutional and capacity constraints. These are compounded by insufficient external support with persistent decline in ODA, which has serious implications for their ability to fight against poverty and hunger.

5. General objectives, goals and targets:

5.1. We take note of the report of the Secretary-General on the Implementation of the Program of Action for the Least Developed Countries for the Decade 2011-2020 and recognize that LDCs have made significant efforts towards achieving the objectives, goals and targets of the IPoA. While some LDCs have made more progress than others in certain sectors, much more needs to be done to foster progress across the sectors. We recognize the need to ensure that LDCs be given preferential and differential treatment in the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for sustainable development.

5.2. We reaffirm our commitment to the full and timely implementation of these development agendas with special focus on LDCs and support to the task of their mainstreaming into LDCs' national development policies and programs and the development cooperation frameworks for these countries. That would require additional, preferential, concessional treatment to ensure their access to markets, finance, technologies, know-how and other resources and differential and flexible treatment in undertaking international commitments and obligations that are not commensurate with their capacity, needs and stage of development. We underline the central role of the renewed and enhanced partnerships between LDCs and their development partners and recognize that without strong national leadership and ownership and substantial international support—both underpinned by mutual accountability—the goals and targets of the IPoA are likely to be missed in many LDCs by 2020.

5.3. Implementation of the Istanbul Programme of Action would require additional, preferential, concessional and most favorable treatment for their access to markets, finance, technologies, know-how and other resources and differential and flexible treatment in undertaking international commitments and obligations that are not commensurate with their capacity, needs and stage of development. We also reaffirm our determination to mobilize the means required to implement these Agenda through a revitalized global partnership for sustainable development, based on a spirit of strengthened global solidarity, focused in particular on the needs of the poorest and most vulnerable, in particular LDCs and with the participation of all countries, all stakeholders and all people.

6. **Criteria for graduation:** We emphasize that progress towards meeting the criteria for graduation accelerated since 2011. We welcome that many LDCs are meeting the criteria for graduation and many others have expressed their aspirations to graduate. However, since the LDC category was established in 1971, only four countries have officially graduated and it appears unlikely that the IPoA's objective of enabling half the LDCs to graduate by 2020 will be realized.
7. **Productive capacity building:** Productive capacity building is an crucial tool for the promotion of sustainable development. It supports structural transformation as a means for increasing economic growth, social development, safeguarding the environment and building resilience. During the last five years little progress were achieved in commodity diversification and value addition as well as effective participation of LDCs in regional and global value chains (GVCs) which are critical for these countries in reversing their marginalization, building productive capacities, accelerating structural transformation and generating decent jobs with quick impact on poverty eradication. Very few LDCs were successful in gainfully linking into GVCs by upgrading and increasing the domestic value-added content of LDCs' exports to harness the commensurate production-linked gains. These situation requires strategic policy interventions at the national, regional as well as at the sectorial level. In this regard, regional cooperation and integration can play a catalytic role.
8. **Infrastructure and energy:**

8.1. We also stress that the development of physical infrastructure is an important prerequisite for sustained economic growth and sustainable development. Significant amount of investment and technology is essential, including through public-private partnerships, innovative financing, regional integration and appropriate institutions and regulation, to bridge the gap in this field. It is equally important to strengthen the underlying investment climate, with enhanced technical support of the development partners and international financial institutions (IFIs), including by improving predictability, governance and transparency, as well as in procurement

practices and policies. Development partners should provide enhanced financial and technical support to LDCs for their infrastructure development and management.

8.2. We emphasize that LDCs have made progress in expanding and improving the road and railway networks, ports, irrigation facilities and access to electricity services. However, the infrastructure deficit, in particular in the rural areas, where a majority of the population lives and works, has been a major bottleneck in LDCs to deliver public services, enhance the scale of production and productivity, deliver job opportunities and promote internal commerce and international trade. Reliable, affordable and uninterrupted access to energy is a key development multiplier. It can foster private sector development, strengthen productive capacity building, expand trade, and promote access to better basic social services. We emphasize that the acute energy gap faced by LDCs has severely constrained their structural transformation. Few LDCs have been able to build and maintain infrastructure, including rural infrastructure with an inclusive approach, and have thus experienced accelerated growth and development much more rapidly than others.

9. Agriculture, food security and rural development:

9.1. We recognize that the low agricultural productivity remains a major challenge in LDCs due to lack of adequate investment in physical infrastructure, little productive capacity building, slow progress in policy reforms, scientific and technological development, research and agricultural extension services and adverse impacts of climate change and related extreme weather events, less predictable weather patterns, declining water availability and degrading water quality due to increasing frequency of droughts and floods.

9.2. We acknowledge that progress in the development of the agricultural sector, which employs more than half of the population in most LDCs, is critical for sustained poverty reduction, women empowerment, rural development and tackling hunger. Actually, 210 million people in LDCs, predominantly those in rural areas, do not have access to sufficient, safe and nutritious food. The proportion of undernourished in the total population of LDCs was the highest among all groups of countries. The availability and affordability of food are key challenges in LDCs which are often affected by structural factors such as under-capitalized agriculture, underdeveloped markets, high dependence on food imports, poor transport infrastructure and food distribution systems as well as periodic shocks such as price fluctuations and negative weather conditions. We agree to work together to address these challenges in LDCs.

10. Economy, trade and investment:

10.1. We recognize that the 5 per cent average growth rate in LDCs during the period under review was well below the 7 per cent target of the IPoA and SDG 8.1. The challenge is also one of inclusive growth and rising inequality as the pace of reduction in poverty has not been commensurate to that economic growth rate. The average extreme poverty in LDCs is still close to 50%. Structural transformation of the economy has not taken hold in most of the LDCs. The IPoA identifies trade and investment as major drivers of employment generation, economic growth, and structural transformation. Although the absolute value of trade flows originating in and flowing to LDCs has steadily increased over the life of the IPoA, the total share of LDCs in world trade remains marginal. Similarly, foreign direct investment, portfolio investment, and other capital flows remain low and concentrated in a small number of countries and sectors. There has been some improvement in market access for LDC products and their exports have gradually increased, but the share of LDCs exports, remained highly concentrated in a few primary products vulnerable to commodity price volatility and to all kind of exogenous shocks, remained stagnant in world's total

exports, standing in 2014 at 1.1%, a level that is far behind the 2 per-cent target of the IPoA and the SDGs set for 2020.

10.2. We are concerned that the share of LDCs in global FDI inflows remained virtually unchanged from 2013 at 1.9 per cent and the value of FDI in LDCs remains concentrated in a small number of mineral-rich economies. We stress that stronger and more focused policies, strategies and mechanisms by the least developed countries, home countries of foreign direct investment, international organizations and other stakeholders can substantially increase foreign direct investment flows to the least developed countries in the coming years.

11. **Good governance, human development and gender equality:** We recognize that good governance, human development and gender equality are essential to achieving sustainable development. Since the IPoA's adoption, LDCs have made considerable progress in these areas. Several LDCs have joined the Open Government Partnership, and their commitments to making their governments more open, accountable, and responsive to citizens must be noted. For example, 42 LDCs have become parties to the UN Convention against Corruption (UNCAC). Substantial progress towards achieving education for all at the primary level has been made including gender parity for one third of LDCs. Nearly 20 percent of all parliamentarians in LDCs are women. Sixteen million people have gained access to an improved source for drinking water in the LDCs. Nevertheless, further efforts are needed to end gender inequalities in access to education, health care, water and sanitation, economic opportunities such as employment, and productive resources, as well as to end gender-based violence.
12. **Financing for development:** Both the IPoA and the recently adopted Addis Ababa Action Agenda (AAAA) acknowledge the importance of domestic resource mobilization and private investment for the sustainability of development gains in LDCs. While LDCs have made considerable efforts to mobilize domestic resources and attract private investment, further progress is needed. For LDCs as a group, Official Development Assistance (ODA) remains the largest source of external financing. The decline in ODA going to LDCs during the last years is a worrisome trend and the level of 0.12 per cent attained in 2014 remained below the relevant 0.15-0.20 per cent target. Despite the central role ODA continues to play in LDCs, other financial flows, foreign direct investment (FDI) and remittances in particular, are swiftly growing in importance, but are concentrated in a few countries and sectors and have limited development impact.
13. **Science, technology and innovation (STI):** The IPoA recommends that LDCs and development partners make concerted efforts to build STI capacity so LDCs can "leapfrog" onto a sustainable development path. Such technological leapfrogging is necessary to overcome the structural impediments LDCs face achieving sustainable development. Despite the importance of STI for promoting positive development outcomes, LDCs have made scant progress in this field since the adoption of the IPoA, as evidenced by, inter alia, the small number of patents filed and scholarly or technical articles published by LDC authors. In addition, fewer than seven percent of households in LDCs have access to the Internet.
14. **Resilience building:** The IPoA highlights LDCs' vulnerability to a variety of environmental and economic shocks and emphasizes that these vulnerabilities threaten to undermine many of the development gains LDCs have made over the last decade. We welcome that many LDCs have designed and implemented national disaster reduction strategies and embedded them in national development plans with focus on preventive measures and multistakeholder approach. However, their efforts have limited success so far given capacity and resource constraints. Although most LDCs have developed some forms of social protection programmes, coverage tends to be very limited. Similarly, the mechanisms to mitigate and manage risk associated

with the volatility of commodity prices are still lacking. Development partners have acknowledged the importance of addressing these vulnerabilities and are taking steps in various multilateral forums to build resilience to many of the “multiple crises and other emerging challenges” described in the IPoA, such as the International Development Assistance (IDA) Crisis Response Window from the World Bank, which helps countries respond to natural disasters and other crisis, the Least Developed Countries Fund (LDCF) replenished by donors contributions during the 21st session of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change Conference of Parties (UNFCCC COP21), or initiatives at the IMF such as the temporary waiver of interest rates on Poverty Reduction and Growth Trust (PRGT) loans and the Catastrophe Containment and Relief (CCR) Trust also play an important role building LDC resilience.

II. Looking forward and recommendations

15. **General recommendations:** We reiterate that the IPoA principle of country ownership and leadership remains crucial in order to accelerate progress with respect to sustainable development in LDCs and that LDCs should take the lead in formulating, implementing, following up and reviewing their own coherent economic and development policies, strategies and plans. They need to find a balance in the allocation of resources between economic and social sectors, with a view to achieving structural transformation, inclusive growth, poverty reduction and sustainable development. We call on LDCs to further enhance governance, including transparency and fight against corruption, and increase institutional capacity with support from development partners. We welcome that the Agenda 2030, the Addis Ababa Action Agenda, the Paris Agreement on Climate Change and the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction reiterate that the most vulnerable countries, including LDCs, deserve special attention and reflect the concerns and aspirations of LDCs and we recall the decision contained in the Agenda 2030 for Sustainable Development that effective linkages will be made with the follow-up and review arrangements of all relevant UN Conferences and processes, including on LDCs. We underline the need for strong synergy in the implementation of SDGs and IPoA at the national and sub-national levels and ensure coordination and coherence in the follow-up of the implementation of the SDGs and the Istanbul Programme of Action at the national, regional and international levels. We also call to strengthen the national statistical capacities in LDCs to increase significantly the availability of high-quality, disaggregated, timely and reliable data, which are necessary for an efficient policy making and effective follow-up and review.

16. **Productive Capacity Building:** We recognize that significant amount of investment and technology is essential, including through public-private partnerships, innovative financing, regional integration and appropriate institutions and regulation, to bridge the gap in the field of productive capacity building. It is equally important to strengthen the underlying investment climate, with enhanced technical support of the development partners and international financial institutions (IFIs), including by improving predictability, governance and transparency, as well as in procurement practices and policies. Development partners should provide enhanced financial and technical support to LDCs for their infrastructure development and management.

17. Graduation:

17.1. We recognize the urgent need to undertake a comprehensive review of the graduation criteria for LDCs, taking into account the goals and targets of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, AAAA and the Paris Agreement and request the Secretary-General to submit a proposal on revision of the criteria for consideration by the General Assembly at its 72nd Session.

17.2. We also urge both LDCs and development partners to undertake more concerted development planning efforts to achieve the IPoA's goal of enabling half the LDCs to graduate by 2020. It is also important that graduation be seen, not as a cut-off point, but as a resolute move towards better and sustained economic development and virtuous and inclusive structural transformation. The development partners and international organizations should therefore provide sustained support for smooth and sustainable transition related support measures.

17.3. We recall UNGA resolutions 59/209 of 20 December 2004 and resolution 67/221 of 21 December 2012 on a smooth transition for countries graduating from the category of least developed countries. We underscore that LDCs' efforts towards graduation are underpinned by their ownership and leadership, as the primary responsibility for development lies with the countries themselves, but they need to be supported by concrete and substantial international measures in a spirit of shared responsibility and mutual accountability for development results.

18. Infrastructure and energy: We recognise that financing for infrastructure and energy remains a major challenge for LDCs. We call upon the development partners to support sustainable energy projects in LDCs with enhanced financial support and technology transfer on special and preferential terms with a view to ensuring universal access to sustainable energy by LDCs. All forms of innovative finance—domestic resources, ODA, public-private partnerships, concessional, non-concessional loans and blended finance—need to be utilized. We call on the Development Finance Institutions (DFIs) and the development partners to play a larger and more coordinated role in investing in infrastructure projects, mitigating risks and ensuring guarantees. We agree to explore the possibility for a dedicated financing facility, which addresses the specific infrastructure and energy financing needs in LDCs in a holistic and comprehensive manner. We also stress that special attention should be given to LDCs throughout the United Nations Decade of Sustainable Energy for All (2014-2024), as well as within the framework of the Secretary-General's Sustainable Energy for All initiative, and the recently held Sustainable Energy for All Forum, the Global Infrastructure Forum under HLPF with a view to ensuring the realization of the objective of universal access to energy for all by 2030 and to addressing the infrastructure needs of LDCs.

19. Agriculture, food security and rural development: We support Secretary-General's zero hunger initiative and reaffirm the commitment to increase investment in agriculture, including through enhanced international cooperation in rural infrastructure, agricultural research and extension services, access to finance, building irrigation facilities, technology development and the establishment of plant and livestock gene banks in order to enhance agricultural productive capacity in LDCs. We furthermore commit to supporting strong economic, social and environmental links between urban, peri-urban and rural areas by strengthening national, regional and local development planning. We recognize that commodity diversification and value addition as well as effective participation of LDCs in regional and global value chains is a critical aspect of the efforts of these countries in reversing their marginalization, building productive capacities, accelerating structural transformation and generating decent jobs with quick impact on poverty eradication.

20. Trade and investment:

20.1. We call upon all partners to realize the implementation of the WTO decision including the Bali Package and the Nairobi agreements, to provide duty-free quota-free market access, on a lasting basis, for all products originating from all LDCs, and other provisions relating to rules of origin and services sector, including for a transition period after graduation. We particularly call on them to develop simple and

transparent rules of origins applicable to imports from LDCs. We also call upon our development partners from the North and the South to provide concrete support to the LDCs for the diversification of their export base, including into dynamic sectors of world trade to assist them to rapidly increase their share in world trade and improve domestic value added from exports.

20.2. We encourage LDCs and development partners to make use of initiatives and programs with proven track records of expanding trade opportunities such as aid for trade and the trade facilitation agreement and to use existing programs like the Generalized System of Preferences (GSP), where approximately 3,500 eight-digit tariff rate lines are already eligible for duty-free treatment. We will strive to allocate an increasing proportion of aid for trade going to least developed countries, provided according to development cooperation effectiveness principles. We welcome the extension of Enhanced Integrated Framework (EIF) into Phase Two and urge members to further intensify their efforts to secure necessary level of contributions for the timely replenishment for effective implementation without any disruption of EIF between 2016 and 2023.

20.3. To further investment promotion, we also recommend to enable national regulatory and policy frameworks that allow businesses to innovate, invest, and transform technology into employment and inclusive economic growth. Measures to fight corruption and encourage transparency (such as the Extractive Industry Transparency Initiative, or EITI) have a proven and positive impact on trade and investment and must be implemented in LDCs. LDCs are also encouraged to utilize existing trade and investment support mechanisms. The World Bank, the UN Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD), and the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) offer several such programs that address risk insurance and guarantees as well as technical and advisory support for investment-related negotiations and dispute resolution. We also call for greater LDCs commitment and international support for regional integration in order to expand markets, to promote trade facilitation, cross border infrastructure development, regional value chains and regional cooperation, all of which will contribute to regional stability and progress. Effective partnerships between and among governments, the private sector and civil society are particularly useful in addressing complex and inter-related challenges. Such partnerships have proven vital in areas where no single actor can successfully address an issue on its own.

20.4. We recall the decision contained in the Istanbul Programme of Action and reaffirmed in General Assembly resolution 67/220 to adopt, expand and implement investment promotion regimes for the least developed countries. We welcome the decision contained in the Addis Ababa Action Agenda to adopt and implement investment promotion regimes for least developed countries and the offer to provide financial and technical support for project preparation and contract negotiation, advisory support in investment-related dispute resolution, access to information on investment facilities and risk insurance and guarantees such as through the Multilateral Investment Guarantee Agency.

21. **Good governance:** Successes that LDCs have achieved in peace, effective governance and justice, must spur additional improvements in areas where progress is lacking. We reaffirm that LDCs must implement necessary domestic legislation consistent with SDG16 and with relevant international agreements such as the United Nations Convention against Corruption (UNCAC) and to promote cross-country sharing of knowledge and creating partnerships for an effective implementation. Basic rule of law, sound legal frameworks, audit systems, the fight against illicit financial flows, anti-fraud and anti-corruption measures are also important for harnessing technology for development. Further strengthening of collective actions towards enabling LDCs' young populations and women will more effectively contribute to

equitable and inclusive development, poverty eradication, job creation and social justice.

22. Human development and Gender equality: We reaffirm the importance of promoting women's economic empowerment, including their human rights, through ending violence, abuse, and discrimination against women and through gainful employment, improving access to family planning and health services, enabling women to use criminal and civil justice systems. We also reaffirm that investment in human resources and institutional capacities are required to ensure a diversified economy, based on a wide range of sectors, to reduce country's economic volatility. Education policies need to take into account the needs of local firms and generate skilled human resources which can also help them to invest in the necessary technologies so as to advance in the value chain.

23. Financing for development:

23.1. We stress that the domestic resource base is critical for rapid and sustained progress and long term economic development. While recognising the efforts for the gradual enhancement of the domestic resource generation in LDCs, we commit to enhancing revenue administration by bringing the informal economy into the formal economy and through modernized, progressive tax systems, improved tax policy and more efficient tax collection. We are committed to implement the Addis Ababa Action Agenda (AAAA) to use Official Development Assistance (ODA) catalytically to mobilize domestic and private sector resources for development. Innovative partnerships such as the Addis Tax Initiative that use ODA as a tool to help LDCs better mobilize and effectively use their domestic resources and leverage private investment to finance development efforts should be promoted. In line with the Addis Ababa Action Agenda, we also call on development partners for providing at least 0.20 per cent of official development assistance/gross national income to LDCs and allocating at least 50 per cent of their official development assistance to LDCs, in view of their high dependence on ODA as a source of development finance. We will enhance international support in developing domestic capital markets (AAAA) in particular in least developed countries. We strongly urge creditors, both public and private, for additional effective measures to facilitate financing of their economic development, including access to both concessional and non-concessional resources for investment in critically needed infrastructure and development projects.

23.2. We recognize the potential role of local finance models in ensuring access of poor and excluded households and localities to adapted technologies that can facilitate entry to new markets and provide renewable energy sources, waste management, and clean water.

23.3. We welcome, in particular the digital finance initiatives, and especially digital payments, and the role that they can have in both promoting financial inclusion as well as in reducing costs, increasing transparency, minimizing leakages, improving the speed and security of payments, and opening up new markets.

23.4. Therefore we call for support for those partnerships, development models, and global alliances, such as the Better than Cash Alliance promoted by UNCDF, that expand the reach and adoption of digital finance in support of the IPoA and the SDGs.

24. South-South cooperation : We recall that South-South Cooperation, and triangular Cooperation, as a complement to North-South Cooperation, remain vital to LDCs, given the importance of such cooperation to promote technical assistance, investment, trade and the sharing of best practices in terms of their development, especially in areas of productive capacity-building, infrastructure, energy, science

and technology, trade, investment and transit transport cooperation. We emphasize the need to accelerate and scale up recent initiatives, and we call upon the countries of the South to further strengthen their support to the least developed countries in all of these areas in a predictable manner.

25. Migration and Remittances:

25.1. We recognize the positive contribution of migrants for inclusive growth and sustainable development. We will enhance our cooperation to facilitate the orderly, safe, regular and responsible migration and mobility of people, involving full respect for human rights and the humane treatment of migrants, regardless of migration status, refugees and displaced persons at their countries of origin, transit and destination, including through the implementation of planned and well-managed migration policies. Such cooperation should also strengthen the resilience of communities hosting refugees, particularly in developing countries. We underline the right of migrants to return to their country of citizenship, and recall that States must ensure that their returning nationals are duly received.

25.2. We call for early implementation of targets contained in the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development related to migration and remittances and strongly urge partner countries to start taking action, specifically with respect to reducing to less than 3 per cent the transaction costs of migrant remittances by 2030 and eliminating remittance corridors with costs higher than 5 per cent.

25.3. We recognize that remittances from migrant workers are typically wages transferred to families, primarily to meet part of the needs of the recipient households and cannot be equated to other international financial flows. We will work to ensure that adequate and affordable financial services are available to migrants and their families in both home and host countries. Combining remittance receipts with broader access to other financial services can increase the impact of remittances on growth by facilitating savings and investments. We will take measures to promote productive investment of remittances, such as in SMEs.

26. Science, technology and innovation (STI):

26.1. We reaffirm our commitment to face and propose concrete measures to improve STI capacity in LDCs. Such measures should include improvements in rule of law, governance, enabling environments and specific legal frameworks for intellectual property (IP) protection and an effective IP rights framework that will give firms confidence to invest in advanced technologies and establish research partnerships in LDCs. It includes also to strengthen the national statistical capacities to increase significantly the availability of high-quality, timely and reliable data, which are necessary for an efficient policy making and an effective follow-up and review. This framework will also provide incentives for local firms to develop or adapt their own technologies.

26.2. LDCs need to support information and communication technology (ICT) development, with an emphasis on promoting regulatory, policy, and institutional support for affordable access to broadband internet as well as the development of digital skills and locally relevant content. They also need to develop their domestic absorptive capacity through the promotion and facilitation of entrepreneurship, human resource and skills development, business development services, and the promotion of business linkages. LDC investment in public goods also plays an important role promoting STI and deserves appropriate attention. Many innovations have been developed in the non-profit sector or resulted from government investment in public goods.

26.3. We reaffirm the importance to establish the LDC Technology Bank during 2017, in view of its potential to foster productive capacity, structural transformation, poverty eradication and sustainable development. In this regard we look forward to its full operationalization by 2017 according to the objectives, principles and arrangements set out in the annex to this declaration¹. We welcome with appreciation the offer by Turkey to host the Technology Bank and call upon the Government of Turkey to continue its support to the Bank. We also call upon all development partners, both from the North and the South, as well as international organizations, foundations and the private sector to provide necessary financial and technical assistance to the Technology Bank.

27. Resilience building:

27.1. Building resilience at the national level as well as community and individual levels is critical in sustaining hard-won development gains and accelerating progress achieving the development aspirations set in the IPoA. More investment in building livelihoods, inclusive and rapid growth, disaster preparedness, application of ICTs and S&T, social protection and inclusive and participatory governance will contribute to strengthening resilience in an effective manner. We reiterate our commitment to implement the Paris Agreement on Climate Change and to build the resilience of the poor and those in vulnerable situations and to reduce their exposure and vulnerability to climate-related extreme events and other economic, social and environmental shocks and disasters.

27.2. We further call on the international community to particularly support LDCs in implementation of sustainable development target 15.3 so that they can advance towards land degradation neutrality by 2030. Tackling land degradation and desertification, which are significant impediments to sustainable development of LDCs, many of which are heavily dependent on land for agriculture and growth, would generate multiple benefits including food security, improving living conditions of affected population, eradicating poverty and contributing to peace and security while enabling LDCs to effectively adapt to the adverse impact of climate change.

27.3. We stress the importance of developing and implementing holistic disaster risk management at all levels in line with the Sendai Framework and to support national and local capacity for prevention, adaptation and mitigation of external shocks and risk management and, in this respect, call for continuing the work in relevant institutions to support efforts by LDCs to build their national capacity to respond to various kinds of shocks including through funds and other tools.

27.4. We lend our support for the national plans of LDCs towards adopting a low-carbon economic growth path. We call for effective delivery on commitments to the Green Climate Fund and simplified and prioritised access for LDCs to all climate change-related funds. We urge both development partners and LDCs to make full use of various programs that are already in place, like country-level multi-donor trust funds (MDTFs), sometimes managed by the multilateral development banks and sometimes by UN agencies (notably UNDP), that have in some instances demonstrated their value in reducing transaction costs to countries undergoing or emerging from a crisis. There is therefore potential value in supporting country-specific MDTFs for resilience building purposes. In some instances resilience programs may require a country-level pooled funding mechanisms that provides assistance and reduces transaction costs to a particular LDC.

28. Advocacy, and UN System support:

¹ Annex will circulate separately

28.1. We request OHRLLS to continue to advocate for the interests and concerns of LDCs at the global level and contribute to global follow-up and review of the implementation of the 2030 Agenda, Addis Ababa Agenda for Action, the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction and the Paris Agreement on Climate Change as well as to build linkages and synergies between this follow-up and review process and that of the IPoA. We further request OHRLLS to enhance coordination within the UN system to ensure better coherence among all these processes at the regional and global levels while also advocating for better integration and alignment of the global goals at the national level.

28.2. We reiterate our invitation to the governing bodies of the United Nations funds and programs and other multilateral organizations, including the World Bank Group and international financial institutions, to contribute to implement the Programme of Action and to integrate it into their work programs, as appropriate and in accordance with their respective mandates. These organizations are invited to participate fully in reviews of the Programme of Action at the national, sub-regional, regional and global levels.

28.3. We are concerned that the share of expenditure for the operational activities for development of the United Nations system in the least developed countries is declining and invite the governing bodies of the organizations of the United Nations development system and other multilateral organizations to prioritize allocations to least developed countries, as appropriate and in accordance with their respective mandates including by allocating at least 75 per cent of their programme resources in LDCs (currently 74 per cent of UNDP's core programme resources is for work in LDCs)

29. **Fifth UN Conference on LDCs:** We decide to hold the 5th UN Conference on LDCs in 2021 and request the UN General Assembly to take a decision in this regard.