



Royal Government of Cambodia
National Committee for ESCAP

Concept Note

Asia-Pacific Regional High-level Policy Dialogue on the Istanbul Programme of Action

Siem Reap, Cambodia
4-6 March 2015

The United Nations LDC IV Conference adopted the Istanbul Programme of Action (IPoA) for the Least Developed Countries for the Decade 2011-2020 in May 2011. The overarching goal of the IPoA is to overcome the structural challenges faced by the least developed countries (LDCs) so that at least 50 percent of the LDCs could graduate from their LDC status by 2020. The IPoA identified eight priority areas for closing the development gaps faced by the LDCs: productive capacity development; agriculture, food security and rural development; trade and commodities; human and social development; coping with multiple crises and other emerging challenges; mobilizing financial resources for development and capacity-building; and promoting good governance at all levels.

Rationale

The IPoA invited the United Nations General Assembly to consider conducting a comprehensive high-level midterm review of the progress made by the LDCs in implementing the Istanbul Programme of Action (para. 157). ESCAP resolution 70/3 requested the Executive Secretary, *inter alia*, to organize the Asia-Pacific regional high-level policy dialogue on the IPoA in early 2015 and to submit to the Commission at its seventy-first session a report on the progress achieved in implementing the said resolution. As the resolution was being adopted by the Commission, Samoa and the Maldives had already graduated, and Kiribati, Vanuatu, and Tuvalu were well on their way to graduate. In addition, Bangladesh, Bhutan, Cambodia, Lao People's Democratic Republic, Myanmar and Nepal had expressed their intention to graduate by 2020. These developments demonstrated that, in this region, the LDCs remained committed to working towards graduation. However, to graduate in a sustainable basis, Asia-Pacific LDCs will need to promote inclusive growth and sustainable development, achieve structural transformation, increase their productive capacity, improve their resilience to shocks, and generate full and productive employment for all. In meeting all these objectives, Asia-Pacific LDCs will need significantly increased levels of financial, human and technological resources. The development partners and international community will have to

come forward and work with the LDCs in mobilizing these resources to facilitate their graduation as early as possible.

Key questions

How the Asia-Pacific region has progressed towards the implementation of the IPoA? What are the lessons learnt after five years of IPoA implementation? What are the prospects and challenges for the graduation of Asia-Pacific LDCs? What are the strategies to accelerate progress towards graduation in a sustainable basis? What are the financial resources required to implement those strategies and how to mobilize them? How regional cooperation, including for the dissemination of best practices and for enhancing capacity building efforts, could support the implementation of IPoA in Asia-Pacific?

Focus areas of the High-level Policy Dialogue

- Productive capacity development
- Agricultural productivity and rural development
- Trade and connectivity
- Human and social development
- Mobilizing financial resources for development
- Reducing vulnerabilities and creating economic resilience

Organization of High-level policy dialogue and expected outcome

The dialogue will be organized by ESCAP in collaboration with the National Committee for ESCAP (Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation), Government of Cambodia. Policy makers from the 12 Asia-Pacific LDCs plus Yemen, preferably at Ministerial level and relevant stakeholders will review the progress made, constraints encountered and discuss the way forward in implementing the IPoA. They will identify priority areas in which they need assistance during the second part of the implementation of the programme. The meeting will adopt a draft Outcome Document which the Government of Cambodia, as host of the dialogue, is expected to present to the Special Body on LDCs, LLDCs and SIDS during the 71st session of Commission for its consideration as the basis for the regional mid-term review of the IPoA.

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