
Madam Chairperson,

At the outset, India wishes to express its deep appreciation for the continued priority being given to the Least Developed Countries (LDCs) and Landlocked Developing Countries (LLDCs) in the agenda of the Second Committee.

India aligns itself with the statement delivered by Yemen on behalf of G-77.
India believes that for an equitable, balanced and sustainable global growth, it is a must that the fruits of development and progress be shared among countries. It is with this belief that India has been extending its steadfast support to strengthen the development process in LDCs and LLDCs.

As we take stock of the achievements of the Brussels Programme in its final year of operation, success seems to be only partial. Though a number of LDCs achieved increased GDP growth, it did not translate into poverty reduction. More importantly, the structural weakness of their economies and vulnerability to external shocks were left unanswered.

The LDCs have undertaken major efforts towards attainment of the MDGs but due to lack of resources and capacity the results are far from satisfactory. The global financial, food and energy crises have reversed their development gains.

The LDCs are in a race against time to bolster their food security given their rapidly expanding urban population and declining agricultural productivity. Of the 33 countries in a permanent state of food insecurity, 22 are LDCs.

Madam Chairperson,

In spite of the market diversification that LDCs have witnessed in recent years, their share in global exports in 2009 was just 1% and if oil was excluded, it would come down to 0.4%.

Integrating and enhancing the participation of LDCs in the global trading network through full implementation of the duty free and quota free market access by developed and developing countries needs urgent action.

We must also remain committed to a development oriented outcome of the DOHA Round to further support LDCs and their participation in global trade.

The global financial and economic crisis has worsened the debt situation of LDCs. India calls upon the international financial institutions in particular the World Bank and the IMF and the developed countries to provide immediate debt relief and make available concessional finance to spur economic growth and investment in LDCs. We also seek democratisation of the BWIs to allow greater voice and participation by the developing countries.

Climate Change poses a serious challenge to development in these countries. They need immediate financial and technology support to undertake mitigation and adaptation strategies.
Madam Chairperson,

Our engagement strategy with LDCs needs a rethinking. As we prepare for the Fourth UNLDC Conference in Istanbul next year, the issues that I have dilated upon must form the core of the action plan. Mobilisation of adequate resources and expanding the choice of international support measures to fill the huge financing gap for development in LDCs should receive our highest attention.

I call upon the countries to fulfil the commitments made by them to provide 0.15-0.20 % of GNI as ODA to LDCs. Transfer of technology, capacity building and strengthening economic support measures are equally crucial to meeting the needs of LDCs.

Madam Chairperson,

India has been steadfast in its support for the special needs of LDCs. As part of South-South Cooperation, India has shared its development experience and technological resources and expertise with them. India has extended assistance worth US$ 1.2 billion for the reconstruction of Afghanistan and offered concessional loans and grants worth US$ 550 million in 2009 to other LDCs. Indian companies have invested more than US $15 billion in the LDCs in Africa for infrastructure development.

In keeping with our WTO commitment, we have extended duty free tariff preference scheme to all LDCs since April 2008. To stimulate bilateral trade, since 2003, we have offered lines of credit worth US$ 4 billion to LDCs, including US$ 1 billion to Bangladesh.

We have made a contribution of US$ 250,000 to the UN Trust Fund to facilitate the travel of participants to the IV UNLDC Conference in Istanbul. We would also be hosting a Ministerial Preparatory event in New Delhi early next year for the Conference where we would be inviting one Minister and the Permanent Representative in New York from all the LDCs.

Madam Chairperson,

The inherent geographical difficulties of landlocked developing countries have placed them at a distinct disadvantage as far as international trade and economic linkages are concerned.

The global economic crisis which hit the LLDCs hard has brought to the fore the urgent need for these countries to transform their economies, broaden their productive base, build resilience to external shocks and achieve higher sustainable economic growth.
The Almaty Programme of Action has resulted in a clear acknowledgement of the special needs and problems of landlocked developing countries, including the need for sustained international support to address them. Equally important is the understanding that any effective solution must address the constraints and challenges faced by the transit developing countries that neighbour landlocked developing countries.

We must work to provide efficient transportation and communication services to LLDCs including reliable logistic chain to offset transit and access difficulties and costs. According to UNCTAD, LLDCs, on an average, spent two times more on payment of transport and insurance services for their exports in comparison to other developing countries and three times more than the developed economies.

India has special bilateral cooperation agreements with its landlocked neighbours for easy transit of their goods through India. We accord the highest priority to further strengthening our ties with these countries including through regional initiatives. We will continue to contribute economic and technical support to their development efforts as well as of other landlocked and transit developing countries, as part of South-South cooperation.

We would also urge cooperation for meeting special transit requirements of landlocked regions within a country, which due to geography or political boundaries, have similar difficulties in accessing international markets as LLDCs.

Madam Chairperson,

India, as always, remains fully committed to strengthening its partnership with LDCs and LLDCs.

Thank you.