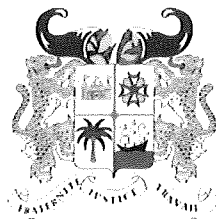


*Mission Permanente
de la République du Bénin
auprès des Nations Unies*



*Permanent Mission of
the Republic of Benin
to the United Nations*

SIXTY NINETH SESSION OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY

**INTERGOVERNMENTAL NEGOTIATIONS
INTERGOVERNMENTAL NEGOTIATIONS ON THE POST-2015 DEVELOPMENT AGENDA**

**STATEMENT
BY**

**H.E.MR. JEAN -FRANCIS R. ZINSOU
AMBASSADOR PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF BENIN
TO THE UNITED NATIONS,
CHAIR OF THE GLOBAL COORDINATION BUREAU OF LDCs**

**GENERAL COMMENTS ON
THE FINAL DRAFT OF THE OUTCOME DOCUMENT**

**NEW YORK, 20 JULY 2015
10:00AM-1:00PM
THE TRUSTEESHIP COUNCIL CHAMBER**

Distinguished Co-Chairs
 Excellencies
 Ladies and Gentlemen,

I have the honor to deliver this statement on behalf of LDCs. The Group aligns itself with the statement made by the G77 and China. The LDCs, would like to highlight the following additional points.

Most of us in this room are coming from Addis Ababa. We have adopted Addis Ababa Action Agenda, which is comprehensive and captures many of our concerns and priorities in the area of the means of implementation. However, some of our key concerns are yet to be resolved. We want the full reflection of the outcome of FfD in Post-2015 development agenda and address the issues that have not been fully reflected in the Addis Ababa Action Agenda. We will reflect on these issues under the Means of Implementation discussions.

Last month, the Group of LDCs made its specific proposals on the zero-draft of the outcome document. We have carefully examined the "final draft of the outcome document" of 8 July 2015. The group is of the view that a number of issues need to be addressed in the draft to make it ambitious, balanced, holistic and comprehensive that we all have agreed upon before.

The new title of the document still deserves improvement to reflect the dynamic of time bound transformation we are seeking. Therefore, we will propose "AGENDA FOR GLOBAL ACTION TO TRANSFORM OUR WORLD BY 2030". The call for expeditious action to meet the deadline will be made more tangible and more compelling. It will motivate for translate aspirations into motivation for result oriented action.

That said, we appreciate the remarkable efforts made by the Co-Facilitators to integrate some of the improvements suggested during our last negotiation session. But, if we want really to move towards the finalization of this historical document to be adopted in September 2015, we need to pay more attention to the state of mind of those who have most at stake in this process. I will get explain our concern in this regard at a later stage of my discourse. We still need to reflect on how to capture the spirit of Addis Ababa Agenda for Action in the Post 2015 Agenda, which should open widely the door for our aspirations and ambitions.

We are happy to note that the poverty eradication has been recognized as a key objective of the Post-2015 development agenda in the declaration. This is vitally important. However, in paragraph 3 of the declaration, the eradication of extreme poverty by 2030 has been reflected as merely an intention, which does not reveal the strong commitment and pledge of the international community to address poverty. The group therefore proposes to replace the word "intend" with "will" to make it stronger.

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We mentioned in our earlier intervention on 22 June that it is vitally important to overcome the structural challenges faced by the LDCs. The entire text does not seem to have recognized the importance of economic or structural transformation, which is key for transforming our nations and the world as a whole. I would like to refer to paragraph 5 of the IPoA that clearly articulates that an evidence-based appraisal of the implementation of the Brussels Programme of Action for the Least Developed Countries for the Decade 2001-2010 confirms that a more strategic, comprehensive, and sustained approach based on ambitious, focused and realistic commitments is required to bring about structural transformation in least developed countries that fosters accelerated, sustained, inclusive and equitable economic growth and sustainable development and helps least developed countries meet long-standing as well as emerging challenges.

The group of LDCs would therefore like to propose the following paragraph in the declaration:

We reaffirm the need for achieving sustained, equitable and inclusive economic growth in least developed countries, to at least the level of 7 per cent per annum, by strengthening their productive capacity in all sectors through structural transformation and overcoming their marginalization through their effective integration into the global economy, including through regional integration. We underline that this will require more strategic, comprehensive, and sustained approach based on ambitious, focused and realistic to bring about structural transformation in least developed countries that fosters accelerated, sustained, inclusive and equitable economic growth and sustainable development and helps least developed countries meet long-standing as well as emerging challenges."

This proposal is prepared based on the language contained in the Istanbul Programme of Action.

The declaration should also accord a balanced treatment to all three areas of sustainable development. Our careful reading reveals that the declaration contains very few elements of the economic pillar of the sustainable development. We want to see a very strong reference to the productive capacity building, infrastructure development and diversification for building a solid economic foundation in LDCs. Such measures are vitally important for building domestic capacities in achieving sustained economic growth and sustainable development. Our specific proposal on productive capacity building is as follows:

We stress that productive capacity building should be considered within a sustainable development policy framework that supports structural transformation as a means for increasing economic, environmental and social development and building resilience. We acknowledge that productive capacity building requires substantially upgrading human and institutional capacity

building, enhanced investment in physical infrastructure development, improved access to energy, which should be accompanied by improved trade, investment and development finance at all levels, enhanced capacity in the areas of entrepreneurship, technology and innovation and financial services.

In our earlier interventions, we made it very clear that there should be seamless connection between MDGs and the Post-2015 development agenda. The new development agenda should fully absorb the lessons learned from the implementation of the MDGs. Paragraph 13 of the final draft captures some of our concerns. The Group of LDCs would like to propose the following phrase at the end of the penultimate sentence of paragraph 13:

"by providing focused and scaled up assistance to LDCs".

Because it is important to bring it up front that the LDCs, as the most vulnerable group of countries, remained off track in achieving most of the MDGs. We can name them to identify clearly the Group of countries deserving special attention in the process of implementation of the SDG. In this sense I would like to repeat here that the Post-2015 Development Agenda will remain incomplete and lack legitimacy unless it gives focused attention to LDCs, who are the poorest segment of the global society. In this sense, it should aim at achieving progress for the social and economic groups that are the furthest behind, and monitor inequalities within and between countries.

Agriculture and food security are well captured in goal 2 of the SDGs. However, the declaration does not contain any strong reference to these issues except some weak reference in paragraph 14 and 25. The Group of LDCs wants to see a strong paragraph on agriculture and food security in the declaration, which will read as follows:

"We recognize that agriculture, food and nutritional security and rural development are vitally important for developing countries, in particular Least Developed Countries. Agriculture plays a crucial role both in promoting food security and as the major economic activity for much of the population, with direct linkages to the eradication of poverty and hunger, rural development and gender equality and empowerment of women, as well as exports, commodity and production diversification and agro-processing capacity. We therefore agree to ensure adequate investment in physical infrastructure, scientific and technological development, research and agricultural extension services in LDCs."

These issues have been thoroughly addressed in the IPoA as well as in the Milan Declaration adopted on 9 June 2015 at the Ministerial Meeting of the African LDCs held in Milan Italy, from 8 to 10 June 2015.

Product diversification, value addition and access to the global and regional value chains are crucial for LDCs. The SDGs made a number of references to these important issues. However, the declaration only talks about cultural values and values of peace, but does not contain any reference to the value addition and value chains. The group would therefore like to propose the following paragraph in the declaration:

We recognize that commodity diversification and value addition as well as effective participation of LDCs in regional and global value chains (GVCs) 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. Equally important is to gainfully link into GVCs by upgrading and increasing the domestic value-added content of LDCs' exports so that the commensurate production-linked gains are not lost. These require strategic policy interventions at the national, regional as well as at the sectoral level. In this regard, regional cooperation and integration can play a catalytic role.

The draft fails to recognize the importance of resilience building against various types of destructive shocks and high vulnerabilities of LDCs. A simple reference to promote resilience in paragraph 28 is not sufficient. Crisis mitigation and resilience building is vitally important to build their national capacity to respond to various kinds of shocks and ensuring sustainability of the progress made by LDCs. Our specific proposal would read as follows:

"We recognize that the on-going impacts of economic, environmental and public health related shocks and crisis demonstrate the need for appropriate regional and international support to be deployed in a timely and targeted manner to complement least developed countries' efforts aimed at building resilience in the face of various kinds of shocks and mitigating their effects. We therefore agree to operationalize a "crisis mitigation and resilience building funds" for LDCs to build their national capacity to respond to various kinds of shocks including financial crisis, natural disasters, and public health emergencies, without compromising the on-going multilateral mechanisms and processes."

The Group of LDCs has made it very clear that without significantly strengthened global partnerships for development, LDCs would not be able to achieve the SDGs. The final draft outcome document has used the qualifiers of "genuine, lasting and revitalized" in the context of partnerships. The zero draft had a reference to "strengthened Global Partnership", which has been taken out in the final draft. The issue of partnerships need to be further strengthened. The Group of LDCs would like to propose the following paragraph after para 40:

"We recommit ourselves for a strengthened partnership and solidarity with understanding and recognition that the least developed countries, as the most vulnerable group of countries, need scaled up global support to implement effective national policies, enhanced and appropriate

mechanisms at all levels for the achievement of the goals and objectives of this Programme of Action.” (This is based on IPoA, para 29c)

As a final point on declaration, the Group of LDCs would like to stress that based on the Rio Principle 6 and in light of the key lessons learned from the MDGs, we call for a “Principle of Differential and Preferential Treatment for LDCs (DPTL)”. This is indeed a faithful reflection of the outcomes of the Rio and the Rio+20. This guiding principle should be reflected in the declaration.

In conclusion, the Group of LDCs would request the full support and co-operation of the development partners in support of the specific proposals of LDCs. We all should keep in mind that the LDCs will be the battleground for the success of the Post-2015 development. Thus, their priorities and concerns must be at the front and center of the Post-2015 development agenda for its timely and effective implementation across the world.

I thank you all for your kind attention.