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Tel: 212 370 3988/89; Fax: 212 953 2038; E-mail: nepal@un.int; Website:
www.un.int/nepal

Statement on behalf of the Least Developed Countries by Mr. Mani Ratna Sharma, member of the Delegation of Nepal, at the opening session of the Second Preparatory Committee Meeting of UNCSD (New York, 7 March 2011)

Co-Chairs,

I have the honour to deliver this Statement on behalf of the Group of the Least Developed Countries (LDCs).

My delegation aligns itself with the statement made by the Republic of Argentina on behalf of the Group of 77 and China.

I thank the Secretary-General for the presentation of various reports for our substantive discussions.

We appreciate the Co-Chairs and other members of the Bureau for their leadership role in connection with the work of this meeting as well as the preparatory processes of the Conference.

Co-Chairs,

We attach great significance to this meeting as it provides us with the opportunity to consider on such matters, among others, as the objective of the conference, green economy in the context of sustainable development and poverty eradication, and institutional framework for sustainable development. LDCs have also a particular importance to this meeting as it is being convened prior to the United Nations Conference on the Least Developed Countries to be held in Istanbul, Turkey in May this year, which is expected to be vital in designing a new and robust international support architecture for the LDCs including to build resilience from the vulnerabilities.

LDCs face a number of problems and challenges towards sustainable development due to the inner structural constraints, vulnerabilities and lack of capacities, as well as the external shocks. Already fallen into the vicious circle of poverty and hunger along with poor health conditions and diseases, problems of illiteracy, low productive capacity and dependence on agrarian nature of economy; these countries also face the crises of global economic and financial, food, energy and the adverse effects of climate change. This has negatively affected the efforts of the LDCs in all three pillars of sustainable development. As a result of the climate change, to which the LDCs have contributed least, we face disproportionate impacts of extreme weather events, desertification and biodiversity loss, fragility of mountainous ecosystems and melting of glaciers, floods and submergence of coastal areas and sea level rise. These have now become regular phenomena and more devastating now than in the past times.

Co-Chairs,

Eradication of Poverty and hunger is a cross cutting issue and without which sustainable economic and social development can not to be achieved in the LDCs as poverty remains high in most LDCs. With regard to the newly emerged concept of a 'green economy', we need to work towards a clear and acceptable definition for all with a view to establishing its beneficial linkages with sustainable development and poverty eradication. The concept is still in the evolving process.

The 'green economy' may not be an objective by itself; it could be a means to an end of sustainable development and poverty alleviation. The 'green economy' should not be interpreted as conditionality or a burden to LDCs in the harnessing of resources in these countries for alleviating poverty. Similarly, this should be used to promote and enhance the capacity in LDCs without constraining the policy space to pursue their own way of development in accordance with their own situations and priorities. The 'green economy' should have a high priority on enhancing substantial transfer of new environmental technology to LDCs with strong international support mechanisms.

Co-Chairs,

The LDCs are lagging behind in sustainable development as the international support measures are not fully effective and adequate in terms of scale, scope and quality. The progress of these countries has slowed down due to the lack of the proper and timely implementation of the commitments made by the international community in the earlier summits, including in *Stockholm (1972)*, *Rio de Janeiro (1992)* and *Johannesburg (2002)*. The LDCs have been experiencing high difficulty in their development mainly due to capacity constraints, lack of enhanced level of financial support, lack of the ODA commitments

fulfillment, their constant marginalization in the international trading system, lack of substantial debt relief measures, negligible FDI inflows, lack of technological support and lack of holistic approach to development. The LDCs, therefore, need to be given due priority in allocating necessary funds as well as devising programs because of their lack of capacity and resources.

There is no doubt that the LDCs require a genuine global partnership in order to strengthen social, economic and environmental aspect of sustainable development. In this context, we emphasize the critical need to fulfill all the previous commitments made by the developed countries, particularly the ODA commitment of providing the 0.15-0.20 per cent of their GNI to the LDCs. The developed countries must take concrete steps to providing additional financial support, transferring technology, reducing and cancelling debt, removing trade barriers and opening their markets, and building capacity in the LDCs in order to realize the agenda of sustainable development at the global level. The LDCs also should be provided with additional, substantive and secure funding and technology for adaptation and mitigation of the climate change effects together with legally binding and ambitious mitigation measures. The resources and support structure will also be critical to attain our bio-diversity protection goals. We need to have a coherent and concerted approach to addressing the issues of sustainable development in a holistic manner in place of the piecemeal approach.

Co-Chairs,

The implementation of multilateral environmental agreements is critical to promote sustainable development and reduce poverty. Because of the lack of capacity and resource constraints, the LDCs face the challenges of effective implementation of the agreements they have been party to. Therefore, any institutional mechanism related to sustainable development, both existing and new, should take these concerns into account. The institutional mechanisms for sustainable development should focus on transfer of technology, resource mobilization and capacity building for LDCs in a holistic manner. These Institutional mechanisms should be inclusive of LDCs.

We believe that the Conference and its preparatory process should be guided by a greater level of efficiency, transparency, inclusiveness and should ensure the inputs and participation of all, including from the vulnerable groups such as LDCs. This alone will lead us to a successful convening of the conference and producing the outcome that is result-oriented with an enhanced level of international support measures and targeted programs.

Co-Chairs,

While I have the floor, let me speak from my national capacity and raise the issue of the mountain countries in particular:

There is about 12 per cent of total global population that lives on mountains, and mountains are among the most vulnerable to the vagaries of climate change. There is a close connection between the mountains and water resources, bio diversity and livelihoods. These issues and adaptation challenges were discussed at the expert level meeting of the mountain countries held in Kathmandu last September. Therefore, sustainable mountain agenda has to be a priority issue for Rio+20 as well as all MEA processes as special area of global concern. As under the CBD, we look forward to a separate *Programme of Work* for mountain areas in all international processes including in the RIO+20 processes because of the extreme vulnerability of these areas.

Finally, we look forward to working with you and the members of the Bureau and will always be providing to you our firm support and cooperation along with our constructive engagement in all the preparatory processes and the conference itself.

I thank you.