

123rd Assembly and Related Meetings  
IPU COMMITTEE ON UNITED NATIONS AFFAIRS

Briefing session on: Parliaments and the Brussels Declaration and Programme of Action  
(BPOA) for the Least Developed Countries (LDCs):  
*"Towards the Fourth United Nations Conference on the Least Developed Countries (LDC IV)"*

10.30 am - 1.00 pm; 4 October 2010  
Room 2, Level 0  
International Conference Centre  
Geneva, Switzerland

**AIDE MEMOIRE**

**Introduction** The Least Developed Countries (LDCs) are among the most vulnerable in the world with some of the lowest human development indicators and per capita income. The United Nations has long singled out this group of countries, a total of 49, as requiring special attention. The 2001 Brussels Programme of Action (BPOA) is the latest commitment by the global community to address the special needs of the LDCs. However, progress toward the commitments of the BPOA has left much to be desired. To refocus and strengthen the commitment of the global community, a new programme of action for the LDCs will be negotiated in the coming months in view of a 4<sup>th</sup> United Nations LDC Conference scheduled to take place in Istanbul, Turkey, from 30 May and 3 June 2011.

Over the years, it has become clear that many parliaments in LDC countries as well as in developing and developed countries are not sufficiently aware of the BPOA. Developed countries' parliaments must become more engaged in support of the LDC agenda as part of the larger development agenda, and as an important expression of North-South partnership. LDC parliaments, for their part, must be more empowered to hold their governments accountable on the commitments of the BPOA and its successor programmes.

The concerns of parliaments received only scant attention in the BPOA itself. To encourage and support more parliamentary oversight of the BPOA, the IPU has worked to raise awareness of the BPOA among its members. More recently, in the context of preparations for the 4<sup>th</sup> LDC conference, the IPU has helped engage parliaments in national reviews of the BPOA and to involve parliaments in follow up regional consultations.

As a next and most critical step in this process, the IPU is now seeking to articulate a strong parliamentary position that may help inform negotiations of the next programme of action for the LDCs. To this effect, the IPU will organise a first consultation with parliaments at a **Briefing Session** that will be held at the 123<sup>rd</sup> IPU Assembly, October 2010, under the aegis of the IPU Committee on United Nations Affairs. A second follow up **Parliamentary Forum on LDCs** will take place on the eve of LDC IV, on 29 May 2011, in

Istanbul. The main objectives and overall format of the Briefing Session are described below.

**Objective**

The **Briefing Session** will present parliaments with the opportunity to:

- review the challenges and successes faced in the implementation of the BPOA, bearing in mind the specific circumstances of each LDC;
- to assess parliaments' role in the implementation and review of the BPOA over the past ten years, and the institutional and legal capacities required to carry out their role more effectively;
- to help identify key messages that parliaments would like to see reflected in the new programme of action for the LDCs;
- to encourage parliamentary focal points and other MPs to follow closely the negotiations of the new programme of action through interaction with their respective governments; and
- by extension, help identify a theme for the Parliamentary Forum that will be held at the UN conference, as well as promote parliamentary participation in the conference and its follow up.

**Draft Agenda**

The meeting will proceed in two parts: a first one consisting of a general review of progress and challenges in the implementation of the BPOA to date; a second part, in the form of a roundtable designed to gather input from participants with respect to the future programme of action for the LDCs.

Part I (25-30 minutes)

Overview of LDC issues with presentations by:

- Mr. Cheick Sidi Diarra, Under-Secretary-General and High Representative for the Least Developed Countries, Landlocked Developing Countries and Small Island Developing States: *the scorecard of LDC progress to date and the key development challenges facing LDCs* (10 mins)
- Hon. Ephraim Kayembe, Member of Parliament, National Assembly, Malawi: *the role of parliaments in the implementation of the BPOA and related challenges, successes and lessons learnt* (10 mins)
- Dr. Arjun Karki, International Coordinator, LDC Watch: *the key elements that should be part of a new international commitment for the LDCs* (10 mins)

Part II: (90-120 minutes)

Roundtable discussion on key parliamentary messages to LDC IV. The discussion will focus on a few substantive questions of concern to parliaments. A moderator will be tasked with keeping the discussion focused and with an eye to the specific deliverables that parliamentarians would like to see expressed in the new programme of action for the LDCs. The above presenters

would also participate in this discussion to help reflect on or elucidate the points made in the various interventions.

Conclusion and wrap up comments (10 minutes)

- Outcome** This Briefing Session aims to raise the awareness of MPs from both developed and developing countries of the situation of the LDCs ten years since the BPOA, to mobilize parliaments in connection with the negotiations of a new programme of action for the LDCs, and ultimately to ensure that the concerns of parliaments will be incorporated in the new programme of action. The briefing is part of the IPU's long term mission to enhance parliamentary oversight of global development commitments and of national development plans. In the short term, the briefing will also serve as a prelude to the Parliamentary Forum that will take place at LDC IV.
- Meeting venue** The **Briefing Session** will take place on the 4 October 2010 in context of the IPU Committee on UN Affairs during the IPU's 123<sup>rd</sup> Assembly at the International Conference Centre of Geneva.
- Languages** English, French, Spanish and Arabic
- Participants** All Parliaments participating in the 123<sup>rd</sup> IPU Assembly will be invited to attend the briefing.