

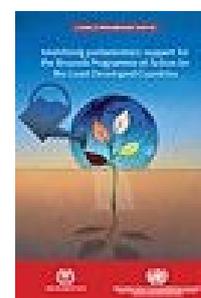
Least Developed Countries

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Introduction

The category of Least Developed Countries (LDCs) was created in 1971, after the international community recognised that the poorest and weakest countries required international support, and the UN General Assembly acknowledged the need to alleviate the problems of underdevelopment. The United Nations Committee for Development Policy (CDP) is responsible for reviewing the status of LDCs every three years, and for monitoring their progress after graduation from the category. Currently, there are 48 countries in the LDC category. The Maldives* graduated from the LDC category on the 1st of January, 2011.



Since 2009 the IPU has facilitated parliaments' participation in the review of the implementation of the Brussels Declaration and Programme of Action (BPOA) for the decade 2001 - 2010, so as to increase the parliamentary dimension of the Fourth United Nations Conference on the LDCs (LDC IV), and to create a precedent for parliamentary participation in future programmes in support of the LDCs.

List of Least Developed Countries

- | | |
|--|---------------------------------|
| 1. Afghanistan # | 27. Mali # |
| 2. Angola | 28. Mauritania |
| 3. Bangladesh | 29. Mozambique |
| 4. Benin | 30. Myanmar |
| 5. Bhutan # | 31. Nepal # |
| 6. Burkina Faso # | 32. Niger # |
| 7. Burundi # | 33. Rwanda # |
| 8. Cambodia | 34. Samoa * |
| 9. Central African Republic # | 35. São Tomé and Príncipe * |
| 10. Chad # | 36. Senegal |
| 11. Comoros * | 37. Sierra Leone |
| 12. Democratic Republic of the Congo | 38. Solomon Islands * |
| 13. Djibouti | 39. Somalia |
| 14. Equatorial Guinea | 40. Sudan |
| 15. Eritrea | 41. Timor-Leste * |
| 16. Ethiopia # | 42. Togo |
| 17. Gambia | 43. Tuvalu * |
| 18. Guinea | 44. Uganda # |
| 19. Guinea-Bissau * | 45. United Republic of Tanzania |
| 20. Haiti * | 46. Vanuatu * |
| 21. Kiribati * | 47. Yemen |
| 22. Lao People's Democratic Republic # | 48. Zambia # |
| 23. Lesotho # | |
| 24. Liberia | |
| 25. Madagascar | |
| 26. Malawi # | |

* Also a Small Island Developing State

#Also a Landlocked Developing Country

Programmes of Action in Support of the Least Developed Countries

- The Substantial New Programme of Action for the 1980s was adopted at the First UN Conference for the LDCs in 1981.
- The Paris Declaration and Programme of Action for the 1990s was adopted at the Second UN Conference for the LDCs in 1990.
- The Brussels Declaration and Programme of Action (BPOA) for 2001 - 2010 was adopted at the Third UN Conference for the LDCs in 2001.

The Brussels Declaration and Programme of Action

The overarching goal of the Brussels Declaration and Programme of Action (BPOA) is to promote sustainable development and reduce the number of people living in extreme poverty and suffering from hunger in LDCs. Despite the strong economic growth in LDCs following the adoption of the BPOA, the world economic crisis, along with food shortages, the energy crisis and climate change, has increased LDC vulnerability.

The BPOA contains 30 international development goals, including the Millennium Development Goals. The BPOA holds policies and measures in seven interlinked areas, which are to be enacted through the mutual commitments of LDCs and their development partners.

The Seven BPOA Commitments

- Commitment 1: Fostering a people-centred policy framework
- Commitment 2: Good governance at national and international levels
- Commitment 3: Building human and institutional capacities
- Commitment 4: Building productive capacities to make globalization work for LDCs
- Commitment 5: Enhancing the role of trade in development
- Commitment 6: Reducing vulnerability and protecting the environment
- Commitment 7: Mobilizing financial resources

IPU activities in support of the Least Developed Countries' parliaments

The IPU and the United Nations Office of the High Representative for the Least Developed Countries, Landlocked Developing Countries and Small Island Developing States (UNOHRLLS) have established a fruitful partnership in promoting the implementation of the 2001 Brussels Programme of Action (BPOA) for the 2001-2010 Decade, especially in the areas of good governance and capacity building. This has provided direct technical assistance to a number of LDC parliaments, and has helped mobilize political support for the LDCs through its resolutions and specialized meetings.

In the Havana parliamentary message of April 2001 to the Third United Nations LDC Conference, held in Brussels in May 2001, the IPU called on the conference to take a close look at the key challenges facing the people and governments of the LDCs. The IPU also called on the Conference to take action in its interest of real, not imaginary, progress.

During the Brussels Conference itself, the IPU convened a high-level parliamentary roundtable aimed at promoting parliamentary action on issues addressed by the Conference and parliamentary follow-up of its results.



In Santiago de Chile in 2003 the IPU formally endorsed the BPOA stressing, in particular, the need for the effective implementation of Commitment 2 of the Programme, relating to good governance at the national and international levels.

The IPU and the UNOHRLLS organised a parliamentary panel on governance in the Least Developed Countries on 15 September 2006. In December 2007 the joint IPU-UN parliamentary workshop, held in Bagamoyo, Tanzania, to promote parliamentary input into the



implementation of the BPOA was yet another building block to the strong foundations of cooperation between parliaments and the UN.



At the request of the Cambodian parliamentary authorities, the IPU also held a national workshop in February 2009 to promote parliamentary input into the implementation of the BPOA. The outcome of this workshop was a national parliamentary draft action plan.



The IPU and the UNOHRLLS published a guide entitled *Mobilizing parliamentary support for the Brussels Programme of Action for the Least Developed Countries*, which highlights parliaments' role in the implementation of the BPOA.

At present, the IPU is coordinating the parliamentary track of the preparations for the Fourth UN Conference on the LDCs (LDC IV). As part of this process, the IPU is strongly involved in encouraging, supporting and facilitating LDC parliaments' participation in the national, regional and global review of the BPOA. The IPU held a **Briefing Session** on LDC IV on the 4th of October 2010, in the context of the IPU Committee on UN Affairs during the IPU's 123rd Assembly in Geneva. The IPU is also organising a **Parliamentary Forum**, which will take place on the 8th of May, 2011 on the eve of LDC IV.

The Fourth United Nations Conference on the Least Developed Countries



The Fourth UN Conference on the Least Developed Countries (LDC IV) will take place from the 9th until the 13th of May 2011 in Istanbul. Preparations for LDC IV occur at the national, regional and global level. The IPU encourages and supports parliamentary participation at all three levels, and facilitates contact between the parliamentary focal points, the ministerial focal points and the UN focal points.

The aim of LDC IV is to:

- assess the results of the 10-year action plan for the Least Developed Countries (LDCs) adopted at the Third United Nations Conference on LDCs in Brussels, Belgium, in 2001; and
- adopt new measures and strategies for the sustainable development of the LDCs into the next decade.

How parliaments can participate in the preparations for the Fourth United Nations Conference on the Least Developed Countries

1. Nominate parliamentary focal points

The nomination of one or two focal points facilitates communication between the parliament and focal points at the UN and ministerial level. Furthermore, it enables the IPU to ensure that all relevant documents are transferred to the appropriate people.

2. Contact your ministerial and UN focal points

Parliaments are encouraged to identify and contact the ministerial and UN focal points for this process. Should your parliament have difficulty in contacting the other focal points, the IPU will attempt to facilitate such contact.

3. Review your national report on the implementation of the BPOA

Even if your parliament has not contributed to the national report, it is important to read and review it so that your parliament can contribute to the LDC IV preparations at the regional and global levels. National reports can be obtained directly from ministerial focal points, or via the LDC IV website: <https://www.un.org/wcm/content/site/ldc/lang/en/pid/11422>. The IPU is also involved in obtaining the national reports.

Reviewing the national report:

- i. distribute the national report to relevant committees for their feedback;
- ii. assess parliament's progress in carrying out its budgetary, oversight and legislative functions, as part of commitment 2 of the BPOA;
- iii. review parliament's involvement in the implementation of the BPOA; and
- iv. identify the lessons parliament has learnt and the challenges it has faced whilst working towards its country's graduation from the LDC category.

4. Identify priority areas for the new programme of action

The 2011 - 2020 Istanbul Programme of Action (IPOA) for the LDCs will be adopted at LDC IV. The negotiation process of the IPOA will take place between January and May 2011, during Inter-Governmental Preparatory Committee meetings. The first meeting of the Inter-Governmental Preparatory Committee took place from the 10th until the 14th of January 2011, in New York. The second meeting will take place from the 4th until the 8th of April 2011, in New York. To create a parliamentary dimension to this programme, parliaments should identify priority areas they wish to see included in the IPOA, and work closely with their government on their national input into such meetings and into the IPOA itself. The IPU would be grateful to receive copies of any parliamentary input into the IPOA.

5. Participate in pre-conference events and global level preparations for LDC IV

So as to ensure parliamentary participation in the preparations for LDC IV, the IPU has strived to keep parliaments informed of upcoming consultations, meetings and pre-conference events. The IPU has planned two pre-conference events of its own: a **Briefing Session** took place on the 4th of October 2010 at the IPU's 123rd Assembly in Geneva and a LDC Parliamentary Forum will be held on the 8th of May 2011 in Istanbul. The Parliamentary Forum on the occasion of LDC IV offers parliamentarians an opportunity to:

1. review parliaments' role in the implementation of the BPOA, identifying successes, lessons learnt and challenges faced;
2. promote parliamentary awareness of all issues on the LDC IV agenda;
3. ensure a parliamentary dimension to the new programme of action for LDCs; and
4. ensure the active engagement of parliaments in the implementation of the new programme of action.