

CUTS - Commonwealth Secretariat Event at UN LDC IV Civil Society Forum – Istanbul, Turkey

From Istanbul to 2020: Vision for LDCs

Time: 10:00am – 12:30pm on 11 May 2011

Venue: Room Uskudar 1, Istanbul Congress Centre

Substantive Backgrounder

LDCs, as a whole, have made some progress in the last decade as evidenced by their GDP, international trade, and inward investment growth. But their economies still need structural transformation to achieve sustained and sustainable growth and inclusive development. Their rudimentary technologies and poor infrastructures make their products less competitive in international markets. They are also quite vulnerable to external shocks. Given that the occurrence of external shocks has increased in recent years, for example the recent food, energy and financial crises, LDCs confront a series of challenges and constraints. Also noticeable is that the recent improvement in LDC growth rates is largely led by capital intensive extractive industries, such as fuels and minerals, which have little impact on poverty reduction, employment creation and diversification. LDCs might experience more severe, persistent and widespread poverty if nothing is done to change the situation.

UN LDC IV in Istanbul, Turkey provides a unique opportunity to objectively analyse the development challenges faced by LDCs, to chart a viable programme of action to address them, and to forge partnerships to implement the programme efficiently and effectively. The Commonwealth Secretariat and CUTS have fully recognized the importance of this opportunity and have been contributing to the preparations for UN LDC IV both individually and jointly. Most noteworthy of these are the research and policy studies commissioned by the Commonwealth Secretariat (with CUTS substantive contributions) and the African CSO Forum on LDC IV organised by CUTS in Arusha, Tanzania in 2010. The main objective of these initiatives has been to assist all relevant stakeholders better understand the issues involved and to offer concrete recommendations for a future course of action based on shared understanding and aims.

Based on this work, and to constructively contribute to LDCs growth and development in the coming decade, CUTS is organising a panel discussion at the Civil Society Forum at the UN LDC IV in collaboration with the Commonwealth Secretariat. The panel will include eminent speakers from the Commonwealth Secretariat, the Organisation internationale de la Francophonie, and CUTS and will discuss the following issues among others:

- What are the common threads among the old and new development challenges faced by LDCs?
- What went wrong with earlier LDCs Programmes of Action, e.g. the Brussels Programme of Action? How can Istanbul Programme of Action be better and deliver where earlier Programmes failed?

- Where do we want LDCs to be in 2020; where are they expected to be if the current trends continue? What can LDCs and their development partners do to bridge the gap between the two?
- What messages CSOs bring to UN LDC IV? What are their expectations and aspirations?