

**Draft statement for Hon'ble Foreign Minister Dr. Dipu Moni, MP for
Annual Ministerial Meeting of the Least Developed Countries
to be held in New York on 26 September 2011**

**Mr. Chairman, Distinguished colleagues,
Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen,**

It is a pleasure speaking before this annual stocktaking meeting which is taking place at a critical time. On one side we have behind us the continued marginalization over the last three decades, on the other side we are faced with the ambitious challenge of graduating half of the countries by the next 10 years. The question is: shall we be successful this time?

It is thus timely for us to discuss ways and means to find a strategy for the successful implementation of the newly adopted Istanbul Program of Action based on experience with the Brussels Program of Action and realize our commitments to convert challenges into opportunities for development.

Ten years ago, when the Brussels Program was negotiated, the situation was far more supportive than today. The environment of constructive engagement was evident in the adoption of Millennium Declaration as well as in the progress in WTO negotiations. There were obvious reasons to be happy and confident. In spite of such an encouraging situation, we failed to realize agreed commitments and create a constructive partnership to reach our goals.

Mr. Chairman,

Despite remarkable progress in some socio-economic development sectors in the LDCs, the extreme poor remain as vulnerable as before and in some cases their situation has worsened. The lofty goals could not ensure concomitant progress in the field of poverty reduction, and productive capacity suggesting a major failure of the Brussels POA. Although we are left with only 4 years, the MDGs remain wishful targets for many of us. There is again uncertainty on sustainability of whatever progress we have achieved given our vulnerability to external shocks. We have not been able to contain price volatility. Major structural handicaps such as export concentration and dependence on volatile commodity price continue to hurt us.

We still remain fragile and insecure for structural weaknesses and deficit in human asset. We are marginalized in trade, wealth generation, technology, connectivity and global decision making. It is unfortunate that when we are talking about renewed engagement, we are not receiving the same level of commitment for enhanced partnership from the development partners. We still face high degree of protectionist practices. We do not see any major shift in approaches and progress in forums like UNFCCC, and the Doha Round.

Mr. Chairman,

It is an irony that LDCs are most vulnerable to all types of external shocks. They suffered the most in the recent global meltdown. Again, we continue to bear the major brunt of the climate change impacts for which the developed countries are mostly to blame. We are faced with all sorts of crisis including displacement, loss of biodiversity, food insecurity, and ecological imbalance. We are doubly disadvantaged not only because of our infrastructural inadequacy but also because of vulnerable geographical locations. International support is thus imperative for LDCs, SIDS and other vulnerable states. The UNFCCC process must have adequate provisions for funding and transfer of technology for such countries.

It was evident from the recent negotiations leading to Istanbul that the development partners are not forthcoming with enhanced support on the pretext of being in the process of recovery from the recent financial melt-down. Many were clearly not in a position to undertake new and additional commitments. The impasse in the Doha Round and the UNFCCC negotiations haunt us with possibility of another failed partnership.

Mr. Chairman

In Istanbul, we have seen satisfactory progress in negotiations on infrastructure, agriculture and rural development, education, health and remittances. But we have little to rejoice on two crucial issues, namely, the enhanced commitment on ODA and enhanced trade opportunities for the LDCs. We must continue to highlight and the world must realize that in the absence of sufficient and timely support, the LDCs will slide backwards and the development gains will be lost.. Such a situation is neither desirable nor sustainable in upholding the principle of ensuring peace, security and development.

We must keep in mind that the overarching goal of Istanbul is to go beyond Brussels and to create the right atmosphere for a good number of LDCs to graduate. We must not falter in our aim. It is therefore in the interest all of us that we must strengthen this partnership. Bangladesh will continue to play a constructive role in ensuring this goal.

Mr. Chairman,

In order for the LDCs to graduate from their present status, there is an urgent need for creation of conditions for LDCs to get out of poverty and underdevelopment. Our development partners must offer us space to develop necessary human, social and financial capital. Therefore, we would call upon them to renew, enhance and fulfill their commitments for support. We would at the same time like to call upon the emerging developing countries for all their cooperation and support so that LDCs can graduate into middle income countries within the coming decade.

I believe that the Istanbul Summit could create the conditions for transforming the one-sixth of humanity, that LDCs comprise into productive assets and attain dignified lives. Let us all, therefore, take an oath for a strong partnership in promoting human dignity, ensuring efficient development administration and providing good governance. Our real dream and hope is a common vision of a world with equal opportunities for all children.

Mr. Chairman,

We agree that the compact agreed in Istanbul is not ambitious, but it is sufficient to encourage growth in LDCs and move them out of the shackles of poverty if commitments are realized in letter and spirit. The final text of the IPOA brought back the focus on productive capacity building and in that context recognized the importance of infrastructure, agriculture and trade. Now that we before us completion of the Doha Developed Round, we need to demand and secure an “early harvest package” incorporating the issues of LDCs by the WTO Council meeting in end 2011. This should include enhanced market access (duty-free and quota-free market access with associated Rules of Origin), an outcome on cotton and service waiver to the minimum. If negotiations paint a bleak prospect on this issue, we must stand united and devise new strategies for effective engagement with the opposing parties. Similarly, we should stand together to realize easy access of LDCs to fast-track finance for adaptation under the Cancun accord and green technology at affordable cost.

Commitments of our partners would be tested again in the context of negotiations for Rio+20 that has a focus on green economy. Our partners must help LDCs to transform challenges of sustainable and carbon-free development into real opportunities. The noble idea of green economy will remain unfulfilled if LDCs remain deprived of clean technology and lag further behind in sustainable development.

While LDCs endeavour to overcome their challenges, we should call upon the emerging economies and countries of the South to also come forward with their hands of friendship. They are gradually assuming greater role in global decision making. As such, we call upon G-20 and other developed countries, having capacities to do so, to come forward with their moral and material support.

Dear friends,

Standing at this critical juncture, we must not lose focus in our endeavor. We must maintain the unity so as to be able to realize the commitments from partners made at Istanbul and reflect LDC concerns in global negotiations under WTO, UNFCCC, Rio+20 and such other mechanisms. That is the only way we can ensure a supportive external environment towards graduation of half of our countries by 2020.

I thank you.
