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Intervention by H.E. Dr. A. K. Abdul Momen, Ambassador and Permanent Representative of Bangladesh at Second Committee on 22 (a): Follow-up to the Fourth United Nations Conference on the Least Developed Countries CR-2, CB, 21 October 2013

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

1. Delegation of Bangladesh aligns itself with the statements made by H.E. the Permanent Representative of Fiji on behalf of the Group of 77 and China, and H.E. the Permanent Representative of Benin on behalf of the Least Developed Countries.

2. We would like to thank the Secretary General for his comprehensive report on the implementation of the Programme of Action for the Least Developed Countries for the Decade 2011 – 2020, known to all of us as IPOA. The report discusses the present situations in the LDCs in various socio-economic fields, and makes recommendations to implement the IPOA more effectively. We must also commend, and put on record our appreciation for High Representative for LDCs, LLDCs and SIDS and his entire team for their significant and substantive contribution into preparing this report.

Mr. Chair,

3. Nearly 880 Million of people of the world live in the 49 LDCs, and half of them live below the poverty level, i.e. live on less than 1.25 dollars a day. Almost 30% of the LDC population is chronically hungry. Four-fifth of the people in these poorest countries do not have access to electricity, and only 3% of rural population can afford modern fuel. The LDCs are the most vulnerable to natural disasters, and to climate change impacts. They are vulnerable to global economic shocks, to contraction of policies of other countries, even they suffer when the multi-national companies change business policies.

4. In the face of these bleak pictures, I am still hopeful that we would be able to achieve our IPoA goals, at least could eradicate extreme poverty provided we are fully committed to it and if we allocate adequate resources to achieve them. Global community spent \$1,734 billion for defense only in 2012 as per SIPRI and therefore, resources are available in spite of financial crises. What we need is a mindset to help the humanity and prioritize our resource allocation accordingly.

Mr. Chair,

5. In Istanbul, the UN membership identified eight priority areas for helping the LDCs to overcome their backwardness. Among them, productive capacity was a key one. In the area of science, technology and innovation, LDCs need international support. We are thankful to Turkey for generously offering to host the Technology Bank for LDCs, and to reinforce and disseminate the newer innovations and technology, we believe, there should be regional science and technology centers in LDCs. We call upon all development partners, and the UN and other international organizations to come forward to help us in setting up the Technology Bank and regional centers.

6. Trade is another area of priority identified in the IPOA where the LDCs remain extremely marginalized. Their share in total global export in 2011 was 1.19%. In 1971, it was around 1%. In the last 42 years, there has not been much improvement. Even this miniscule figure is unevenly distributed among the LDCs. We call upon the developed countries, particularly the Ministers of these countries who will be meeting in Bali two months from now, to ensure the timely implementation of duty-free and quota-free market access to all products from all LDCs in a manner that is efficient, effective and meaningful. All other barriers to trade and services (including barriers to Mode-4 of WTO) should be removed with immediate effect.

7. Another point of emphasis should be a regular mechanism for trade financing, because every now and then trade is a victim of financial crisis and LDCs are hard hit. Such a facility can only be set up by coordinated action of IMF, World Bank and the WTO. It is imperative that they work in a cohesive and coordinated manner. Otherwise, our goal of graduating half of LDCs by 2020, as targeted in IPOA, I am afraid, will remain as an unfinished agenda.

8. We have been flagging the issue of Official Development Assistance (ODA) to LDCs for quite some time. The Secretary General's report highlights that ODA as a percentage of GNI fell from 0.11% in 2010 to 0.10% in 2011. We are alarmed that bilateral net ODA to LDCs dropped by 12.8% last year. The Aid for Trade commitment also dived down. My delegation therefore, again call upon the development partners to meet their commitments and factor their ODA commitment to their regular national budgets to ensure predictability and stability.

9. We need support in the area of climate change adaptation also. Most LDCs will, or are already suffering from rising sea levels and coastal erosion, salinity and depletion of aquifers, ocean acidification, desertification, floods, and land degradation. It is an obligation on the part of the global leadership to assist LDCs to face this challenge.

Mr. Chair,

10. As per IPOA the LDCs themselves are responsible for improving their socio-economic situations with the assistance of their development partners. LDCs are fully committed to fulfill their part of the partnership. They have been implementing IPOA as part of their national plans. Bangladesh, for example, have mainstreamed IPOA in its national development strategy, and

we believe we are on the right track to graduate by 2021, as envisioned by the Prime Minister of Bangladesh. We have already fulfilled the criteria of Economic Vulnerability Index (EVI). On the Human Asset Index (HAI), we are on the right track, and on the last indicator of GNI, the steady GDP growth rate of Bangladesh signals that we are not far from the target. Our achievements in different priority areas and goals – both economic and social, and also in the area of governance, have been appreciated globally.

11. Unfortunately, our development partners – Member States of the UN, UN agencies and other international organizations plus other stakeholders are far behind in meeting their commitments.

11. Therefore, Mr. Chair, let me conclude by re-emphasizing that the global community needs to do more, needs to be more proactive, needs to fulfill their commitments first to eradicate poverty and hunger, second to assist LDCs to meet their basic human needs, and third, to assist them at least half to graduate by 2020. If we fail, our future generation may not pardon us, may not trust us.

I thank you, Mr. Chair.
