

**Economic and Social Council**Distr.: General
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Agenda item 11 (b)

**Resolution adopted by the Economic and Social Council
on 6 June 2019***[on a proposal considered in plenary meeting ([E/2019/L.17](#))]***2019/3. Programme of Action for the Least Developed Countries
for the Decade 2011–2020***The Economic and Social Council,*

Recalling the Istanbul Declaration¹ and the Programme of Action for the Least Developed Countries for the Decade 2011–2020,² adopted by the Fourth United Nations Conference on the Least Developed Countries, held in Istanbul, Turkey, from 9 to 13 May 2011, and endorsed by the General Assembly in its resolution [65/280](#) of 17 June 2011, in which the Assembly called upon all the relevant stakeholders to commit to implementing the Programme of Action, and recalling also the Political Declaration adopted by the Comprehensive High-level Midterm Review of the Implementation of the Istanbul Programme of Action for the Least Developed Countries for the Decade 2011–2020, held in Antalya, Turkey, from 27 to 29 May 2016, and endorsed by the Assembly in its resolution [70/294](#) of 25 July 2016,

Reaffirming the overarching goal of the Istanbul Programme of Action of overcoming the structural challenges faced by the least developed countries in order to eradicate poverty, achieve the internationally agreed development goals and enable graduation from the least developed country category,

Recalling the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development,³ the Addis Ababa Action Agenda of the Third International Conference on Financing for Development,⁴ the Paris Agreement,⁵ the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk

¹ *Report of the Fourth United Nations Conference on the Least Developed Countries, Istanbul, Turkey, 9–13 May 2011* ([A/CONF.219/7](#)), chap. I.

² *Ibid.*, chap. II.

³ General Assembly resolution [70/1](#).

⁴ General Assembly resolution [69/313](#), annex.

⁵ Adopted under the UNFCCC in [FCCC/CP/2015/10/Add.1](#), decision 1/CP.21.



Reduction 2015–2030⁶ and the New Urban Agenda adopted in Quito by the United Nations Conference on Housing and Sustainable Urban Development (Habitat III),⁷

Recalling also General Assembly resolution [73/242](#) of 20 December 2018,

Recalling further its resolution [2018/26](#) of 24 July 2018 on the Programme of Action for the Least Developed Countries for the Decade 2011–2020,

Recalling the intergovernmentally agreed conclusions and recommendations of the fourth annual Economic and Social Council forum on financing for development follow-up, held from 15 to 18 April 2019,⁸

Recalling also General Assembly resolutions [59/209](#) of 20 December 2004 and [67/221](#) of 21 December 2012 on a smooth transition for countries graduating from the list of least developed countries,

Reaffirming General Assembly resolutions [71/243](#) of 21 December 2016 on the quadrennial comprehensive policy review of operational activities for development of the United Nations system and [72/279](#) of 31 May 2018 on the repositioning of the United Nations development system in the context of the quadrennial comprehensive policy review of operational activities for development of the United Nations system, and emphasizing the importance of their full and timely implementation,

Recognizing the synergies between the implementation of the Istanbul Programme of Action and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development,

Taking note of the 2018 Ministerial Declaration of the Least Developed Countries,⁹

1. *Takes note* of the report of the Secretary-General on the implementation of the Programme of Action for the Least Developed Countries for the Decade 2011–2020;¹⁰

2. *Notes with concern* that, with only one and a half years left to implement the Istanbul Programme of Action,² significant gaps persist between the goals and targets set out therein and the achievements made on the ground, and in this regard calls upon the least developed countries, their development partners, the United Nations system and all other actors to further intensify their efforts to fully and effectively implement, in a coordinated, coherent and expeditious manner, the commitments that have been made in the Programme of Action in its eight priority areas, namely, (a) productive capacity, (b) agriculture, food security and rural development, (c) trade, (d) commodities, (e) human and social development, (f) multiple crises and other emerging challenges, (g) mobilizing financial resources for development and capacity-building and (h) good governance at all levels;

3. *Invites* the private sector, civil society and foundations to contribute to the implementation of the Istanbul Programme of Action in their respective areas of competence in line with the national priorities of the least developed countries;

4. *Welcomes* the operationalization of the Technology Bank for the Least Developed Countries in Turkey, by which the first Sustainable Development Goal target, target 17.8, has been achieved, and invites Member States, as well as international organizations, foundations and the private sector, to provide voluntary

⁶ General Assembly resolution [69/283](#), annex II.

⁷ General Assembly resolution [71/256](#), annex.

⁸ See [E/FFDF/2019/3](#).

⁹ [A/73/455](#), annex.

¹⁰ [A/74/69-E/2019/12](#).

financial contributions and technical assistance to ensure the full and effective implementation of its work programme;

5. *Reaffirms* that the least developed countries, as the most vulnerable group of countries, need enhanced global support to overcome the structural challenges they face in implementing the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development,³ and in this regard calls upon the international community to prioritize and strengthen support from all sources to facilitate the coordinated implementation and coherent follow-up to and monitoring of the Istanbul Programme of Action, the 2030 Agenda and the Addis Ababa Action Agenda of the Third International Conference on Financing for Development⁴ in the least developed countries;

6. *Recognizes* that significant additional domestic public resources, including at the subnational level, supplemented by international assistance as appropriate, will be critical to realizing sustainable development and achieving the Sustainable Development Goals and that the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the Addis Ababa Action Agenda acknowledge the centrality of domestic resource mobilization underscored by the principle of national ownership, also recognizes that, while the least developed countries have made considerable efforts to mobilize domestic resources and attract private investment, further progress is needed, and underlines the importance of strengthening domestic enabling environments, including the rule of law and combating corruption at all levels and in all its forms;

7. *Also recognizes* that private business activity, investment and innovation are major drivers of productivity, inclusive economic growth and job creation, and that private international capital flows, in particular foreign direct investment, along with a stable international financial system, are vital complements to national development efforts;

8. *Expresses its concern* that, while the least developed countries are in need of increased global support, bilateral official development assistance to the least developed countries declined by 3.0 per cent in real terms in 2018 compared with 2017, and, expressing its appreciation to those few countries that have met or surpassed their commitments to 0.7 per cent of gross national income for official development assistance to developing countries and the target of 0.15 to 0.20 per cent of gross national income for official development assistance to the least developed countries, calls upon official development assistance providers to fulfil their respective official development assistance commitments to the least developed countries, and encourages official development assistance providers to consider setting a target to provide at least 0.2 per cent of gross national income for official development assistance to the least developed countries, while reiterating that an important use of international public finance, including official development assistance, is to catalyse additional resource mobilization from other sources, public and private;

9. *Reaffirms* that the promotion of gender equality and empowerment of all women and girls, in accordance with the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action¹¹ and the outcomes of relevant United Nations conferences and resolutions of the General Assembly, including through investing in the development of women and girls and promoting their economic and political participation and equal access to economic and productive resources and education, is of fundamental importance and has a multiplier effect for achieving sustained and inclusive economic growth, poverty eradication and sustainable development;

¹¹ *Report of the Fourth World Conference on Women, Beijing, 4–15 September 1995* (United Nations publication, Sales No. E.96.IV.13), chap. I, resolution 1, annexes I and II.

10. *Recalls* the recognition in the Political Declaration of the Comprehensive High-level Midterm Review of the Implementation of the Istanbul Programme of Action for the Least Developed Countries for the Decade 2011–2020¹² of the importance of the reviews by the Committee for Development Policy of the graduation criteria for the least developed countries, and the recommendation in the Political Declaration that the reviews be comprehensive, taking into account all aspects of the evolving international development context, including relevant agendas, and in this regard recalls the decision of the Committee to implement a multi-year work programme for a comprehensive review of the least developed country criteria¹³ and looks forward to its outcome;

11. *Congratulates* those countries that have met the criteria for graduation from least developed country status, notes with appreciation that several least developed countries have expressed their intention to reach the status of graduation by 2020, invites those countries to start the preparations for their graduation and transition strategy, and requests all relevant organizations of the United Nations system, led by the Office of the High Representative for the Least Developed Countries, Landlocked Developing Countries and Small Island Developing States, to extend the necessary support in this regard, in a coordinated manner, and in this regard welcomes the establishment of the inter-agency task force on graduation and smooth transition by the Office of the High Representative;

12. *Reiterates* that wider recognition of least developed country status could stimulate and facilitate better integration of the Istanbul Programme of Action into development policies, and in this regard recalls the survey conducted by the Committee for Development Policy to collect information on the recognition and application of the least developed country category by entities of the United Nations development system and the recommendations of the Committee;¹⁴

13. *Recalls* the decision contained in the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development that effective linkages will be made with the follow-up and review arrangements of all relevant United Nations conferences and processes, including on the least developed countries, underlines the importance of strong synergy in the implementation of the recently adopted agendas and the Istanbul Programme of Action at the national and subnational levels, and encourages coordination and coherence in the follow-up of their implementation;

14. *Welcomes* the increase in the share of expenditure for operational activities for development of the United Nations system in the least developed countries in 2017, which reached 47.7 per cent of total expenditures at the country level, while noting that in 2012 the system contributed 51 per cent, urges the United Nations development system to continue to prioritize allocations to the least developed countries by developing operational guidelines, while reaffirming that the least developed countries, as the most vulnerable group of countries, need enhanced support to overcome structural challenges that they face in implementing the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, and requests the United Nations development system to provide assistance to graduating countries in the formulation and implementation of their national transition strategies and to consider country-specific support for graduated countries for a fixed period of time and in a predictable manner;

¹² General Assembly resolution 70/294, annex.

¹³ *Official Records of the Economic and Social Council, 2017, Supplement No. 13 (E/2017/33)*, chap. I, sect. B, para. 12.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, sect. A, para. 5.

15. *Invites*, in this regard, the United Nations development system to prioritize allocations to the least developed countries by developing operational guidelines with clear budget targets, as appropriate;

16. *Welcomes with appreciation and endorses* the generous offer of the Government of Qatar to host the Fifth United Nations Conference on the Least Developed Countries in Doha at the highest possible level, including Heads of State and Government, in 2021 for a duration of not more than five working days;

17. *Recalls* that, pursuant to General Assembly resolution [73/242](#), the meetings of the preparatory committee for the Conference will be preceded by two regional preparatory meetings, each no longer than three days, one in collaboration with the Economic Commission for Africa and the other in collaboration with the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific, in the context of the regular annual session of each Commission, with those regional meetings to be supported by broad-based and inclusive country-level preparations;

18. *Calls upon* Governments, intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations, major groups and other donors to contribute in a timely manner to the trust fund in support of activities undertaken by the Office of the High Representative to support the implementation, follow-up and monitoring of the Istanbul Programme of Action and the participation of the representatives from the least developed countries in the high-level political forum on sustainable development of the Economic and Social Council as well as in other relevant forums and the preparatory process of the Conference, and in this regard expresses its appreciation to those countries that have made voluntary contributions to the trust fund;

19. *Requests* the Secretary-General to submit to the Council at its 2020 session, under the sub-item entitled “Review and coordination of the implementation of the Programme of Action for the Least Developed Countries for the Decade 2011–2020” of the item entitled “Implementation of and follow-up to major United Nations conferences and summits”, a progress report on the implementation of the Programme of Action.

*20th plenary meeting
6 June 2019*