Statement by

Mrs. Rajani Patil
Hon’ble Member of Parliament
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On Agenda Item 22: “Groups of countries in special situations:
(a) Follow-up to the Fourth United Nations Conference on the
Least Developed Countries;
(b) Comprehensive 10-year Review Conference on the
Implementation of the Almaty Programme of Action”

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Mr. Chairperson,

India associates itself with the statement made by the distinguished representative of Fiji on behalf of G-77.

Mr. Chairperson,

The Least Developed Countries (LDCs) and the Landlocked Developing Countries (LLDCs) face unique developmental challenges and need the sustained support of the international community.

In the interconnected world of today, it is important that we approach the issues of LDCs and LLDCs through the lens of solidarity and as a vision of our common destiny. Their development is the common development of all.

Unless we are able to ensure rapid, sustained and inclusive development in the LDCs and LLDCs, we can hardly expect to make any headway in achieving the internationally agreed development goals including the MDGs.

It is equally important that the concerns and priorities of the LDCs and LLDCs are given priority in our deliberations for a Post-2015 Development Agenda.

Mr. Chairperson,

Unfortunately, the first year of implementation of the Istanbul Programme of Action has witnessed a deceleration of growth rates in the LDCs. Structural transformation has not taken hold in most LDCs. Share of manufacturing in their GDP remains low and lack of energy access remains a critical weakness.

Mr. Chairperson,

ODA accounts for over half of all external financing available to the LDCs to close their savings gap.

Unfortunately, ODA levels have now fallen for two consecutive years. ODA flows to LDCs have declined even more drastically. This is a matter of serious concern.
Mobilization of resources for development in LDCs must receive our highest attention. Past ODA commitments for LDCs must be met urgently.

ODA commitments to LDCs need to be further scaled up in the post-2015 period so that the ambitious target of half of LDCs graduating by 2020 can be realized.

We must work for the early conclusion of the Doha Round to create more space for the LDCs in global trade. We must also prioritize technology transfer, enhanced market access, debt relief, creation of infrastructure and building of productive capacity in the LDCs to promote structural transformation of their economies.

Mr. Chairperson,

India remains fully committed to timely and effective implementation of the Istanbul Programme of Action (IPoA). India has offered One Billion Dollars worth of Lines of Credit to the LDCs. We have also allocated Five Million US Dollars for the follow-up of the Istanbul Programme.

We are confident that these measures will assist the LDCs in meeting the objectives of the Istanbul Programme of Action.

Mr. Chairperson,

India is deeply sensitive to the significant geographical difficulties faced by Landlocked Developing Countries that place them at a distinct disadvantage as far as international trade and economic linkages are concerned.

The Almaty Programme of Action has led to encouraging results.

It is important that the international community continues and strengthens its support to the LLDCs in the coming decade.

The objective of our efforts in the coming decade should be to promote greater structural transformation in the LLDCs, create infrastructure and build strong productive capacities in order to improve trade performance and enhance their integration with the world economy.
An effective solution to the problems faced by the LLDCs must also address the constraints and challenges faced by the transit developing countries that neighbour them.

India has special bilateral cooperation agreements with its landlocked neighbours for easy transit of their goods through India. We accord the highest priority to further strengthening our ties with these countries to support their economic development.

Mr. Chairperson,

We are happy that South-South Cooperation has meaningfully supplemented international efforts for supporting the LDCs and LLDCs.

The report of the Secretary General has pointed out that corporations from the South, in particular from India and China accounted for 41% of FDI inflows into LLDCs in 2011 and that Southern providers accounted for 47% of official infrastructure financing in sub-Saharan Africa from 2001 to 2008.

Large developing countries have emerged as important trade partners for LDCs and LLDCs. In fact, over 50% of the exports of LDCs now go to developing economies.

India has already extended duty free tariff preference scheme to all the LDCs.

India will continue to contribute enhanced economic and technical support to the development efforts of the LDCs and LLDCs as part of South-South cooperation.

Yet, efforts of countries like India through South-South Cooperation can only complement the provision of resources from our developed partners, which needs to be scaled up urgently.

Mr. Chairperson,

We look forward to working closely with all our LLDCs partners for an ambitious, comprehensive and balanced outcome to the 10-year review conference on LLDCs in year 2014.
In the spirit of our long standing solidarity and partnership with them, India has made a financial contribution of One Hundred Thousand US Dollars for the organization of the Conference on LLDC.

In conclusion Mr. Chairperson,

Let me reiterate the high level political commitment of India to work closely in partnership with our LDCs and LLDCs partners to assist them in their efforts to pursue rapid, sustained and inclusive economic growth, eradicate poverty and mainstream sustainable development.

I thank you.