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**Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific****Seventy-fourth session**

Bangkok, 11–16 May 2018

Agenda item 2

**Special Body on Least Developed, Landlocked  
Developing and Pacific Island Developing Countries****Draft resolution****Sponsored by: Bangladesh****Co-sponsored by: Bhutan, Cambodia, China, Nepal and Timor-Leste****Supporting the smooth transition of the least developed  
countries in Asia and the Pacific towards a sustainable  
graduation***The Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific,*

*Recalling* the Istanbul Declaration<sup>1</sup> and the Programme of Action for the Least Developed Countries for the Decade 2011–2020,<sup>2</sup> adopted at the Fourth United Nations Conference on the Least Developed Countries and endorsed by the General Assembly in its resolution 65/280 of 17 June 2011, in which States Members of the United Nations committed to assisting the least developed countries with an overarching goal of enabling half of them to meet the criteria for graduation by 2020, through the eradication of poverty and the achievement of accelerated, sustained, inclusive and equitable growth and sustainable development,

*Recalling also* General Assembly resolution 70/1 of 25 September 2015, entitled “Transforming our world: the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development”, in which, inter alia, it was recognized that the least developed countries faced specific challenges in their pursuit of sustainable development and deserved special attention,

*Recalling further* 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 2011–2020, held in Antalya, Turkey, from 27 to 29 May 2016, endorsed by the General Assembly in its resolution 70/294 of 25 July 2016 and annexed thereto, in which the

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

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, chap. II.

participants at the Comprehensive High-level Midterm Review recognized the need to provide well-coordinated support so that the goal of enabling the least developed countries to meet the criteria for graduation by 2020 could be realized,

*Recognizing*, in this regard, the progress made by Asia-Pacific least developed countries, despite their structural challenges, in achieving the goals and targets of the Istanbul Programme of Action, particularly the aim of enabling half the number of least developed countries to meet the criteria for graduation by 2020,

*Congratulating* those countries in the Asian and Pacific region that have already successfully graduated from least developed country status, and noting with appreciation that some least developed countries have been recommended for graduation, including Kiribati, Tuvalu and Vanuatu, that some least developed countries have been found eligible for graduation for the second consecutive time, including Bhutan, Nepal, Solomon Islands and Timor-Leste, and that some least developed countries met the eligibility criteria for graduation for the first time at the triennial review of the Committee for Development Policy in March 2018, including Bangladesh, which is the largest least developed country in the category, the Lao People's Democratic Republic and Myanmar,

*Taking into account* 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,

*Emphasizing* that the smooth transition of Asian and Pacific countries from the list of least developed countries is vital to ensuring that these countries are eased onto a sustainable graduation and development path without any disruption to their development plans, programmes and projects,

*Acknowledging* that the graduation of Asia-Pacific least developed countries symbolizes their considerable long-term socioeconomic progress in prevailing over the structural handicaps to socioeconomic development, and that it also presents many challenges for graduated countries, which continue to face vulnerabilities to various shocks and crises,

*Welcoming* the efforts of the Government of Bhutan in convening, in collaboration with the secretariat, a regional capacity-building workshop on formulating national policies and strategies in preparation for graduation, in Thimphu in November 2017, and of the Government of Bangladesh in convening, in collaboration with the Office of the High Representative for the Least Developed Countries, Landlocked Developing Countries and Small Island Developing States, the High-level Meeting on Achieving Sustainable Graduation for the Least Developed Countries, in Dhaka on 29 and 30 November 2017, and noting their outcomes,<sup>3</sup>

*Recalling* resolution 71/2 of 29 May 2015 of the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific on the implementation of the Istanbul Programme of Action in Asia and the Pacific, in which the Commission, inter alia, requested the Executive Secretary to assist Asia-Pacific least developed countries to build their capacities for appropriate policy responses to accelerate their structural transformation, and recalling that the final review of the Programme of Action is scheduled for 2020,

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<sup>3</sup> See [www.unescap.org/events/csn-ldc-workshop-in-cambodia](http://www.unescap.org/events/csn-ldc-workshop-in-cambodia) and [www.unescap.org/events/csn-ldc-workshop-in-bhutan](http://www.unescap.org/events/csn-ldc-workshop-in-bhutan).

1. *Recognizes* that the graduation process of least developed countries should be coupled with an appropriate package of incentives and support measures in order to not jeopardize their development process;

2. *Invites* graduating countries from the Asian and Pacific region to start the preparations for their graduation and transition strategy, and invites all relevant organizations of the United Nations system, in a coordinated manner, led by the Office of the High Representative for the Least Developed Countries, Landlocked Developing Countries and Small Island Developing States, in collaboration with the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific, to extend necessary support in this regard;

3. *Invites* the international community and development partners to continue to support graduating least developed countries in the Asian and Pacific region in the implementation of transition strategies and to avoid any abrupt reductions in financial and technical assistance;

4. *Calls upon* providers of official development assistance to fulfil their respective commitments to the least developed countries, and reiterates that an important use of international public finance, including official development assistance, is to catalyse additional resource mobilization from other sources, public and private;

5. *Invites* development partners to make available in a timely manner information about country-specific development aid measures, including smooth transition measures for the least developed countries in the areas of financial support and technical assistance, covering, inter alia, their time frames, characteristics and modalities;

6. *Expresses its serious concern* at the fact that the share of expenditure for operational activities for the development of the United Nations system in the least developed countries is declining, and invites the United Nations development system to continue to prioritize allocations to least developed countries, reaffirming them as the most vulnerable group of countries, and to provide assistance to graduating countries in the formulation and implementation of their national transition strategies;

7. *Requests* the Executive Secretary:

(a) To encourage high-level policy dialogue among the least developed countries, including countries in the process of graduation and countries that have already graduated in the Asia-Pacific region, inviting relevant development partners and organizations of the United Nations system to share experiences and lessons learned in the context of a smooth transition and sustainable graduation, including during the annual sessions of the Commission and other intergovernmental meetings, as appropriate;

(b) To provide, upon request, targeted assistance, through capacity-building and policy analysis to graduating countries, within existing mandates and resources, to support the formulation and implementation of smooth national transition strategies towards sustainable graduation;

(c) To carry out, in line with ongoing work, publications and knowledge products, a needs assessment, before the final review, in 2020, of the Programme of Action for the Least Developed Countries for the Decade 2011–2020,<sup>2</sup> on how to support, in a coordinated manner, the least developed countries of the Asia-Pacific region in their graduation and smooth transition;

(d) To submit to the Commission at its seventy-sixth session a report on progress in the implementation of the present resolution.

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