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Follow-up and implementation of the Vienna Declaration and Programme of Action

Written statement* submitted by the Organisation internationale pour les pays les moins avancés (OIPMA), a non-governmental organization in special consultative status

The Secretary-General has received the following written statement which is circulated in accordance with Economic and Social Council resolution 1996/31.

[8 February 2019]

* Issued as received, in the language(s) of submission only.



Sustainable development and the goals of the 2030 agenda

Sustainable development entails four dimensions of society: economic development (including the end of extreme poverty), social inclusion, environmental sustainability, and good governance including peace and security. The “Organisation Internationale pour les Pays les Moins Avancés” (OIPMA) / The International Organization for Least Developed Countries (IOLDCs) considers the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development as an essential guideline that must be present in any multi-level policy and legislation.

As such, OIPMA welcomes the 6 elements stated by the United Nations Secretary-General to help frame and reinforce the sustainable development agenda and to ensure delivery at the country level: (1) dignity - to end poverty and fight inequality; (2) people - to ensure healthy lives, knowledge and the inclusion of women and children; (3) prosperity to grow a strong, inclusive and transformative economy; (4) planet - to protect our ecosystems for all societies and our children; (5) justice - to promote safe and peaceful societies and strong institutions; and (6) partnership - to catalyse global solidarity for sustainable development.

It is essential to link peace, development, and human rights with a universal approach to address economic growth, social justice, and environmental challenges.

Focusing on some Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), OIPMA is extremely committed with the development of LDCs and the fulfilment of the SDGs under the mandate of the organization.

The organization acknowledges that eradicating poverty in all its forms remains one of the greatest challenges facing humanity. While the number of people living in extreme poverty dropped by more than half between 1990 and 2015 – from 1.9 billion to 836 million – too many are still struggling for the most basic human needs.

Progress in eradicating extreme poverty has been incremental and widespread but the persistence of poverty, including extreme poverty remains a major concern in Africa, the LDCs, small island developing States, in some middle-income countries, and countries in situations of conflict and post-conflict countries.

OIPMA believes that poverty is one of the root causes of many conflicts, death, malnutrition, lack of adequate health and education and an impediment for the fulfilment of many other human rights.

Regarding hunger, this can be eliminated within this lifetime, if we create better opportunities for farmers and focus on the needs of undernourished groups. Sustainability means using fewer natural resources to produce food and reducing food waste and loss. Improved nutrition means reducing both hunger and obesity through improved education, and access and availability of quality foods.

In terms of health, despite this incredible progress, more than 6 million children still die before their fifth birthday every year. 16,000 children die each day from preventable diseases such as measles and tuberculosis. Every day hundreds of women die during pregnancy or from childbirth related complications. In many rural areas, only 56% of births are attended by skilled professionals. AIDS is now the leading cause of death among teenagers in sub-Saharan Africa, a region still severely devastated by the HIV epidemic. Climate change affects the social and environmental determinants of health – clean air, safe drinking water, enough food and secure shelter- by heat waves, sea-level rise, flooding, changing rainfall patterns and storms, desertification, etc. Between 2030 and 2050, climate change is expected to cause approximately 250,000 additional deaths per year, from malnutrition, malaria, diarrhoea and heat stress.

Therefore, OIPMA urges the need for an enhanced health response to such diseases and climate change mitigation to diminish its impacts on health in LDCs.

It is vital to bear in mind that the world will not achieve any of the SDGs if girls and women are not equal partners to boys and men. We have made tremendous strides in awareness of the gender gap – from schools to boardrooms – it is time to translate these movements and campaigns into action. Workplaces, governments, healthcare and education systems must be

designed to provide a level playing field. Practices that have worked already must be adapted more broadly.

Regarding the environment, OIPMA urges the need to tackle wastewater, especially in towns and cities. This is a good way in, as 80% of it is currently not treated. Accelerating technology, partnership models and financing mechanisms to scale wastewater treatment solutions can create new reusable sources of water for industry and agriculture and free up lots more fresh water for humans and nature.

In order to hold Global Warming to 1.5°C but also funding the costs of mitigation and adaptation, accountability is necessary. Oil companies have a crucial role in causing, shaping, advancing, and defending the current unsustainable fossil fuel dependent global economy. By continuing to provide fossil fuels to feed the demand, they have been dictating the rules of the game to the global economic system.

The oil industry holds fossil fuel reserves that, if burned, will bring the planet well above the 2°C warming. Thus, to avoid exceeding that threshold, more than one-third of current oil reserves and half of the gas reserves should, in fact, be kept in the ground.

OIPMA urges the reduction of harmful environmental activities, and the rectification of the harm already done which are so-called: Decarbonization and disgorgement, respectively.

Healthy oceans provide 50% of our oxygen, 20% of our protein and 30% of our oil and gas. They are suffering. We must 1) recognize the problem; 2) form new partnerships for fishing, acidification, waste, marine transport; 3) forge new forms of regional and global governance to manage our blue commons.

OIPMA supports the idea of sustainable intensification and climate-proofing of agriculture; best practice landscape-level ecosystem management; scaled land-use planning with satellite observation; ecosystem economics and natural capital modelling; doubling down investment in sustainable rural development; empowering rural, indigenous and forest people; sorting land tenure and enforcing law, including for trafficking endangered species.

OIPMA believes in the need for new policy frameworks and solutions that give economies every chance to drive growth that is inclusive and not limited to small elites. This means looking beyond redistribution to other levers that promote broad-based increases in living standards; for example, entrepreneurship, well-functioning financial systems and the upholding of ethical values in business and public spheres.

Over 4 billion people, in almost all countries of the world, lack access to justice. Thus, OIPMA urges that helping these people have their basic human rights respected means thinking creatively about how to implement reforms that enable efficient and accountable institutions that foster peaceful societies.

Regarding LDCs, OIPMA welcomes the last report of the UN-OHRLLS, following-up the implementation of the Istanbul Programme of Action (IPoA) for LDCs.

Moreover, the organization believes on the importance of not only supporting financially the governments of LDCs, but also transferring technical and scientific skills in order to build a viable technological base, which constitutes the backbone of an economic diversification strategy. Investment promotion and improved market access as well as supply-side capacity building measures, including through Aid for Trade, need to complement improvements in the business environment of LDCs.

In addition, preparedness for disasters and adaptation to climate change must be factored into national strategies and programmes to implement the SDGs and the IPoA, for example, ensuring that new infrastructure is built to be climate-resilient.

Capacity building support should be strengthened in several areas, including to strengthen social protection and disaster preparedness, to facilitate the preparation of bankable proposals, as well as enhancing absorption capacity. Sharing best practices and lessons learned is vitally important for capacity building and thus a platform for such exchanges among LDCs should be created.

Strengthening support for building resilience should remain a priority for LDCs after graduation, both as part of the smooth transition strategy, as well as beyond, given that they are very likely to remain vulnerable for an extended period of time.

LDC graduation needs to be considered in the larger context of development. It is not only about meeting the graduation thresholds but should be based on a long-term and holistic approach towards equitable and sustainable development.

In sum, the Agenda 2030 for Sustainable development and the SDGs reflect the tasks to do, but us, stakeholders, must figure out the way towards their fulfilment. We need solidarity and cooperation interlinked with businesses, civil society, individuals and governments.
