

**Statement of Ambassador Ertugrul Apakan,
Permanent Representative of Turkey**

**to the UN Pre-Conference event on Reducing vulnerability due to
Climate Change, Climate Variability and Extremes, Land
Degradation and Biodiversity Loss: Environment and Development
Challenges and Opportunities for LDCs**

New York, 28 February 2011

Mr. High Representative,
Excellencies,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

It is a great pleasure for me to address you today on behalf of the host country of the 4th United Nations Conference on the Least Developed Countries.

This gathering is one of the most important pre-conference activities towards the 4th Conference that will be held in Istanbul on between 9 and 13 May 2011.

I would like to thank H.E. Cheick Sidi Diarra, Under-Secretary General and High Representative for the Least Developed Countries, and his Office for the organization of this timely event.

Distinguished Participants,

Climate change remains as one of the most critical and complex challenges that humanity faces today. It is not only an environmental phenomenon, but also a sustainable development issue.

Combating climate change goes beyond the capability of any single state. It requires a long term international cooperation and a strong solidarity.

LDCs have contributed the least to the emission of greenhouse gases, but they are among the most vulnerable countries to the effects of climate change.

Socio-economic development and livelihoods in the LDCs is under the threat of global warming. They are compelled to divert limited resources away from development to overcome the challenges of climate change. Moreover, their capacity and resources to mitigate and adapt climate change are not sufficient.

Therefore, LDCs urgently need additional, predictable and adequate technical and financial support to combat climate change and to sustain economic growth.

Distinguished Participants,

The loss of biodiversity and related changes in the environment are now faster than ever before. Irreversible degradation is taking place in natural ecosystems. But, there is no sign of this process slowing down. Unlike climate change, a general lack of public awareness in loss of biodiversity is an issue still persists.

Forest degradation, drought, pollution as well as conversion of forest land into agricultural land and unsustainable agricultural practices are creating a heavy toll on biodiversity in the LDCs.

Furthermore, land degradation is a widespread phenomenon in these countries. Together with loss of biodiversity, it not only creates ecological imbalances but also decreases agricultural production and the quality of life.

Restoring biodiversity and halting land degradation will certainly contribute to the sustainable development and economic growth of the LDCs.

Distinguished Participants,

The most important aspect of climate change is the erratic behaviour of precipitation that results in several other types of physical changes and impacts. They include, depending upon location and other natural environmental contexts of countries, floods, droughts, excessive rains, sea level rise, glacial melt, erosion and land degradation.

The LDCs will continue to suffer from more severe and frequent natural disasters, which are among the most serious impediments to sustainable development and poverty eradication.

When affected by a natural disaster, the LDCs are dependent on external aid, as they do not have the necessary capacity and funds for immediate response.

The observations show a trend of decreased precipitation in semi-arid and arid parts of Africa and Asia, where many LDCs are situated.

Water related changes have direct consequences on human systems in the LDCs. Take for example agriculture. Water scarcity adversely affects agricultural production and threatens food security and livelihoods. This could lead to migration of populations to other areas with better living conditions.

Distinguished Participants,

LDCs should develop their institutional and human capacities to cope with climate change, land degradation and biodiversity losses. Integration of environment and climate change issues in national development thinking, planning and practice is central in this context. An immediate and substantial scope for greater protection biodiversity and land resources should be put in place over different time frames with concrete targets.

LDCs need to implement national adaptation and mitigation programmes with medium and long-term perspectives, including comprehensive reforestation and afforestation schemes. Preferential access to advanced and clean technologies is critical to implementation of these programmes.

While the LDCs emit only a limited amount of greenhouse gases, new opportunities exist for the LDCs to enhance climate and environment friendly economic growth. This is a win-win situation particularly because such efforts are now pledged to be supported through technology transfer and finance.

LDCs' renewable energy resources provide a sustainable source of employment and livelihood while reducing dependency on fossil fuels and contributing to mitigation efforts.

Disaster preparedness level of the LDCs need to be increased through risk management plans and measures, early warning systems and appropriate infrastructure.

Agricultural sector and water management in the LDCs need to be strengthened in an integrated manner. Collection and processing of hydrological, agro-climatic and socio-economic data are central in this regard. Furthermore, water storage and irrigation could increase crop yields and improve food security. Needless to say, these actions require increased resources and investment.

The negative effects of climate change on the hydrological regimes also necessitate priority attention to avoid any inter-sectoral and trans-boundary water conflicts.

I believe that the Istanbul Programme of Action to be adopted in the 4th Conference will be a milestone in the overall development of the LDCs with its environment dimension. It would open new horizons for sustainable development and ecosystem protection in the LDCs with renewed partnerships and support measures.

Distinguished Participants,

The 16th Conference of the Parties to the UN Framework Convention to Climate Change ended last December in Cancun in frank success. Intense negotiations have led to a substantial deal on several issues, including finance and technology.

The Cancun Conference confirmed support for the LDCs to help them cope with global warming.

Commitments made by the developed countries in Copenhagen in 2009 to provide fast-track financing for the period of 2010-2013 were reaffirmed in Cancun. In this context, new and additional resources of almost 30 billion US dollars will be mobilized in the short run, targeting the most vulnerable developing countries, namely the LDCs and the Small Island Developing States.

In addition, the Green Climate Fund is created to deploy 100 billion US dollars per year until 2020 to protect poor and vulnerable nations against climate impacts and assist them with low-carbon development.

Parties resolved to deploy, diffuse and transfer environmentally sound technologies and know-how in developing countries as well as to increase public and private investments.

In addition to the special LDC fund under the UN Framework Convention to Climate Change, these are the significant achievements in Cancun in connection to the LDCs.

Excellencies,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

In concluding, I would like to reiterate Turkey's determination to make the 4th Conference a success, which, we trust, would create a new momentum with renewed commitments, reinforced partnerships and concrete action.

It is also our conviction that the outcome of the 4th Conference will be synchronized with other ongoing international processes with a view to improving the access of the LDCs to resources in various environment and climate funds.

Thank you.