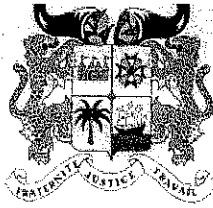


*Mission Permanente
de la République du Bénin
auprès des Nations Unies*



*Permanent Mission of
the Republic of Benin
to the United Nations*

SIXTY SEVENTH SESSION OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY

INFORMAL CONSULTATIONS OF THE OWG ON SDGs

(Employment and decent work for all, social protection, youth, education and culture)

**STATEMENT
BY**

**H.E. MR. JEAN -FRANCIS R. ZINSOU
AMBASSADOR PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF BENIN
TO THE UNITED NATIONS,
CHAIR OF THE GLOBAL COORDINATION BUREAU OF LDCs**

NEW YORK, 17 JUNE 2013

125 East 38th Street, New York NY 10016 - Tel: 212 684 1339 - Fax: 212 684 2058

Email: beninewyork@gmail.com

Messieurs les Co-Présidents,

Je voudrais vous remercier pour les bonnes dispositions que vous avez prises pour l'organisation de cette session qui portent sur des questions d'importance cruciale pour le développement durable.

Distinguished co-chairs,
Excellencies
Ladies and Gentlemen,

I have the honor to deliver this statement on behalf of LDCs. This statement complements the presentation of the G77 and China.

Employment and decent work

The population of LDCs is projected to double to 1.67 billion by 2050, with about 15 million entering the working age population every year. Unemployment, underemployment and disguised unemployment are common phenomena in LDCs. The high prevalence of working poor in LDCs, with an estimated share of 60 per cent over total employment, is major challenge. This share for the developing world has come down to 32.1 per cent in 2012 from 55.2 per cent in 2000.

Around 71% of the population of LDCs are living in rural areas, remaining trapped in informal jobs with insufficient wages, uncertain prospects and limited protection from social, economic and environmental risks.

In LDCs, high economic growth of the past decade has not translated into corresponding level of employment generation. Therefore, their unemployment remains at a higher band range. An ILO study suggests that LDCs need a rate of employment growth of 7 per cent to achieve MDG 1, against the growth of 2.9 per cent per annum over the years 2000–09.

What is mostly needed now is to foster the creation of new employment and decent work for all which should also be a goal of the next development agenda. We need to trigger the main engine of job creation. Promoting structural transformation will have to be a key part of the policy packages to promote employment and decent work for all.

LDCs need to implement policies that facilitate the transition from the informal to the formal economy and to support micro- and small- and medium-sized enterprises. Innovative programmes such as employment guarantee schemes can provide poor workers with a minimum employment floor. Introduction of a basic set of essential social transfers and services can also lead to a sustainable growth and development framework.

LDCs need enhanced international support to build their productive capacities to reach the goal of full employment and decent work for all.

Social Protection

Istanbul Programme of Action aptly recognizes that social protection has both short- and long-term benefits to sustainable economic growth, poverty eradication and social stability. Social protection systems, including cash transfers, public work programmes, and unemployment benefits, protect the poor and support growth, employment and broader economic resilience. These systems act as stabilizers for the economy, bolster the resilience of the poor and help prevent people from falling into poverty.

We need to ensure that every man and women, boys and girls in LDCs are covered by social protection schemes by ensuring essential social services and economic needs. This should also be a goal of the next development agenda. This requires adequate resources, capacity-building and appropriate financial infrastructure for the functioning of social protection systems such as cash transfers, food for work, food for education, un-employment and disabled benefits etc. Sharing of experiences and best practices between countries can help LDCs benefit from other success stories.

It is a matter of grave concern that due to a variety of constraints, LDCs are not been able to provide secured social protection schemes. Traditional social insurance policies are not sufficient due to informal nature of the labor market in LDCs. Development partners must provide adequate financial and technical support to least developed countries to develop and implement social protection policies and programmes, especially for poor and disadvantaged groups.

Youth

The population of LDCs is expected to nearly double and increase to 1.67 billion between now and 2050. The high population growth in LDCs will result in a large and growing youth population. Today about 60 per cent of the population in LDCs is under the age of 25, and the number of young people in the LDCs will increase by more than 60 per cent over the next forty years. Large youth populations of LDCs are no doubt an asset for LDCs, given they are provided with necessary opportunities.

It is vitally important that the youth population, especially the women and girls, have access to secondary and higher education, vocational training and productive employment, health-care services, and access to inclusive financial sector with entrepreneurship skill. This should be a goal of the SDGs.

In the Istanbul Programme of Action, development partners have promised to :

- (a) Provide financial and technical assistance to support least developed countries' policies and programmes that provide economic opportunities and productive employment to youth;
- (b) Support formal and non-formal education systems in least developed countries for capacity-building and skill development of youth and adolescent through financial and technical assistance;
- (c) Promote youth exchange programmes, including through virtual campuses and other networking mechanisms.

And more specifically, the Heads of State and Government who met in Rio+20 stressed in the paragraph 24 of the Outcome document the following:

"We express deep concern about the continuing high level of employment and underemployment particularly among young people, and note the need for sustainable development strategies to proactively address youth employment at all levels. In this regard, we recognize the need for a global strategy on youth and employment building on the work of the International Labour Organization." These commitments need to be fully honored and reflected in the SDGs.

Education and culture

We are deeply concerned that in LDCs one quarter of young men aged 15 to 24 and one third of young women aged 15 to 24 are still illiterate. Many LDCs persistently displayed low survival and completion rates into the schools. The combination of poorly trained teachers and crowded classrooms impaired learning outcomes.

In most LDCs, poor outcomes in primary education inhibited improved enrolment and completion rates in secondary and vocational education. Moreover, the quality of education and access to education by marginalized groups continued to remain a major issue for LDCs. While tertiary enrolment rates continued to rise in LDCs, quality seemed to have deteriorated partly because new entrants are often insufficiently equipped for higher education. Other factors included inadequate laboratories and library facilities and very limited use of information and communication technologies.

The next development agenda should set a goal of universal access and quality completion of primary, secondary and tertiary education. This is necessary for developing knowledge and skills, including technical and vocational, that are relevant to the worlds of work and life as well as to strengthen the role of culture and creativity in society.

LDCs need to strengthen and implement strategies and programmes for national education, technical and vocational education and training and strengthen national education

systems, including through better curricula, financing, teacher development and deployment, and improvement in basic infrastructure and providing adequate supplies.

In the Istanbul Programme of Action, the development partners, have made the following commitments:

(a) Provide financial and technical support for LDCs to implement their national education plans and programmes, including increased accessibility in rural and remote areas;

(b) Support LDCs to go beyond MDG targets in education, especially in increasing enrolment and decreasing dropout rates through measures such as abolishing school fees, providing school meals and ensuring that schools have separate sanitation facilities for boys and girls;

(c) Provide support to LDCs efforts to train and retain teachers and trainers, particularly in rural and underserved areas, through adequate incentives, as a means to ensure quality education;

(d) Support LDCs efforts to improve higher educational and technical and vocational education and training;

(e) Continue providing, and encourage, as appropriate, higher education institutes to allocate, places and scholarships for students and trainees from least developed countries, in particular in the fields of science, technology, business management and economics. These need to be honoured and fully reflected in the SDGs.

I thank you all for your kind attention.