



PRESS RELEASE



OFFICE OF THE HIGH REPRESENTATIVE FOR THE LEAST DEVELOPED COUNTRIES,
LANDLOCKED DEVELOPING COUNTRIES AND SMALL ISLAND DEVELOPING STATES

UN launches leadership programme for poorest countries

The United Nations has launched a programme to develop leadership capacity at the country level in the Least Developed Countries (LDCs).

Using innovative methods that have proven successful in development and corporate worlds, the programme will enhance leadership capacity at various levels in participating LDCs to address core development challenges, ranging from HIV/AIDS to poverty. It will be implemented in partnership with UN agencies, donor countries and civil society organizations. It will target the youth and women.

“This is a very important initiative that will build the capacity of LDCs to address major development concerns in a sustainable manner by tapping the unique strengths of individuals, communities and organizations in those countries,” said Anwarul K. Chowdhury, the High Representative for the Least Developed Countries, Landlocked Developing Countries and Small Island Developing States during the launch at the United Nations on Wednesday, 25 April.

Mr. Chowdhury said that the programme was a timely response to the observation made during the midterm review of the Programme of Action for LDCs last year. At their ministerial meeting in Cotonou, Benin, in June, LDCs called for “support to LDCs in their efforts for leadership and capacity development with special focus on the young people and women.”

The programme will initially be implemented in 9 LDCs - Cambodia, Djibouti, Ethiopia, Senegal, Somalia, Sudan, Uganda, Yemen and Zambia. Mr. Chowdhury said that the programme will be extended to 20 LDCs by the end of the year, with the target of covering all the 50 LDCs in the following year.

In Senegal, the programme, to be implemented in partnership with UNDP, will begin with the training of 50 “champions for change”. Over the next two years, 100 women and 100 youth leaders as well as 100 civil society organizations will be assisted to sharpen their leadership capacity. The programme in Senegal, known as “Senti Eleuk, Teeru Ko” (Looking into the future and preparing for it) aims to generate at least 50 “breakthrough” initiatives which will be implemented by the local communities themselves to tackle their main development concerns.

The launch of the programme was attended by delegates from the participating countries, partner UN agencies and a representative of civil society.

The Permanent Representative of the Mission of Sudan to the United Nations, Mr. Abdalmahmood Abdalhaleem Mohamd, commended the initiative’s focus on the youth and women, and the fact that the specific development challenges to be addressed will be decided by the communities involved.

The Permanent Representative of the Mission of Zambia, Mr. Tens C. Kapoma and the Permanent Representative of the Mission of Somalia, Mr. Elmi A. Duale also welcomed the initiative as an important step in the implementation of the Programme of Action for LDCs and in making progress towards the Millennium Development Goals.

The Deputy Executive Director of UNICEF, Mr. Kul Gautam, observed that a large proportion of the population of LDCs is composed of young people, who could be a major resource of given the necessary opportunities, but also a reservoir for discontent if neglected.

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