

Permanent Mission of India
Geneva

**62nd Executive Session of the Trade and
Development Board of UNCTAD**
(Geneva, 25-27 January 2016)

**Agenda Item 2: “The Least Developed Countries
Report 2015: Transforming Rural Economies”**

Statement by India

Thank you Mr. President,

My delegation would like to thank the Secretary-General for his incisive opening remarks and the UNCTAD Secretariat for a comprehensive and well researched report reflecting the development challenges faced by the LDCs and for emphasizing the imperative for transforming their rural economies. We also thank Mr. Tesfachew for his detailed presentation.

Mr President,

2. At the outset we align with the statements made by the Ambassador of Jamaica on behalf of the G77 and China; and the delegation of Philippines on behalf of the Asia –Pacific Group. The LDC Report has come at a crucial point of time; Adoption of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development represents a paradigm shift in the development initiative. The SDGs have established a collectively agreed set of universal goals for an inclusive and sustainable global development. As

we move from adoption to the implementation, the focus on LDCs is extremely important for effectively achieving the SDGs globally.

3. With two thirds of its population living in rural areas, India looks at the report with great interest. India welcomes the Report's analysis of the critical determinants of rural development in all countries particularly in the LDCs, including agricultural productivity, structural transformation and gender-based approaches and values its constructive recommendations.

4. We agree with the conclusion of the Report that well integrated national and international efforts towards technology generation and innovation diffusion can make a major contribution to raising agricultural productivity. We take note of the approach outlined in the Report towards economically sustainable poverty eradication through a process of poverty-oriented structural transformation (POST), ensuring equal productive opportunities for all. The report has aptly highlighted finance, technology, human resources, innovation and institutions as the key policy areas to focus in each of the determinants of rural development.

Mr. President,

5. India has a vibrant and largescale programme of cooperation with all the forty-eight LDCs, spanning a large spectrum of human activity including agriculture development, information technology, irrigation, aquaculture, disaster management, remote sensing, telemedicine, textile

engineering, accounting and finance, clean technologies, rural development, and SMEs. India unilaterally put in place a duty-free market access scheme for LDCs and also of Preferential Treatment to LDCs in Trade in Services in respect of market access; technical assistance and capacity building; and waiver of visa fees for LDC applicants applying for Indian business and employment visas.

6. Support and assistance for the LDCs have always been an important theme of India's regional engagements, be it in our neighbourhood in Asia, our special relations with Africa or with the Pacific Island Countries. The Third India Africa Forum Summit held in New Delhi October last year, saw participation of all the 34 out of the 48 LDCs belonging to Africa. I am happy to note that some of the policy recommendations in the Report have resonance with the productive discussions we had during the Summit on human resource development, setting up of institutions in Africa and the increased use of technology. India is committed to expand and extend the Pan Africa E-Network, which links African countries including the LDCs to India and to each other and to reduce the digital divide within Africa and between Africa and rest of the world. We think this will play a crucial role in transforming rural economies. There is growing investment by Indian companies in Africa in a broad range of sectors, which is bringing in capital and technology and leading to diversification of economic activity while also generating employment.

7. India's commitment to the LDCs was also demonstrated during the Second Forum for India Pacific Island Countries Summit held in August 2015, where it was announced that India will establish at least one information technology laboratory in each of the Pacific Island countries and offered to support the development of MSMEs and purchase of agricultural machinery.

8. My delegation also wishes to highlight the importance of ODA to LDCs in their transformation of rural economies, which in turn can help in effective realization of the SDGs by 2030. In this context we urge the Developed Countries to make available timely and quality ODA as committed under SDG 17.

Mr. President

9. The LDC Report 2015 is a timely document that places rural economic transformation at the centre of the development discourse in UNCTAD. We hope that the discussions on the Report will be able to guide our efforts to support the LDCs towards the effective implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals.

I thank you Mr. President.
