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Fantu Cheru, director of the Nordic Africa Institute, is among a long list of intellectuals involved in the Academic Council



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Lack of access to a clean water supply results in the deaths of 4,000 children each day, according to End Water Poverty

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İSTANBUL NEWSLETTER



THURSDAY, MAY 12, 2011

GULER SABANCI
 SABANCI HOLDING CHAIRWOMAN



TURKEY MOVES TO PROMOTE WOMEN'S RIGHTS

Many important steps taken by the government in the past couple of years to further promote women's rights have had positive effects on women's lives in Turkey, including eliminating obstacles in the work life of women, raising their living standards, maintaining the continuity of the prosperous family and providing more opportunities to women in political life. **SEE STORY ON PAGE 02**

AHMET DAVUTOĞLU
 TURKISH FOREIGN MINISTER



İSTANBUL NEW HOME OF UNFPA REGIONAL OFFICE

Turkish Foreign Minister Ahmet Davutoglu opened the UN Population Fund (UNFPA) Eastern Europe and Central Asia Regional Office (EECARO) in Istanbul. In a speech he delivered, Davutoglu said the UNFPA's projects are of major importance to Turkish society and play a significant role in raising awareness of the issues and contributing to Turkey's development efforts. **SEE STORY ON PAGE 08**



Representatives from various nations are currently in Istanbul to attend the Fourth United Nations Conference on the Least Developed Countries.

LDC LEADERS: CONFERENCE WILL BOOST GLOBAL COOPERATION

At the plenary meeting of the Fourth United Nations Conference on the Least Developed Countries (LDC-IV), leaders of participating countries expressed the belief that the conference will mark an era of cooperation between the LDCs and the global community. "Global progress will only be complete when 880 million plus people, engulfed by poverty and underdevelopment, achieve decent and dignified lives. This is only possible with unity and the determination of all nations to reverse the process of marginalization of LDCs. This calls for genuinely addressing their human development gap and overcoming their structural weaknesses," noted Sheikh Hasina, the prime minister of Bangladesh. Accord-

According to leaders of countries participating in the plenary meeting of LDC-IV in Istanbul, the conference will mark an era of cooperation between the least developed countries and the global community. They also expressed their appreciation to the Turkish government for supporting the cause of LDCs

ing to Nepalese Prime Minister Jhala Nath Khanal, the conference will instill new hope and confidence in hundreds of millions of people living in LDCs for their future. Afghan President Hamid Karzai also delivered a speech in which he said the adoption of the Istanbul Program of Action represents a renewed commitment in addressing the challenges of LDCs. Even though the pace of development in LDCs improved somewhat during the previous decade, he said, the overall goals of the Brussels Program of Action have not been met. "The LDCs and their development partners must forge a genuine alliance to harness the powers of ideas, science and technology to overcome the poverty, hunger and disease that suppress human progress and ingenuity." **SEE STORY ON PAGES 4-5**

TURKEY TAKES MAJOR STEPS TO EMPOWER WOMEN IN RECENT YEARS

During the past several years, many important steps have been directed towards the prevention of discrimination based on gender. Although the Turkish Constitution had ensured equality between women and men, it was only in 2004, during the Justice and Development Party (AK Party) government, that the “equality of women and men” was defined in the Constitution as a responsibility of the state. In order to further promote women’s rights, several revisions have been made to the Turkish Penal Code (TCK), the Labor Code and the Law on Municipalities. Finally, with the constitutional amendments of 2010, women were included within the scope of positive discrimination. These changes have already had positive effects on women’s lives, including eliminating obstacles in the workplace, raising the standards of living of women, as well as men, maintaining the continuity of the prosperous family and providing more opportunities to women in political life.

Improvements in business life

The “equal pay for equal work” principle was added to the Labor Act in 2003, eliminating discrimination against women in business. In the same act, maternity leave was increased to 16 weeks, eight weeks before and eight weeks after birth.

With the stimulus package introduced in 2008, the insurance premiums of women and youths are now covered by the government for the first five years of employment. Furthermore, domestic production has been exempted from taxes. In order to support women’s entrepreneurship, support is provided for women to set up their own businesses.

Moreover, the establishment of the Women’s Employment Supreme Board was announced in the Prime Ministry circular issued on May 25, 2010 in order to strengthen women’s socioeconomic status. The main goal of this board is to further prevent gender discrimination in business life.

Education

One of the main keys to the empowerment of women is education. By providing decent education and training to girls and women of all ages, women can have their own share of the contribution and leadership of the country.

The project “Let’s Go to School Girls!” aimed at increasing girls’ enrollment in schools, enrolling 350,000 girls previously unable to go to school for various reasons. With another project called “Mothers and Daughters together at School,” more than 3 million women learned how to read and write.

Training concerning issues such as domestic violence, family planning, honor killings, child abuse and prevention of alcohol and substance addiction is provided via conferences, panels and village and home visits to families under the Parents and Children’s Education project.

Last but not least, the children of low-income families are given scholarships to stay at school. Each month a certain amount of money



Support is provided for women to set up their own businesses to support women’s entrepreneurship. Also, the “Women’s Employment Supreme Board” was established to strengthen women’s socio-economic status.

is deposited in mothers’ accounts for each child who goes to school. As an example of positive discrimination, the amount paid to girls is higher than boys in order to encourage more girls to go to school.

Health and social security

Financial aid is provided to low-income families for children between the ages of 0 and 6, on the condition that the children are regularly taken to health screenings. Another form of aid is given to pregnant women, provided that they give birth in hospitals and continue to have regular checkups.

With the Program for Transformation in Health, mother and infant death rates were reduced by 48 percent between 2003-2008 compared to the 1998-2003 period. A form of financial support has been introduced for the maternity leave of 16 weeks, as well as for breastfeeding. Furthermore, mothers with disabled children have been given the right to retire five years earlier.

In the event of a working woman’s death, a survivor’s pension, which was previously only assigned to the beneficiaries of a deceased man, has been assigned to her beneficiaries, including her spouse,

her children and/or her parents.

In the projects conducted by the Social Assistance and Solidarity Foundation, 70 percent of the contribution is provided by women.

Municipalities with a population of over 50,000 are obliged to open shelters for women exposed to domestic violence.

Women in Turkey according to Social Gender Indicators provided by the Turkish Statistics Institute:

- The illiteracy rate of women decreased from 19.4 percent in 2000 to 11.6 percent in 2009.

- The net schooling rate of girls rose from 90.8 percent in 2000 to 97.8 percent in 2009.

- The number of female university graduates increased from 5.4 percent in 2000 to 7.3 percent in 2009, despite the headscarf ban at universities.

- Women’s participation in the labor force in 2000 was 17.2 percent in cities and 40.2 percent in rural areas. These rates were measured at 22.3 percent and 33.6 percent, respectively, in 2009.

- The rate of women satisfied with their jobs rose from 38.1 percent in 2003 to 59.8 percent in 2009.

Women hold only 1 percent of global wealth

Speaking at the Private Sector Forum at the 4th UN Conference on the Least Developed Countries (LDC-IV) earlier this week, Sabancı Holding Chairwoman Güler Sabancı said women hold only 1 percent of global wealth.

Other speakers at the session included UN Women Executive Director Michelle Bachelet, who noted the impact the global economic and financial crisis had had on LDCs. In this respect, she highlighted in particular the importance of sustaining growth levels in order to increase wealth and development, along with the need to support food-importing countries, arguing that the crisis had adversely affected poor families in these countries and they were facing serious hunger issues.

Bachelet also stressed the need to help women gain access to markets in order to sell their goods and services – both in technological channels and developing business strategies. She argued that such gender dimensions must be systematically addressed in all priority areas of the Istanbul Plan of Action.

Ümit Boyner, president of the Turkish Industrialists and Businessmen’s Association (TÜSİAD), claimed that working women in LDCs were hindered by having to maintain their traditional roles, as well as trying to become successful in business or pursuing educational opportunities. For this reason, she said, TÜSİAD offered financial support to female entrepreneurs and she called on UN LDC-IV to bring governments together with the private sector in order to find solution.

Academics: LDCs should be called MECs – Most Exploited Countries



Intellectuals stated that instead of being identified as LDCs, where hundreds of millions of people live on less than a dollar a day, these countries should be called the Most Exploited Countries.

Intellectuals who are involved in the Academic Council, which has been established as part of the Fourth UN Conference on the Least Developed Countries (LDC-IV) held in Istanbul, stated that instead of being identified as LDCs, these countries should be called the Most Exploited Countries (MECs).

“Even the major impediments to development associated with corruption in the LDCs is partly a legacy of ‘divide and rule’ colonial administration and partly the bribery endemic to transnational venture capital,” stated the council in its declaration, which is planned to be announced at the end of the conference this week.

The UN considers as LDCs those countries whose gross national income (GNI) per capita is under \$900 per year. Criticizing the approach of the world’s most affluent countries toward the problems of the world’s poorest and most vulnerable people, the Academic Council, which was established at LDC-IV, held in Istanbul, stated that they will monitor policies toward LDCs.

“We offer ourselves as friendly critics of the LDC approach, believing that it can be more effective in reaching its stated objectives and convinced that this potentiality will not be achieved without some fundamental rethinking of approach,” said Richard Falk, chair of the Academic Council of LDC-IV.

Falk said that the members of the Academic Council believe that the earlier LDC conferences which were held in the European cities of Paris and Brussels exhibited the structure of a Western-centric world. He brought up that a large UN conference is held every 10 years to refocus attention

on these countries, but it is misleading in some fundamental respects.

“It relies on macro-economic indicators based on averages rather than on the actual conditions of the poor and vulnerable living in a given country. It also ignore issues of economic inequality in general and in relation to the realities of each LDC and fails to connect economic achievements with the policies and practices embedded overall in a neoliberal world order,” stated the council.

According to the Academic Council, the UN approach excludes some crucial dimensions of human disadvantaged circumstances, like countries with a population of over 75 million are not considered LDCs, thereby overlooking the conditions affecting hundreds of millions. In that regard, Falk said that Palestine, which has been under occupation for more than 25 years, should be considered an LDC.

The council members also believe that measures of success rest on flawed and monolithic conceptions of development that rely heavily on a neoliberal emphasis on aggregate growth.

“Such an approach overlooks the relevance of history and culture, especially the legacies of colonialism as having ravaged these countries of their resources and identity,” the council stated.

The 18 Academic Council members include such international figures as Fantu Cheru, director of the Nordic Africa Institute and former member of the UN Secretary-General’s Advisory Panel; Hilal Elver, professor of international law at the University of California, Santa Barbara; Chico Whitaker Ferreira, co-founder of World Social Forum; and Susan George, author on poverty and underdevelopment who works

at the Transnational Institute in Amsterdam.

Falk said they will be working on ways to become effective in shaping policy in a more benevolent way. He added that they will emphasize the empowerment of young women in overcoming poverty and will encourage all others to devote more resources to educating women.

The Intellectuals Forum of the council is being held at Bogaziçi University on May 8-11 and deals with issues concerning the UN’s work with the LDCs. They said that neither governments nor the United Nations will play a part in shaping their Istanbul declaration. The academics indicate that the Intellectuals Forum is committed to seeing development with fresh eyes that would convert people-oriented and sustainable development into “something more tangible than a set of slogans.”

“Part of the injustice of the world economic system, with its many imbalances, is a consequence of unequal bargaining power, access to information and control over intellectual property rights,” their declaration stated. “One of the persisting difficulties of the LDCs in Africa has been the manipulation of prices and markets on agricultural commodities both through subsidies designed to promote agricultural exports from rich countries and the imposition of duties and tariffs that burden agricultural imports from poorer countries.”

Falk added that the council stresses powerful economic and political interests that benefit from existing structures and therefore this realization requires popular mobilization around a number of issues including how to address the challenge of climate change which harms development opportunities in Africa and Asia.

The UN considers as LDCs those countries whose gross national income per capita is under \$900 per year. Criticizing the approach of the world’s most affluent countries toward the problems of the world’s poorest people, the Academic Council stated that they will monitor policies toward LDCs

LEAST DEVELOPED COUNTRIES' LEADERS OPTIMISTIC CONFERENCE WILL BOOST COOPERATION IN GLOBAL COMMUNITY

According to leaders of countries participating in the plenary meeting of LDC-IV in İstanbul, the conference will mark an era of cooperation between the least developed countries and the global community. They also expressed their appreciation to the Turkish government for supporting the cause of LDCs and taking a great interest in the success of the historic conference

Excerpts from the statements delivered at the plenary of the Fourth United Nations Conference on Least Developed Countries (LDC-IV), May 9-13, 2011, in İstanbul.

Her Excellency Sheikh Hasina, prime minister of Bangladesh, in her speech at the plenary meeting of LDC-IV, said: "I express my deep appreciation to the government of Turkey for the generous hospitality and the excellent arrangements. I thank the honorable president for his powerful statement which, I believe has set the tone of the conference. I also commend the UN secretary-general for voicing a realistic approach to the cause of the LDCs. The conference is thus all set to formulate a new era of cooperation between the LDCs and the global community." In concluding her remarks she said that "global progress will only be complete when 880 million plus people, engulfed by poverty and underdevelopment, achieve decent and dignified lives. This is only possible with the unity and determination of all nations to reverse the process of marginalization of the LDCs. This calls for genuinely addressing their human development gap and overcoming their structural weaknesses. İstanbul gives us the opportunity to try out the option. Let us all seize this defining moment and pronounce our collective determination and will. Let us agree on an enhanced, ambitious and do-able global framework for helping LDCs to graduate out of their poverty and misery. I have full faith in our capacity to respond to this challenge and measure up to the cause of the LDCs."

His Excellency Jhala Nath Khanal, prime minister of Nepal, in his speech at the plenary meeting of LDC-IV, stated: "I would particularly like to put on record our grateful thanks to His Excellency President Abdullah Gül and His Excellency Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdogan of the Republic of Turkey, both of whom have consistently supported the cause of the LDCs and taken a deep personal interest in the success of this historic event. This is indeed a fine reflection of the great tradition of Turkey, a country which not only distinguishes itself for its civilization, history and modernization but also for the great economic strides it has made in recent years. Furthermore, true to its character as a bridge connecting Asia, Africa and Europe, today it has demonstrated itself as a link between the LDCs and the rest of the world to create a new future for the LDCs. It is, therefore, so fitting that this conference is being held in this beautiful and vibrant city of İstanbul in Turkey. Let me also express appreciation to UN Secretary-General Mr. Ban Ki-moon for your consistent leadership and strong stewardship of this conference. Working together with all for a new vision and stronger promises, we would like to begin a new dawn of hope and confidence for the more than 800 million people living in the LDCs." He also said: "It is with this call for a renewed and strengthened global partnership of a higher order that I wish the İstanbul conference real success. And we must make sure that what we agree on here is fully implemented with strong monitoring and follow-up mechanisms. By 2021, at the least, we would like to see

the number of LDCs reduced by half and most of the people in LDCs out of grinding poverty. This is certainly not an unreasonable expectation. Working together, we can do it, we should do it and we should start doing it right from here. The people in the LDCs deserve it, as they have waited long for a real and sustainable change in their lives."

His Excellency Yves Leterme, prime minister of Belgium, in his speech at the plenary meeting of LDC-IV, said: "First of all, the Action Program reflects a strong political commitment. Structural vulnerability is the main obstacle to the LDCs' development." He also said that "secondly, as the secretary-general and the Group of Eminent Persons have reminded us, the LDCs have to make radical changes to their economies and take the development process into their own hands," adding: "Thirdly, the primary responsibility for their development policies lies with the countries themselves, but these policies have little chance of success if they cannot count on the support of the international community as a whole." In concluding his remarks he said, "Belgium is lending its support to the ultimate aim of ensuring the maximum number LDCs leave this category, ideally over the next decade."

His Excellency Akil Akilov, prime minister of Tajikistan, in his speech at the plenary meeting of LDC-IV, said: "Let me thank the organizing committee of the United Nations Conference on the Least Developed Countries for the great and fruitful work in arranging this conference and express appreciation to the government and people of Turkey for their warm hospitality and excellent facilities provided for this important international forum." In concluding his remarks he stated that "Tajikistan's efforts in water issues are aimed at sustainable and effective utilization of existing capacity in the country, strengthening of the mutually beneficial and equitable regional cooperation. Based on these considerations, Tajikistan initiated the proclamation of the 2013 International Year of Water Cooperation, approved by the UN General Assembly. In conclusion, I would like to mark that Tajikistan is ready to closely cooperate in implementing the resolutions of the UN General Assembly and of the outcome documents of this conference."

His Excellency Manasseh Maelanga, the Solomon Islands deputy prime minister and minister for home affairs, in his speech at the plenary meeting of LDC-IV, said: "The new Program of Action must have the vision, ambition and courage to graduate 50 percent of the 48 least developed countries from their current status by 2020. It is a school of countries that for the last couple of decades have seen their numbers grow from 24 in 1971 to 48 in 2011. Sadly only three countries graduated; Botswana in 1994, Cape Verde 2007 and Maldives in 2011. This is said against the backdrop of the review of the [2001-2010] Brussels Program of Action." In concluding his remarks he stated that "the international governance system will need to recognize the LDCs' special situation and provide for the LDC voice, representation and a window to address its development challenges. This is the 20th year the Solomon Islands has been part of the

group. With the adoption of the proposed İstanbul Program of Action, when we retrace our journey after İstanbul at the review session, we hope to celebrate the early harvest of the program."

His Excellency Hamid Karzai, the president of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan, in his speech at the plenary meeting of LDC IV, said: "I am pleased to be among you today to renew our commitment to combat poverty and address the needs and aspirations of the least developed countries. I join previous speakers in thanking His Excellency President Abdullah Gül and the government and the people of Turkey for the warm hospitality we have experienced since our arrival in the stunningly beautiful city of İstanbul." He also stated that "the adoption of the İstanbul Program of Action represents a renewed commitment in addressing the challenges of the LDCs. As the report of the UN secretary-general indicates, even-though the pace of development in LDCs improved somewhat during the previous decade, the overall goals of the Brussels Program of Action have not been met. It is a welcome step that the İstanbul Program of Action recognizes the importance of productivity enhancement in LDCs." In concluding his remarks he said that "the space we call our world is shrinking at an astonishing pace in terms of time and distance. The LDCs and their development partners must forge a genuine alliance to harness the powers of ideas, science and technology to overcome the poverty, hunger and disease that suppress human progress and ingenuity. Allow me to finish my statement by expressing my strong hopes for the İstanbul Program of Action to achieve what the last LDC Program of Action was not able to achieve."

His Excellency Dr. Thongloun Sisoulith, deputy prime minister and minister of foreign affairs of the Lao PDR, in his statement said: "The unfinished business of the Brussels Program of Action and the lack of significant achievement in its implementation should not be treated with pessimism. We should draw on the best practice and good lessons learned from the past 10 years. The Lao PDR has high expectations from this Fourth UN Conference on LDCs, expectations that by the time we review the İstanbul Program of Action 10 years from now, the Lao PDR will be graduating from LDCs status. We believe that the İstanbul conference will once again consolidate the strong and renewed commitments by all of us, the least developed countries and their development partners, for development that would benefit all LDCs. Let's work together toward the aspiration of all LDCs."

His Excellency Dr. Toga Gayewea McIntosh, minister of foreign affairs of the Republic of Liberia, in his statement at the 4th United Nations Conference on the Least Developed Countries said: "The success of what we do or what we need to do lies squarely in our hands. The success of what we do also lies in the hands of our development partners. The key to unleash the abundant stored up potential on our side and opportunities within the world and apply them effectively is right within our grasp. There is the need for us to



The audience of the LDC-IV plenary session listens to the addresses delivered by leaders of participating countries. The leaders thanked the Turkish government for supporting the cause of the LDCs.

keep in view always the essence and requirements of the İstanbul Program of Action. It is important for us, members of the LDC family, to own up to the program and be willing and able to lead the fight against our common structural challenge.”

Her Excellency Dr. Aurelia Frick, foreign minister of the Principality of Liechtenstein, in her statement said: “Liechtenstein welcomes the İstanbul Program of Action, particularly the sections on good governance, as development results remain fragile if they are not coupled with serious efforts to strengthen good governance, the rule of law, human rights, gender equality and an active civil society.

Her Excellency Jan O’Sullivan, minister of state for trade and development of Ireland, said in her address: “This conference presents us with a critical opportunity not just to focus on how to regain lost ground but to set the objective of having many more countries graduate from LDC status over the coming decade. This objective should be an integral element of our wider approach to development, which must remain focused on the reality of poverty in the daily lives of people and communities. I believe that we must also recognize the important role to be played by the full range of actors and funding sources. Only a comprehensive approach can ensure that many more countries graduate from LDC status in the next decade.”

His Excellency Sam Kutesa, minister of foreign affairs of Uganda, said: “A number of LDCs have adopted bold measures to address the challenges they face, resulting in some progress realized over the last decade. In Uganda, we continue to make various strategic interventions to address some of the bottlenecks to our development. These include prioritizing energy and infrastructure development; education [universal primary education and secondary education], human resources development, health and modernization of agriculture.”

His Excellency Osman Saleh, minister of foreign affairs of the State of Eritrea, stated: “It is Eritrea’s conviction that cooperation geared more towards trade and investment would be more af-

fective in addressing the root causes of poverty and underdevelopment than ODA [Official Development Assistance], which comes with so many red tapes or strings, which has over the years failed to assist countries in achieving sustainable development. In this context, as it is enshrined in the draft İstanbul Program of Action, the ownership, leadership and primary responsibility for their own development should be in the domain of the LDCs. LDCs have the right and responsibility to formulate and execute their own national priorities, including striking a balance in the allocation of resources between economic and social sectors. Eritrea attaches great importance for LDCs to have the necessary policy space, not only in identifying priorities but also in the execution of the priorities set out, to ensure sustainability.”

His Excellency Wolfgang Waldner, state secretary for foreign affairs of Austria, said: “The current assessments of the implementation of the MDGs [Millennium Development Goals], especially in the LDCs, conclude on the need for a better inclusion of the most vulnerable into the development process. This means first of all the inclusion of women and girls, the most neglected and the first-excluded population groups worldwide. Advancing gender equality and empowering women is a precondition for poverty reduction, sustainable economic growth and social development, since women are important agents of change within their societies. Empowered women contribute to the health and productivity of entire families and communities; this improves prospects for next generations. Austria attaches special importance to the gender dimension in its development cooperation.”

His Excellency Mr. Joseph B. Dauda, minister of foreign affairs and international cooperation of Sierra Leone, said: As we gather to adopt a new Program of Action with the objective of at least 50 percent of the LDCs to graduate by the end of the decade, we call on our development partners to contribute to making a signifi-

cant breakthrough to higher growth in most of our countries through significant increase in Official Development Assistance and Foreign Direct Investment [FDI] and address trade distortions.

“We are hopeful that the Plan of Action which we will be adopting in this conference will be beneficial to the 880 million people in the LDCs. We need an action plan that is robust enough, results-oriented and focuses on the critical areas of building the productive capacities of the LDCs notably in infrastructure development, telecommunication technology, health and education, youth employment, good governance, agricultural productivity, building the capacity of the public sector and investment in the private sector.”

His Excellency Dr. Nizar bin Obaid Madani, minister of state for foreign affairs of Saudi Arabia, said: The international community has a moral obligation, and it is in their joint interests, to assist those who are unable to take advantage of the opportunities offered by globalization and an economic open-door policy; otherwise, their problems will be shared by all.

“The international community must therefore fully honor the pledges that it made to those countries by providing direct or indirect assistance or waiving and rescheduling their debts. The developed countries also have an obligation to dispel those countries’ doubts and fears concerning the fairness of the world trading system by adopting equitable international trade rules to ensure market access for their exports and by refraining from the adoption of unfair measures and restrictions that would impede the flow of those exports.

“At the same time the governments of the LDCs have an obligation to diligently develop their institutional and organizational frameworks and create a favorable environment by putting market economy mechanisms into effect. All countries and international financial institutions should continue their endeavors to help those countries to adopt appropriate economic policies and carry out the structural reforms needed to support development.”

Babacan: Developed countries should be more responsible

State Minister and Deputy Prime Minister Ali Babacan has said developed countries cannot just think of their own future and that they should develop a global sense of responsibility for poorer countries.

Speaking at a gala dinner during a trade fair held by the Turkish Confederation of Businessmen and Industrialists (TUSKON) as part of the ongoing United Nations Conference on the Least Developed Countries (LDC-IV), Babacan recalled that an additional 44 million people have had to deal with hunger in the last six months due to an increase in food prices, as the number of people dealing with hunger has surpassed 1 billion. "Everybody has to act with a sense of global responsibility," he said. Babacan highlighted the importance of global cooperation and continued: "In order to establish social justice in global terms, developed countries in particular have important tasks. The developed countries, the countries that have achieved a certain fortune, cannot just think of their own future. There must definitely be a sense of global responsibility in all developed economies. After the [conditions of all] humanity are improved and developed, the future world will be a more livable place. "On one side, you see countries where the latest technology -- mobile phones and computers -- are used and on the other side, hundreds of millions of people have never answered a phone even once in their lives. There are countries where obesity is a problem, while there are people living with hunger."

Highlighting that the population of the world is expected to rise to 9 billion by 2050, Babacan said if current policies continue, the world will not be a better place in 2050. He also urged radical steps to ensure the survival of the world.



State Minister and Deputy Prime Minister Ali Babacan

"The developed countries in particular must take responsibility," he said. "As a developing country that has just become a donor country, Turkey has built more than 40 schools in Afghanistan alone and 50 others in Lebanon," Babacan said, adding that the Turkish Republic and Turkish civil society have established schools in many countries around the world.

"As we do these with our own means, the expectations from the developed countries must surely be higher," he said.

Many countries take Turkey as model

While noting that discussing urgent topics in detail at the İstanbul conference will have positive repercussions in the

future, Babacan said the subjects spoken and discussed in İstanbul will pave the way for new ideas to emerge regarding sustainable growth. "We are honored to host this decennial meeting," he said. Babacan also highlighted that Turkey's reform process in the past eight years sets an example for many developing and less developed countries.

"There are many countries who are inspired by what we did in Turkey and who want to make use of the reforms that we have carried out in the past eight years. International institutions, including the UN and the World Bank, have much advice, but we have experience. We provide all kinds of means and support for countries who want to make use of our experience and listen to us in order to apply our experiences in their countries."

He added that democracy has been advancing quickly as many important initiatives are realized in terms of basic rights and freedoms in Turkey. "Turkey was a country receiving assistance until 2004, but it has been one of the assisting countries since 2004, and our foreign aid exceeded \$1 billion last year," he said.

Recalling Turkey's geographical position between cultures, religions and languages, Babacan said: "Turkey is a NATO member, it is a European Union candidate, and it has special agreements with the Arab League at the same time. Turkey is also one of the strategic partners in the African Union. While we had 12 embassies in Africa in 2008, now we aim to increase it to 30 embassies; we are close to achieving this target." While indicating that the main factor behind these developments in Turkey is political stability, Babacan continued: "Our economic development model is based on the private sector. We believe that the most important task of the state is to pave the way for the private sector and to improve their investment environment. After providing these opportunities, there is no longer much of a problem, believe me. Once you create the environment of confidence, everything gets easier."

The minister further said it is important for economic development to be sustainable, while social aspects of the economic development must not be ignored, either. It is important that everybody benefit fairly from economic development in a country, Babacan said, adding that preferring a development model that complies with environmental sustainability is of vital importance for future generations. "It is necessary to pick a human-based development model that does not ignore the fact that the state exists for the people."

Investment is not charity: LDCs eager for investment

This week's LDC-IV has devoted a whole track towards helping LDCs attract private sector investment from developing nations. Speaking yesterday, Muhammed Ibn Chambas, secretary-general of the ACP Group, made clear that the driving principle for the forum was not about charity but about investment.

The main theme of yesterday's session was to explore best practice garnered from Turkey's experience and provide advice on optimizing investment opportunities. However, the discussions also covered the need to develop strong institutions to support the private sector and create conditions

that would attract foreign investment. Speaking as one of the panelists in the session, Farida Waziri, executive chairperson of the Nigerian Economic and Financial Crimes Commission (EFCC), outlined the successes her organization had had in preventing and prosecuting financial crimes, which had formerly crippled the Nigerian private sector. Waziri said the EFCC had benefitted from technology exchange with Microsoft that enabled the organization to monitor bank transfers and cyber crime. She noted that Nigeria had recognized the impact perceived corruption had had on investment and on its ability to exploit natural resources.

Consequently, the EFCC had placed a strong focus on heightening local awareness of corruption issues among state officials and bank directors which in turn had led to a greater level of whistle-blowing.

Another panel member, Scott Mitchell, vice president of Sumitomo Chemical Australia, offered a checklist of best practice initiatives that should be undertaken by companies looking to invest or by governments when seeking investment. He focused his discussion on the need for public and private sectors to work extremely closely together in order to create virtuous circles that would benefit both sides.

Third day of UN Conference at a glance

The third day of the UN Conference on the Least Developed Countries (LDC-IV) kicked off with the fifth plenary meeting and thematic debates. The sixth plenary meeting took place in the afternoon session. Wednesday's high-level thematic debates included the topics of good governance at all levels, reducing vulnerabilities, responding to emerging challenges and enhancing food security in the least developed countries. The conference's Committee of the Whole held two closed informal consultations, one at 11 a.m.-1 p.m. and another at 3 p.m.-6 p.m. while another meeting of the Credentials Committee took place.

A group of LDCs gathered at the ambassadorial level before noon, as Group of 77 came together in two sessions to discuss the fourth UN conference. The European Union held another meeting in the afternoon as part of the conference. All meetings were closed.

A number of special events were also held on the third day of the conference. The discussed topics were addressing desertification, land degradation and drought in LDCs: Sustainable land management and climate change

adaptation; ensuring universal access to HIV prevention, AIDS treatment, care and support by 2015; implementation of the WHO Framework Convention on Tobacco Control in LDCs; responsible agricultural investment in LDCs; Water issues in LDCs; a high-level forum on building a comprehensive framework for promoting development in LDCs through innovation and creativity; gender and migration: Care workers at the interface of migration and development; optimizing support measures for LDCs: Access, utilization and effectiveness; population dynamics and poverty reduction in the LDCs; promoting inclusive growth and sustainable development: Increasing the impact of future development policy; the implementation of the Brussels Program of Action for the Decade 2011-2020 by Asia-Pacific LDCs and the way forward; sustainable agri-food supply chains and food security (agriculture and fisheries); making trade work for women in LDCs; a forum on building productive capacities for poverty eradication; illicit financial flows from the least developed countries, the global shift in wealth: What does it mean for LDCs' develop-

ment?; and the Turkish government's support for forestry activities on dry and degraded lands in the least developed countries: Opportunities and challenges.

UN Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD) Secretary-General Supachai Panitchpakdi and UNCTAD Special Coordinator for Cross-Sectoral Issues Charles Gore also held a press conference on productive capacities and poverty reduction in LDCs, while Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) Director-General Jacques Diouf held a press conference on food price volatility. Another press briefing was held at noon with the participation of Michelle Bachelet, undersecretary-general and executive director of the UN Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN-Women), and the last press conference of the day was held by Patricia Francis, executive director of International Trade Center (ITC).

In the meantime, Turkey's President Abdullah Gül gathered with a group of nine journalists who arrived in İstanbul for the LDC-IV, at the Tarabya Mansion.



PRESIDENT GÜL RECEIVES JOURNALISTS

Abdullah Gül, president of Turkey, welcomed nine journalists to Tarabya Mansion on Wednesday morning for a breakfast briefing on the progress being made in İstanbul this week. Journalists from least developed countries (LDCs), including Benin, Burkina Faso, Burundi, Djibouti, Ethiopia,

Gambia, Haiti, Senegal and Sierra Leone, joined the president and had the opportunity to discuss key elements of the İstanbul Program of Action, which will be formally announced on Friday. During the session, Gül acknowledged the important role that journalists have at the conference, both

by covering the summit itself and holding the world accountable for the outcomes of the plan of action. Other key topics of discussion included the role of the private sector and the need to shift from aid-driven to action-driven and capacity-building development policy.

Istanbul new home of UNFPA regional office for Eastern Europe and Central Asia

The opening of the UNFPA's Eastern Europe and Central Asia Regional Office is one example of Turkey's willingness and desire to transform İstanbul into a regional hub of the UN system. In this regard, the country is also putting İstanbul forward as the host of the regional office of UN Women



Turkish Foreign Minister Ahmet Davutoğlu cut the ceremonial ribbon to open UNFPA's Eastern Europe and Central Asia Regional Office in İstanbul.

Turkish Foreign Minister Ahmet Davutoğlu yesterday opened the UN Population Fund (UNFPA) Eastern Europe and Central Asia Regional Office (EE-CARO) in İstanbul.

Speaking at a ceremony to mark the occasion, Davutoğlu said, "Turkey attaches great importance to the work of the UNFPA in Turkey and regionally and is a strong supporter of its efforts in the areas of promoting the status of women, reproductive and

maternal health, young people's reproductive health, population and development and gender equality." "The UNFPA's projects are of major importance to our society and play a significant role in raising awareness of the issues and contributing to our development efforts. For its part, Turkey is ready and wholly committed to sharing its experience and know-how in reproductive health and other crucial areas through further South-South cooperation," he continued.

The opening is just one example of Turkey's

willingness and desire to transform İstanbul into a regional hub of the UN system. In this regard, the country is also putting İstanbul forward as the host of the regional office of UN Women. "Given its central location and transport connections, İstanbul makes an ideal location to host such regional offices and this has been recognized by many international corporations and multinational firms, which use the city as a base from which to run their operations to run their entire regional operations," Davutoğlu said.

4,000 children die each day due to water pollution

The lack of access to a clean water supply results in the deaths of 4,000 children each day due to health issues related to unclean drinking water, claimed Fleur Anderson, international coordinator for End Water Poverty.

Speaking at the Civil Society Forum, Anderson said that although there had been improvements over the last decade, over 800 million people still lack access to a safe drinking water supply and that 2.6 billion people lack access to a toilet.

Anderson said these figures emphasize the need to tackle these issues as a priority -- both globally and within LDCs, since, although 1.9 million people gained access to clean drinking water between 1990 and 2008, the current rate meant that by 2015, the world would still be 1 billion people short of the Millennium Development Goals.

End Water Poverty brings together over a million people in 180 organizations across 60 countries around the world. From this perspective, Anderson claimed that amongst the challenges still being faced were insufficient political prioritization, insufficient national investment, weak country sector capacities, lack of accountability and weak data analysis and communications. Never-



theless, she believed that a number of nations had been able to increase the impact of their resources and strengthen commitments in the area. Serena O'Sullivan, campaigns and communications officer of End Water Poverty noted that her organization had made a commitment within a draft program for action to assure sanitation and water for all by 2020, which the organization conceded was an ambitious, yet achievable, commitment.

As an active campaigning and lobbying organization, End Water Poverty's mission is

to support country processes in order to establish a global framework for sector dialogue and improved information for decision making. On Wednesday it organized a "Walk for Water" at UN LDC-IV, and O'Sullivan made clear that it had been supporting civil society organizations in pushing for the right to clean water in İstanbul and that sanitation takes its place in the İstanbul Program of Action.

More people have access to cell phones than clean toilets

Also speaking at the Forum was Doreen Wandera, executive director of the Ugandan Water and Sanitation Network. She noted that people in the LDCs walk an average of six kilometers per day to find water for drinking, cooking and sanitary needs and that half of the primary schools in LDCs do not have toilets. She claimed this lack of sanitation had an impact not only on health but also education.

Presenting Uganda as an example of a country dealing with the challenges of a lack of access to clean drinking water and sanitation, Wandera voiced her belief that "water is a right, not a privilege" and that civil societies must play an important role in the struggle for access to water.