

DRAFT STATEMENT

TO BE DELIVERED

BY

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AMABSSADOR AND PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF NEPAL TO THE
UNITED NATIONS
&
CHAIR OF THE GLOBAL COORDINATION BUREAU OF THE LEAST DEVELOPED
COUNTRIES (LDCs)
ON BEHALF OF
THE GROUP OF LEAST DEVELOPED COUNTRIES (LDCs)
DURING THE CONSULTATIONS WITH THE MEMBERS OF THE HIGH-LEVEL
PANEL ON THE MULTIDIMENSIONAL VULNERABILITY INDEX FOR SIDS
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(Please check against delivery)

Excellencies,
Distinguished delegates,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

I have the honour to deliver this statement on behalf of the least developed countries.

At first, let me express our sincere gratitude to H.E Mr. Gaston Browne, the Prime Minister of Antigua and Barbuda; and H.E Ms. Erna Solberg, former Prime Minister of Norway, the Co-Chairs of the High-Level Panel of Experts on a Multi-Dimensional Vulnerability Index (MVI) for Small Island Developing States, for convening today's Meeting and briefing our Groups of Countries, on this ongoing process.

We appreciate the hard work of the Panel for developing the MVI, along with the Vulnerability-Resilience Country Profiles (VRCP).

We have already expressed our concerns on the MVI in our statement on May 10. Let me briefly restate them today.

It is common knowledge and agreed understanding that all groups of countries in special situations have their unique challenges and problems. In this respect, we fully sympathize with the challenges and problems facing our SIDs brethren.

Excellencies and distinguished delegates,

We believe that vulnerability and resilience are very important policy issues to be decided through adequate deliberations and inclusive process involving Member states and other relevant actors. The metrics and indices we develop should follow from the policy decisions, not the other way round. It is baffling that the MVIs and attendant VRCPs portray LDCs where a large chunk of

population lives under and around the lines of extreme poverty and hunger as less vulnerable and better-off than prosperous nations.

Here, we see that the index undermines the key principle of Agenda 2030-that of leaving no one behind, and its key goal of eradicating poverty and hunger. It is truly a matter of grave concern.

Excellencies, distinguished delegates,

The relevant General Assembly resolutions calling for an MVI have clear and unambiguous reference to ‘multidimensional vulnerability index for Small Island Developing States (SIDs)’.

Let me now turn to the LDCs once again.

We know that the LDC criteria currently in use, which is universally accepted and which has been evolving over time, already includes vulnerability of the LDCs. A separate indicator of vulnerability can create confusions, conflicts, contradictions and can undermine the universally accepted LDC criteria which already includes ‘Economic and Environmental Vulnerability Index’. Therefore, our suggestion was that the MVIs and VRCPs do not look pragmatic and applicable to LDCs, and I want to reiterate the same today.

How can we believe that a nation whose income per capita is a few hundred dollars is better off and more resilient than a nation with per capita income above many thousand dollars? Measuring the comparative status of vulnerability of countries in isolation of respective economic capacity is utterly imperfect. After all, it is the economic capacity that makes communities and countries resilient against any kind of vulnerability.

Therefore, we must be very cautious about the scope of such an exercise to avoid creating false impressions. In the same vein, such an exercise also shows how far-off from the reality can be an index which puts all developing countries in a single ranking order.

All developing countries are in need in international solidarity and support, particularly the LDCs, whose meagre domestic resources leave them little room to invest in resilient and sustainable infrastructures, build productive capacities and green economy, along with making progress in other areas of socio-economic development, environment protection and climate action.

That is why, what we want in the least is a condition which sows seeds of distrust and unhealthy competition among groups of developing countries, which have common problems to overcome.

Therefore, we underscored the need for a broader agreement and consensus on the objectives, purposes and usage of the MVIs and VRCPs, and I reiterate this concern today.

Next, our group has made it very clear that MVI should be technically robust, logically convincing, and politically accepted. Therefore, what we develop now, need to be inclusive, comprehensive, robust and acceptable.

Besides, in our preliminary reading, we had noticed important omissions of certain variables like GNI per capita, external debt, social protections, access to energy and it, commodity dependence on foreign trade, which are highly pertinent in the calculation of vulnerability and resilience of a country.

We need to understand and reflect how these concerns are going to be accommodated as the exercise evolves.

Excellencies, distinguished delegates,

As the MVIs are no doubt highly technical in nature, we need time to carefully study, understand and digest the indicators and the composite Index which took months for the expert panel to develop. I reiterate again that the Group of LDCs would therefore not agree to be bound by any artificial deadline that can compromise the robustness and political acceptability of this exercise.

Finally: I would like to highlight that the Group of LDCs is historically recognized as the most vulnerable group of countries in the world and the special and differential treatment have been accorded to them. The QCPR resolution of 2020 and the Doha Program of Action clearly recognize that reality.

We must ensure that the support going to LDCs, which is the poorest group of Countries, is maintained and enhanced. It should not be affected or compromised due to the application of any other process. We cannot think of overshadowing the plight of the poorest group of countries by any exercise.

Thank you.