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**Promotion and protection of all human rights, civil,
political, economic, social and cultural rights,
including the right to development**

Written statement* submitted by Organisation internationale pour les pays les moins avancés (OIPMA), a non- governmental organization in special consultative status

The Secretary-General has received the following written statement which is circulated in accordance with Economic and Social Council resolution 1996/31.

[29 January 2021]

* Issued as received, in the language(s) of submission only.



Constraints and obstacles caused by conflict in the Least Developed Countries

There is no doubt that conflict poses huge development challenges for the least developed countries (LDCs). Due to conflict, these vulnerable countries face serious obstacles to achieve economic growth, human development and sustainability. Many LDCs face challenges by going through periods of conflict that had devastating impacts on their growth.

Since 1991, two thirds of the LDCs have experienced armed conflict. Based on the United Nations Committee for Development Policy (CDP) and Uppsala Conflict Data Program (UCDP) data, the LDCs that experienced conflict since 1991 are Afghanistan, Angola, Bangladesh, Burundi, Cambodia, the Central African Republic, Chad, the Comoros, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Djibouti, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Guinea, Guinea-Bissau, Haiti, the Lao People's Democratic Republic, Lesotho, Liberia, Mali, Mauritania, Mozambique, Myanmar, Nepal, the Niger, Rwanda, Senegal, Sierra Leone, Somalia, South Sudan, the Sudan, Uganda, and Yemen.

Generally, conflict-affected countries score worse on the LDC indicators as opposed to their peaceful counterparts. Average Gross National Income per capita of peaceful LDCs is 2.6 times higher than that of conflict affected LDCs. While economic vulnerability is not significantly different between conflict-affected and non-conflict-affected countries, human capital is 1.4 times higher on average in peaceful LDCs. Therefore, it is very important to apply the analysis of conflict-development cycle in the cases of LDCs, as they are the most vulnerable countries left behind.

Furthermore, the lack of development is triggering the conflict and particularly in the case of civil wars. Lower development means a poverty, which is a key determinant for conflict outbreak in the LDCs. Due to the extreme poverty rate, these countries experience unstable governance and high level of unemployment, which lead the young men to join violent extremist groups.

If the conflict trap is an obstacle to overcome for the LDCs, then there is a need to find when and in what way these countries are affected by conflict and address the question of whether conflict is a structural handicap to development. It is important to address this issue because there is a strong association between armed conflicts, poverty and underdevelopment. The conflict-affected LDCs clearly have less resilience to deal with external shocks because they have fewer resources and policy instruments to mitigate the adverse impact of these shocks.

There is no doubt that conflict is one of the most extreme obstacles to freedoms and advancing human rights, and it forms a major threat to all aspects of human development. The present cases prove us that any future outbreak of armed conflict will be directly associated with the income level of a country. Thus, conflict is a potential factor to be included in the classification of countries as LDCs.

Therefore, we ask the United Nations to implement stronger and special measures for the conflict-affected LDCs to help them overcome their challenges. These include a better education, accessible healthcare, and efficient activities for development. We ask the international community to pay a greater attention to these vulnerable countries because they are often left behind and forgotten.

These countries are extremely fragile and require special attention and sustained international engagement in order to graduate from their LDC status and achieve sustainable development. Thus, we ask the United Nations to introduce a new reform that specifically aligns with country-specific needs. This is very important because it will accelerate the process of promotion and protection of human rights, the rule of law and good governance, and it will definitely contribute to stability and security. Also, with country-specific support, the graduating countries can effectively adopt a national transition strategies.

Lastly, we ask all concerned stakeholders to prioritize the issues of conflict-affected LDCs and help them to build trust between government and civil societies.
