

ECOSOC 2004 High-Level Segment Preparatory Meetings
“Resources mobilization and enabling environment for poverty eradication
in the context of the implementation of the Programme of Action for the Least
Developed Countries for the decade 2001-2010”

Closing remarks for the President by
H.E. Ambassador Marjatta Rasi
President of the Economic and Social Council

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Excellencies,
Distinguished Colleagues,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

It is my pleasure to welcome all of you back to conclude the first day of our high-level segment preparatory meetings. We had a lively and stimulating discussion from different perspectives. I would like to thank all of you, and especially the co-chairs and participants of our roundtables, for contributing to a very lively discussion today. I do not wish to repeat what has already been said, but let me assure you that all your ideas and recommendations will guide us towards focused and concrete outcomes of this year's high-level segment.

In today's roundtables, it became clear that much more needs to be done if we are to meet the targets of the Brussels Programme of Action as a means of attaining the Millennium Development Goals in the Least Developed Countries. We addressed a wide range of issues from resource mobilization for the implementation of the Brussels Programme, to good governance and public finance management, to PRSPs. The specific country experiences shared by Timor-Leste, Bangladesh, Benin and Burkina Faso were very valuable. They demonstrated that while each country situation is unique, there are a number of common issues and our debate contributed to a better understanding of the constraints faced by LDCs and possible ways to overcome them.

Before I conclude, let me just reiterate some of the recommendations made today:

- The Millennium Development Goals and Brussels Programme of Action provide us the overall framework for action. The focus must now be placed on implementation. The importance of a comprehensive approach to development was emphasized.
- It was underlined that donors' conditions for financing and the required assessment mechanism could be better coordinated: this would release more resources to the actual work for poverty eradication.
- The primary responsibility lies with the LDCs themselves. However, the international partners have a crucial part to play to support the efforts of the LDCs. This exercise is our common responsibility.

- The actions taken by the LDCs in the field of good governance in all its aspects as well as public finance management are essential building blocks for the enabling environment that will mobilize both domestic and foreign resources.
- PRSP creates new frames for the development under the ownership of the country itself: Government and civil society in cooperation with donors.
- We were also reminded of the crucial importance of addressing the issue of transition from humanitarian assistance to development.
- Other crucial elements include capacity building, strengthening national institutions and making their work transparent; fight against corruption, improving social sector management, including education and health; participation of civil society and the private sector and empowerment of women.
- The most important message remains, as we have heard many times, that the targets contained in the Brussels Plan of Action and the MDGs cannot be achieved in the LDCs with the resources available at present.

As you know, we will continue our dialogue tomorrow morning when the Council will convene two roundtables. The first one on “Enabling environment and resources mobilization for the LDCs emerging from conflict: the experiences of Guinea Bissau and Burundi” and the second one on “Trade and market access preferences – commitments, achievements, challenges and prospects: the experiences of Burkina Faso”. Tomorrow afternoon, a NGO/Civil Society Forum will be held focusing on poverty eradication in the Least Developed Countries and the role of NGOs in promoting sustainable development in these countries.

The meeting is adjourned.