

## **Closing Remarks**

by  
**H.E. Ambassador Marjatta Rasi**  
**President of the Economic and Social Council**  
at

**The High-Level Segment Preparatory Meeting of the Economic and Social Council**  
“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”

New York, 17 February 2004

Excellencies,  
Distinguished Colleagues,  
Ladies and Gentlemen,

**We have reached the conclusion of our first high-level segment preparatory meeting of 2004 on the theme of “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”.**

**Allow me to say, first of all, that I think this meeting has been productive. It provided a unique platform for deliberating policies and new initiatives on a broad range issues linked to the Least Developed Countries with participation of the key institutions and stakeholders.**

**Undoubtedly, this success was largely due to the dedication and hard work of our many renowned guests and the active participation of many delegates and others in the roundtable discussions. I would therefore like to express my sincere gratitude to each and all of you for a job well done. I would also like to add a special thanks to our distinguished roundtable chairpersons: H.E. Mr. Donald Kaberuka, Minister of Finance of Rwanda; Mr. Ibrahim A. Gambari, Under-Secretary-General and Special Adviser on Africa; H.E. Mr. Jean de Ruyt, Permanent Representative of Belgium to the United Nations; Mr. Anwarul K. Chowdhury, Under-Secretary-General and High Representative for the Least Developed Countries; Mr. Kim Hak-Su, Executive Secretary of ESCAP and Ms. Mervat Tallawy, Executive Secretary of ESCWA, for the excellence and professionalism of their work as well as their unparalleled support.**

**A clear message of many speakers this morning was that, at current trends, the MDGs will not be met in LDCs –notably in Sub-Saharan Africa. To achieve a breakthrough to a virtuous circle, the international community must help LDCs to mobilize their own resources- financial and human. It must help them to build their institutions and to shape an environment that creates business opportunities and attracts investment. We all reckoned that national policies and institutions are crucial in this regard. Yet, we could not underscore enough the importance of external resources, ODA and foreign direct investment, nor the unique opportunities that a development friendly international trading system could offer.**

**The discussions in our two round tables were closely related, as you saw from the summary provided by the chairpersons. We assessed the progress achieved so far in implementing the Brussels Programme of Action with regard to domestic and external resources mobilization and enabling environment. We identified obstacles, constraints, policy challenges, and actions to overcome them.**

**The Economic and Social Council, with the involvement of the UN, the International Financial Institutions and other organizations, should encourage and help LDCs build their capacity to optimally use all available resources. There was an understanding that international community needs to address the linkages between peace and development, particularly in LDCs emerging from conflict.**

**I would like to give some of my reflections of today's discussions. On the basis of this morning's excellent introductions many basic issues and views emerged and we should keep them in mind in our continued preparations of the High-level segment:**

- **a comprehensive response is needed to address the LDC topic of the ECOSOC high-level segment 2004**
- **there is a lack of resources faced by the LDCs and many speakers thus referred to the fulfilment of the Monterrey Consensus as our joint obligation**
- **the partners should work better together – be it aid delivery or strengthening the multilateral system and multilateral cooperation in the various spheres**
- **the opportunities and requirements for the private sector to be more involved were pointed out in different ways**
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- **I was especially pleased by the inputs of the UN agencies and the whole UN system regarding their work and look forward to their further contributions in the ECOSOC context, to identify the actions that help implement the Brussels Programme of Action together with the LDCs**

**The discussions evolved around several interesting concepts , of which I will mention just a couple:**

- **the notions of "aid for trade" and "investment for trade" were brought to the debate, especially as challenges for the international community**
- **the importance of human capital and the many aspects of human development were underscored by the development agencies and we should not neglect these dimensions**
- **how to develop the institutions was, no doubt, among the key questions raised during the day and could be further elaborated**

**How to bring back development also in the context of the Brussels Programme of Action:**

- **the Millennium Development Goals and the implementation of the Millennium Declaration is the common framework different stakeholders share**
- **achieving sustainable economic growth and economic well-being is a primary concern and the strengthening of the financial sector is central for domestic economic stability**
- **Equally, providing a social basis for development is another demand, including prospects for the young generation and the fight against the HIV/AIDS in countries suffering from the pandemic**
- **How to empower people with material and human resources and to advance the human rights for them**
- **The problem of peace and security as a precondition for other development efforts, the necessity to reach political consensus and stability**

**How to build on concrete experiences should guide us to focus our further deliberations:**

- **all round tables put emphasis on sharing best practices**
- **specific country situations need to be analyzed to better understand the development constraints and the ways to overcome them both by domestic policies or through international cooperation**

**- the regional level brings in valuable examples of how to mobilize resources and how to coordinate between the actors and we heard illustrative cases from the regional perspective.**

**Excellencies,**

**Distinguished Colleagues,**

**Ladies and Gentlemen,**

**A great deal has been accomplished during this first Preparatory Meeting of the High-Level Segment. Let me once again congratulate you for your participation and your very substantive and valuable contribution to the work of this Council. I take the opportunity to draw your attention to our next Preparatory Meeting to be held from 17 – 18 March 2004 which will deepen our on-going dialogue by focusing on specific country situations so as to bring out lessons learned and best practices. The results of our meetings will be brought to the Council's High-level segment through the Secretary-General's report and summaries of our meetings.**

**Thank you.**