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OFFICE OF THE HIGH REPRESENTATIVE FOR THE LEAST  
DEVELOPED COUNTRIES, LANDLOCKED DEVELOPING  
COUNTRIES AND SMALL ISLAND DEVELOPING STATES

Regional Review of the Implementation of the Programme of Action  
for the Least Developed Countries for the Decade 2001-2010

14-15 March 2006  
Bangkok

**Report of the Regional Review of the Implementation of the Programme of Action for  
the Least Developed Countries for the Decade 2001-2010**

**SUMMARY**

In preparation for the global mid-term review of the implementation of the Programme of Action for the Least Developed Countries for the Decade 2001-2010, the Regional Review considered its implementation in the Asian and Pacific region, as presented in document LDCCU/POA/RR/1. The Regional Review adopted the recommendations contained in that document for action at both the national and international levels with a special focus on (i) financing for development, (ii) trade, migration and technology transfer, (iii) environment and (iv) conflict prevention and security, for submission as the regional input to the global mid-term review.

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## **I. MATTERS CALLING FOR ACTION AT THE REGIONAL LEVEL**

1. The Regional Review of the Implementation of the Programme of Action for the Least Developed Countries for the Decade 2001-2010 had before it, under agenda items 4 and 5 (see sect.III.D below), document LDCCU/POA/RR/1 and commended the secretariat on the excellent quality of the document, which contained the recommendations of the Expert Group Meeting on the Implementation of the Programme of Action for the Least Developed Countries for the Decade 2001-2010, held in Phnom Penh from 14 to 16 February 2006. The Regional Review agreed that the commitments made in the Programme of Action remained substantially unfulfilled in the Asian and Pacific least developed countries. The Regional Review adopted the recommendations contained in the document, with certain amendments, as presented below, and submitted them as an input to the comprehensive global mid-term review.

### **A. Financing for development**

2. Least developed countries in the Asian and Pacific region are unable to finance their investment requirements from domestic resources alone owing to the resource gap resulting from their low per capita income, structural bottlenecks and weak financial sectors. Measures to support positive real interest rates, strengthen pension fund and insurance schemes, reduce budgetary deficits and capital costs, maintain macroeconomic stability and expand savings institutions, particularly for small savers, are essential in order to increase domestic saving.

3. These least developed countries also need to look for ways to tap regional and international capital markets. These initiatives could include an expanded Asian bond initiative, which makes use of the high level of international reserves in the region, or an international financing facility which recycles windfalls from extractive industries in some countries. These countries could also look into obtaining sovereign credit ratings which would enhance their ability to raise capital internationally.

4. Aid and debt relief from development partners, as well as foreign direct investment, complement domestic efforts to reduce the financing gap. On average, disbursements of aid in per capita terms to the least developed countries in Asia have been significantly lower than those to least developed countries in other regions. Moreover, aid to the least developed countries in Asia and the Pacific has not increased in per capita terms since 1990. Since most of those countries have succeeded in achieving higher growth rates than elsewhere and in keeping debt-servicing ratios relatively low, they continue to deserve a higher level of official development assistance (ODA) and should be considered eligible for debt relief.

## **1. Official development assistance and debt relief**

### *Action at the national level by the least developed countries*

5. Issues related to governance determine the absorptive capacity of least developed countries. Ensuring effective use of aid through improved management is critical. This requires (a) a national development strategy which directs aid to priority sectors identified by a national development plan; (b) aid coordination through a national consultative process; (c) harmonization of procedures with donors to reduce the resources required on the part of recipient least developed countries; and (d) development of an aid coordination database to facilitate coordination. Improvements in public resource management, prioritization of expenditure, stronger national institutions and policies, better institutional coordination, greater decentralization of project implementation and a better monitoring and evaluation framework will not only improve the efficiency of resource utilization but can help increase assistance. The least developed countries also need to accelerate reforms to reduce poverty, improve the capacity to manage the economy and reduce corruption.

6. A consultative process is essential in order to ensure that the national development plan addresses the priorities of the primary beneficiaries and to explain the reasons for the recovery of the cost of public services.

7. The public sector investment plan should ensure that the national development plan is linked to the national budget. Sustainability of aid is a concern. Public investment should focus on areas where there is limited or no investment by the private sector. Public investment projects should aim at cost recovery and funds for them should be disbursed at the beginning of the project cycle so that they can be completed.

8. Since the population in many least developed countries, especially those that consist of small islands, is often dispersed, national strategies should take into consideration the need for economies of scale so that investments, especially in the social sectors, are viable in the long term.

9. A multisectoral approach, which addresses all factors that affect achievement of a country's development goals, is essential. Improvement of social indicators through the provision of social services in remote areas may, for example, require development of transport infrastructure.

### *Action at the national level by development partners*

10. Development partners should support the national priorities of least developed countries through consultation and dialogue, and ensure that a country's efforts to strengthen its capacity are not undermined. Their strategies and assistance should be transparent and channeled to prioritized activities benefiting the poor. Aid should be disbursed at the beginning of a project cycle to enable least developed countries to meet the targets set by the Millennium Development Goals and the Programme of Action.

11. Development partners can improve aid effectiveness by untying aid, financing investment requirements and recurrent expenditures, supporting a sector-wide approach, providing budgetary support and supporting countries' strategies and priorities.

12. Since the gap between aid commitments and disbursements affects the budgets of least developed countries, committed assistance should be disbursed on time. Conditionalities should be reduced since they could lead to delays in aid disbursement and project implementation.

13. Resources given to non-governmental organizations (NGOs) should be compatible with the specific development goals of each country in which they operate. Greater transparency and accountability is needed from NGOs.

14. Domestic capacity to evaluate and manage projects should be developed. To enable transfer of technology and knowledge and to strengthen the institutional capacity, more local counterparts should be used.

*Action at the international level*

15. Development partners need to fulfil their commitments with regard to providing assistance to least developed countries. The international community is urged to meet the targets of 0.15 or 0.20 per cent of gross national product (GNP) as aid to least developed countries as embodied in the Brussels Declaration adopted by the Third United Nations Conference on the Least Developed Countries. Aid policies of development partners should place special emphasis on assistance to least developed countries.

16. Steps should be taken to establish coherence among donors in areas such as policy conditionalities, aid practices and their trade regimes. Efforts should be made to ensure recipient country ownership of policy conditionalities as well as aid projects. Such ownership should be based on genuine dialogue and a spirit of partnership between the donors and the recipient countries.

17. All aid to least developed countries should be untied and in the form of grants. Sufficient resources should also be made available to cover recurrent costs.

18. Many developing countries increasingly provide aid to least developed countries in the form of technical assistance and development projects. Such aid could be expanded. Developing countries could provide greater assistance to the least developed countries in trade, investment, aid and debt relief. Developed and developing countries could collaborate to provide aid more effectively. Triangular cooperation provides a cost-effective way to use the financial resources and technical expertise available from different sources.

19. Although least developed countries have received increased attention under the Heavily Indebted Poor Countries debt initiative, countries in Asia and the Pacific have yet to benefit from this

initiative despite generally good debt performance. All severely indebted least developed countries that have made tangible progress towards attainment of their Millennium Development Goals should be given debt relief. Debt forgiveness has to be provided over and above the regular assistance.

20. Debt of least developed countries in the Asian and Pacific region is largely from multilateral sources and highly concessional. Such debt obligations are relatively large for those small economies and often affect their decisions to solicit additional aid. Multilateral partners could consider granting debt relief to those countries, especially in post-conflict situations.

## **2. Investment**

21. Foreign direct investment to least developed countries in Asia and the Pacific has been miniscule. Subregional economic integration could lead to greater investment inflows. Such economic integration requires greater cooperation on issues related to infrastructure and trade facilitation, such as transport, customs clearance and product standards, as well as financial and labour services. Agreements on these issues therefore need to be both deepened and widened.

22. Inadequate infrastructure, particularly in power generation and transport, poses obstacles to greater investment in least developed countries of Asia and the Pacific. Port services and infrastructure need to be improved, especially as landlocked countries depend on transit countries for access to the sea.

23. The financial sector remains weak in most least developed countries. Reform and development of this sector should be pursued to maximize domestic resource mobilization. A creative approach will be needed to develop new institutions, such as microfinance institutions, which will also require appropriate regulation.

### *Action at the national level*

24. Policy liberalization has not led to increased foreign direct investment. Countries should examine the various elements that determine locational advantages and introduce measures to make improvements possible in areas amenable to policy action. Investment from both domestic and international sources should be directed to those sectors where a country has a comparative advantage and that generate employment within the country.

25. Strengthening of the private sector requires reduction of risks and transaction costs, macroeconomic stability, trade and investment liberalization and freeing of prices. Business support services such as the provision of information on foreign markets and of advice on productivity improvements, certification, quality control and human resources development are also essential. The enforcement of effective labour laws could provide greater flexibility for managers and improved work conditions and rights for workers.

26. Least developed countries should simplify administrative procedures. Regulations need to be streamlined so that bureaucratic delays and lack of regulatory clarity and scope for informal payments are minimized. Procedures for the establishment of new firms could be simplified. Tax and customs administration warrant particular attention.

27. Since limited access to finance and the high cost of capital constrain private sector development, greater competition within the financial sector and the introduction of microfinance are desirable. Strengthening of pension and provident funds, insurance schemes, the development of capital markets and positive real interest rates can also help improve resource mobilization. Where appropriate, State-owned banks should be either privatized or made more efficient and rural finance institutions should be developed and supported. Supervisory capacity in the financial sector should be strengthened.

28. Since the public sector accounts for a significant portion of economic output in least developed countries, full or partial privatization of economic activities that could be undertaken more efficiently by the private sector should be considered, where possible. This requires the articulation by the Government of a clear private-sector and foreign direct investment policy framework, the development of the necessary legislation to protect private-sector investment and the initiation of investment promotion activities. Greater private-sector participation, fostered through public bidding, could increase competition and lower costs for the provision of various services previously provided by the public sector. More areas, especially in the service sector, could be opened to foreign investment.

29. Issues related to property ownership, in particular land ownership, are a constraint to greater investment in several least developed countries. Land ownership encourages private investment. Without the possibility of land ownership, greater private-sector investment will be possible only with the assurance of long-term leases.

*Action at the international level*

30. A number of countries as well as multilateral institutions provide insurance guarantees to private-sector investment in least developed countries. The international community could also contribute to an increased flow of investment through co-financing, enhancing market access for exports from those countries and strengthening infrastructure facilities in them. Export-import banks should assume credits and country risks to direct more investment in least developed countries.

31. The Generalized System of Preferences facility should be extended to least developed countries by countries which have yet not done so, since it encourages greater investment.

32. Development partners can also help in developing project profiles, undertaking feasibility studies and detailed project reports, and conducting detailed project design in order to attract more investment.

## **B. Trade, migration and technology transfer**

### **1. Trade**

33. Tariff and non-tariff barriers as well as subsidies adversely affect the export earnings of least developed countries. Tariff rates imposed by developing countries on imports from other developing countries, including least developed countries, are not only high, but sometimes higher than those of developed countries. Although developed countries generally levy lower overall tariffs on exports from developing countries, tariff peaks are applied on agricultural products and labour-intensive products. As a result, least developed countries face higher average tariffs than their developed country counterparts.

#### *Action at the national level*

34. Trade liberalization policy should be integrated into a country's national development plan and poverty reduction strategy, not only to promote exports but also to reduce poverty through the expansion of trade.

35. Unfavourable geographical location increases both export and import costs. To increase the volume of trade and to make optimal use of available trade preferences, improved transport and communication networks are essential. Development of infrastructure for processing, storage and transport is needed in order to lower costs and improve export delivery times. Announced resource commitments relating to "aid for trade" should be delivered and an increased share devoted to the least developed countries.

36. Cumbersome documentation requirements and bureaucratic impediments raise trade-related transaction costs and erode the competitiveness of exports from many least developed countries. Customs agencies should be modernized and procedures streamlined to facilitate trade.

37. Greater diversification of exports and export markets is essential, given the narrow export base of least developed countries, which continue to be vulnerable to sudden changes in demand for their products in the main export markets.

38. Given the current pattern of trade of least developed countries, the benefits for those small economies of their membership in global and regional trading bodies need to be more evident. Greater technical capacity needs to be developed in key ministries so that obligations for complying with the rules of global and regional trading bodies are understood and available trade concessions are fully utilized.

*Action at the international level*

39. The Asian and Pacific least developed countries call on their trading partners to provide bound, duty- and quota-free access to all their exports. The least developed countries should be given universal non-discriminatory treatment for all of their products on a lasting basis.

40. Rules of origin should be simplified and harmonized to promote exports from least developed countries. Difficulties in complying with rules of origin result in low rates of utilization of the preferential treatment provided by developed countries.

41. Effective special and differential measures in favour of the least developed countries should be made an integral part of the multilateral trading system and should be binding within the framework of the World Trade Organization (WTO).

42. A large share of the population in least developed countries is employed in the agriculture sector. The share of this sector, including fisheries, in total exports of least developed countries is also significant. Developed countries should reduce agricultural subsidies, while developing countries could reduce tariff and non-tariff barriers. Such measures could lead to increased investment in the agricultural sector in the least developed countries.

43. There should be policy coherence on the part of development partners in their responses to the market access and supply capacity concerns of least developed countries. Market protection for exports from least developed countries could be considered. Measures should be taken to ensure remunerative commodity prices and the stabilizing of commodity trade.

44. In the context of revitalizing South-South trade, developing countries should contribute to better trade performance on the part of least developed countries by lowering trade barriers. Developing countries should reduce tariffs levied on exports from least developed countries and provide trade preferences, including market access preferences, on a non-discriminatory basis, so that least developed countries can increase their exports in regional markets.

45. Multilateral trade rules governing regional trade arrangements should be supportive of regional integration efforts and provide flexibility to the Asian and Pacific least developed countries in adjusting to a more liberalized and competitive trade regime. These arrangements could increase intraregional trade by the least developed countries and accelerate their integration with the region. Regional and subregional cooperation should be promoted, especially in the areas of trade, investment and the development of physical infrastructure.

46. Some least developed countries are engaged in the WTO membership process. Despite guidelines on simplifying and streamlining accession, the process has proved both complex and costly. The process for WTO membership should be expedited.

47. There should be a longer period of transition in the implementation of WTO agreements. Support should be intensified for the building up of capacity in least developed countries to undertake multilateral trade negotiations and ensure adequate representation in WTO trade negotiations.

48. With the expiration of the Multifibre Arrangement on 31 December 2004, trade in textiles and clothing is governed by WTO rules. Least developed countries which are exporters of these products need to cope with the adverse impact of such trade liberalization on employment, economic growth and poverty reduction. The Trade Integration Mechanism of the International Monetary Fund should be made effective and other mechanisms designed to address balance-of-payments issues resulting from trade liberalization should be explored.

49. Least developed countries need assistance to develop capacity for trade and overcome supply-side constraints. The decision taken at the Sixth WTO Ministerial Conference, held in Hong Kong, China from 13 to 18 December 2005, to establish an enhanced Integrated Framework for Trade-related Technical Assistance to Least Developed Countries, as well as to increase its resource base, is welcomed. Least developed countries that have not yet taken advantage of this framework should be encouraged to do so. Technical assistance should be offered in order to ensure that exports from those countries comply with the quality standards of importing countries.

## **2. Migration**

50. Migration constitutes a drain on human resources if professional and skilled workers depart. To foster and retain human resources within countries, Governments need to improve the quality of education at all levels and to create conditions that lead to better domestic employment opportunities. This may require the development of tertiary education as well as alternative training opportunities, with support from donors.

51. Migration within the Asian and Pacific region, however, has offset unemployment in least developed countries. Migration, especially from the small island least developed countries, has reduced population pressure and enabled the acquisition of new skills through the return of residents who had temporarily migrated abroad. Remittances account for a larger share of the balance of payments than trade in many least developed countries. In addition to being a major source of foreign exchange and income, they indirectly contribute to the economic growth of these countries.

52. Regional cooperation on the legal and institutional aspects of migration is essential in order to ensure the safety of migrant workers, including informal migrants, transparent and accountable labour policies and effective monitoring mechanisms.

### *Action at the national level*

53. In order to ensure that migrants have the skills in demand and obtain technical or professional work, appropriate training to improve human resources should be provided. Donors could earmark training facilities for least developed countries.

54. Efforts must be strengthened to develop mechanisms whereby remittances are invested in productive activities.

*Action at the international level*

55. There should be preferential market conditions for least developed countries with respect to the movement of natural persons. Greater temporary movement through official channels of natural persons from least developed countries to receiving countries that require their specific skills could reduce illegal migration and facilitate the integration of those workers in receiving countries. The establishment of institutions to facilitate official migration could ensure the enforcement of established labour standards and the provision of minimum wages and social benefits, and could reduce discrimination.

56. Since international human migration is a transnational phenomenon, a common migration policy framework at the regional and multilateral levels and bilateral negotiation within such a framework, with special focus on the concerns of the least developed countries, would be highly beneficial.

57. In order to provide a safe avenue for the transfer of remittances, money transfer through formal channels must be encouraged and promoted. The earnings of informal migrant workers must be protected. In this context, the outcome of the Ministerial Conference of the Least Developed Countries on Enhancing the Development Impact of Remittances, held in Cotonou, Benin on 9 and 10 February 2006, is welcomed.

58. The safety and security of migrant workers are of major concern to the countries sending these workers. The International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of their Families (General Assembly resolution 45/158, annex) must be ratified.

### **3. Technology transfer**

59. Transfer of technology that is appropriate to the needs and resources of least developed countries could improve the integration of those countries into the global economy and facilitate their overall development. Technology and knowledge transfer that parallels investment flows could also increase productivity in those countries. Transferred technology should be readily accessible, use resources and skills available within the country, minimize maintenance costs and be less costly in the long term. Technology transfer could be beneficial in all areas, including agriculture, energy, production, commerce and government. Technology transfer, especially information technology transfer, could contribute to better public education and health services.

*Action at the national level*

60. National policy to strengthen research and development capacity in the Asian and Pacific least developed countries should be strengthened. For countries in the Pacific, technical assistance

and training opportunities should be available through national and regional research institutes and universities. Lower-cost technology could improve access to and expand knowledge significantly in those countries.

61. Legal frameworks should be established for the protection of traditional knowledge and indigenous technology.

*Action at the international level*

62. Since the Asian and Pacific region is one of the leaders in the development of new technologies, regional cooperation and support from developing countries of the region can help transfer new technologies and encourage their use, especially in the least developed countries.

63. The transfer of technology could contribute to the development of niche markets that are essential for exports from the least developed countries.

**C. Environment**

64. The least developed countries are particularly vulnerable to natural disasters and environmental degradation, which could adversely impact the livelihood of many, especially the poor, whose economic and social well-being are dependent on the availability of natural resources. Environmental protection is therefore a priority.

*Action at the national level*

65. Environmental concerns need to be mainstreamed in all public policy decisions. Governance of environmental challenges can be improved by integrating poverty-environment issues into national planning frameworks, ensuring the effective participation of a broad range of stakeholders in implementing environmental action plans, and improving the monitoring of poverty-environment policy implementation. This may require the introduction of appropriate legislation and the establishment of institutional bodies to enforce it.

66. Effective measures to protect and conserve the environment must be adopted, promoted and implemented on a timely basis to minimize and reverse deterioration in the environment of least developed countries. Areas that need to be addressed include the dumping of hazardous wastes, the use of clean and renewable energy and the promotion of carbon sinks through community forestry and through reforestation programmes. Given the limited capacity of the least developed countries, especially those that are small islands, to contain waste, effective sanitation systems and waste management involving greater use of recycling and use of biodegradable materials are required.

67. Industrial development should be in line with proper environmental safeguards. Environmental impact assessment studies should be carried out in advance for sustainable

development. Awareness of environmental concerns, conservation and biodiversity should be promoted.

68. Given the vulnerability of least developed countries, especially those that are small islands, to natural disasters and given the fragility of their ecosystems, disaster mitigation strategies are essential. This requires the development of appropriate early warning systems and of institutional capacity to respond to disasters rapidly with the support of regional partners. The design and development of infrastructure to reduce the impact of disasters should also be actively promoted.

69. Environmental legislation and its enforcement should extend to the coastal areas and seas. Surveillance at the regional level through the shared use of satellite technology could be considered.

*Action at the international level*

70. The least developed countries call for the immediate ratification and implementation by all countries of the Kyoto Protocol and existing regional protocols.

71. Environmental issues are not just national issues. They are also of regional and global concern. Water pollution and deforestation problems in upstream countries often have an adverse impact on downstream countries. Similarly, countries in the region suffer from acid rain with the excessive emission of carbon dioxide. Enhanced regional cooperation on environmental issues helps minimize adverse transboundary environmental impacts.

72. Although the least developed countries are the least responsible for climate change, they are greatly affected by this phenomenon. There should be institutional and funding mechanisms at the global level to assist these countries to recover from natural disasters resulting from the effects of climate change.

73. While some funds and facilities such as the Central Emergency Response Fund and Global Environment Facility are available for dealing with the environmental consequences of climate change, the availability of such funds and facilities and how they can be accessed by least developed countries should be publicized.

**D. Conflict prevention and security**

74. There are several factors behind conflicts. Inequalities between regions or groups within a country could heighten both political and economic tensions that lead to conflicts. Violence, outside interference in the internal affairs of countries, terrorism, extremism used for political purposes and radicalism imposed from outside or of domestic origin could also be causes of conflict. Conflict not only lowers economic growth, exports and private investments, but also has a negative impact on a country's social and human development indicators. The cost of conflict could spread beyond national borders, leading to a rise in regional military spending, a decline in investment and disruption of trade.

75. Several least developed countries in the Asian and Pacific region have been seriously affected by violent conflicts. Others have experienced security issues and difficulties in maintaining law and order. Measures to reduce and prevent conflict are of interest to all least developed countries and must be promoted.

*Action at the national level*

76. Since conflict can be a major cause of poverty, national development strategies to address poverty must contain effective measures to prevent conflict. Peace and security will help promote economic growth and reduce poverty.

77. Equitable and transparent distribution of resources as well as benefits from economic growth could contribute towards more inclusive development and greater security. Timely resolution of conflicts between different social and ethnic groups through reconciliation is essential. As part of the national development process, greater emphasis should also be placed on the development of rural communities and institutions.

78. Illicit exploitation of minerals and natural resources could provide the means to sustain violent conflicts and weaken State capacity. The introduction of certification schemes can reduce opportunities for exporting the product of such illicit exploitation.

79. The capacity of relevant national institutions needs to be strengthened to enable them to contribute effectively to conflict prevention and national stability.

*Action at the international level*

80. Since aid to fragile countries may be low or unpredictable, a global fund should be established to finance their long-term reconstruction and development on a predictable basis. Development partners should also be more transparent about the conditions for aid allocations and their reasons for reducing investments in conflict-prone countries.

81. Security issues often extend beyond national borders and require regional solutions. For some least developed countries, this may require the strengthening of judiciary and police institutions and effective information sharing at both the national and regional levels. Countries also need to be more proactive to prevent tensions reaching crisis proportions.

82. Illicit trade in small arms and drugs has been a contributing factor to conflicts in many least developed countries. Effective measures are needed at the national, regional and global levels to deal with this challenge.

83. Terrorism and extremism undermine peace and stability in the least developed countries and cause hardship and suffering. Effective national, regional and global measures are therefore required to deal with terror and extremism.

## **II. PROCEEDINGS OF THE REGIONAL REVIEW OF THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE PROGRAMME OF ACTION FOR THE LEAST DEVELOPED COUNTRIES FOR THE DECADE 2001-2010**

### **A. Progress towards attainment of the Millennium Development Goals through the implementation of the Programme of Action**

84. The limited availability of internationally comparable statistics on least developed countries during the period 2001-2006 affected the conduct of the Regional Review. Gross domestic product was difficult to measure in some of the least developed countries since their economies were small and their outputs fluctuated widely over time. In such cases, other indicators should be used to measure the progress made by the least developed countries. Some delegations were of the view that, in addition to the two studies on the least developed countries of Asia and the Pacific prepared by the secretariat, greater focus could have been given to analysis of the actual performance of those countries during the period.

85. Since the goals and targets of the Programme of Action highlighted internationally agreed development goals which were specific to the least developed countries, it was important to ensure that the international community supported those goals. The overall goals of international development required the development of human resources, improved market access and strengthening of the capacity of least developed countries to address emerging challenges. Greater focus should be given to enhancing productive capacity through strengthening people-centred policies, including the gender dimension of those policies, in each country and promoting the agricultural sector to assist the rural population, as well as enhancing productive capacities.

86. Development partners should support the least developed countries through improved aid, debt relief, investment and market access. Development partners could also assist in strengthening the ability of the least developed countries to mobilize domestic resources and provide both training and technical expertise to those countries.

### **B. Implementation of regional support measures**

87. The regional commissions and subregional institutions should give support for and follow up on the implementation of the Programme of Action.

88. Greater coordination with the United Nations system was necessary to reach the least developed countries so that they were aware of the range of services and assistance available to them.

89. A number of measures were being undertaken to address the concerns of the least developed countries, including the convening of the High-level Dialogue on International Migration and Development in New York on 14 and 15 September 2006 during the next session of the General Assembly.

### **III. ORGANIZATION OF THE SESSION**

#### **A. Opening of the session**

90. The Regional Review of the Implementation of the Programme of Action for the Least Developed Countries for the Decade 2001-2010 was held in Bangkok on 14 and 15 March 2006.

91. The Executive Secretary of the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP) and the High Representative for the Least Developed Countries, Landlocked Developing Countries and Small Island Developing States made introductory statements. The Executive Secretary of the Economic Commission for Africa, the Executive Secretary of the United Nations Capital Development Fund, the Manager of the Regional Centre in Colombo of the United Nations Development Programme and the Chairman of the Global Least Developed Countries Coordination Bureau delivered statements to the Regional Review.

92. In his introductory statement, Mr. Bounnhang Vorachith, Prime Minister of the Lao People's Democratic Republic, noted that the Brussels Programme of Action for the Least Developed Countries for the Decade 2001-2010 had become the principle platform for all least developed countries to achieve the Millennium Development Goals, thus attaining their objectives in poverty eradication and sustainable development. In order to ensure that the Programme of Action was fully and effectively implemented during the remaining period 2006-2010, it was necessary to step up common efforts in addressing those global concerns, particularly poverty. The outcome of the Regional Review would constitute a significant input to the global review of the implementation of the Brussels Programme of Action to be held in New York later in 2006.

#### **B. Attendance**

93. The session was attended by participants from all 14 least developed countries in the Asian and Pacific region: Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Bhutan, Cambodia, Kiribati, the Lao People's Democratic Republic, Maldives, Myanmar, Nepal, Samoa, Solomon Islands, Timor-Leste, Tuvalu and Vanuatu. Representatives of China, India, Japan, the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, Mongolia, Pakistan, Papua New Guinea, Thailand and Uzbekistan also participated in the Regional Review. The Chairperson and Vice-Chairpersons of the Least Developed Countries Global Coordination Bureau accepted an invitation to attend the meeting.

94. Representatives of the United Nations Capital Development Fund, the United Nations Development Programme, the United Nations Environment Programme, the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development, the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa, the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, the International Labour Organization, the International Telecommunication Union, the World Intellectual Property

Organization, the World Food Programme and the Delegation of the European Commission to Thailand also attended the meeting.

95. A representative of the Korean Foundation for World Aid attended the meeting as an observer.

### **C. Election of officers**

96. The Regional Review elected Mr. Mahmoud Saikal (Afghanistan) and Ms. Noumea Simi (Samoa) Chairpersons, Mr. Ameer Khurram Rathore (Pakistan) and Mr. Naoyasu Murayama (Japan) Vice Chairpersons and Ms. Myo New (Myanmar) Rapporteur.

### **D. Agenda**

97. The Regional Review adopted the following agenda:

1. Opening of the session.
2. Election of officers.
3. Adoption of the agenda.
4. Progress towards attainment of the Millennium Development Goals through the implementation of the Programme of Action.
5. Implementation of regional support measures:
  - (a) Financing for development;
  - (b) Trade, migration, and technology transfer;
  - (c) Environment;
  - (d) Security.
6. Coherent national, regional and international measures to ensure attainment of internationally agreed development goals.
7. Other matters.
8. Adoption of the report.

### **E. Adoption of the report**

98. The Regional Review adopted its report on 15 March 2006.

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