

IFAD
INTERNATIONAL FUND FOR AGRICULTURAL DEVELOPMENT
Executive Board – Seventy-Ninth Session
Rome, 10-12 September 2003

**PROPOSAL TO MAINSTREAM IMPLEMENTATION OF
THE BRUSSELS PROGRAMME OF ACTION FOR
THE LEAST DEVELOPED COUNTRIES
IN THE PROGRAMME OF WORK OF IFAD**

A. INTRODUCTION

1. The Brussels Programme of Action for the Least Developed Countries for the Decade 2001-2010 (A/CONF.191/11) was adopted by the Third United Nations Conference on the Least Developed Countries, held in Brussels on 20 May 2001. The programme aims to achieve substantial progress towards meeting the Millennium Development Goal (MDG) of halving extreme poverty by 2015 and of promoting sustainable development, thus resulting in improved human conditions for more than 600 million people in 49 least developed countries (LDCs). It provides the framework for a strong global partnership to accelerate sustained economic growth and sustainable development in LDCs; end marginalization by eradicating poverty, inequality and deprivation in these countries; and enable them to become constructively integrated into the global economy.

B. BACKGROUND

2. The seven specific commitments of the programme are as follows:
 - (a) fostering a people-centred policy framework;
 - (b) encouraging good governance at the national and international level;
 - (c) building human and institutional capacity;
 - (d) building productive capacity to make globalization work for LDCs;
 - (e) enhancing the role of trade in development;
 - (f) reducing vulnerability and protecting the environment; and
 - (g) mobilizing financial resources.

3. Cross-cutting priority issues have also been identified, such as poverty eradication, gender equality, employment, sustainable development, special problems of landlocked and small island LDCs, and challenges faced by LDCs affected by conflict.

4. IFAD's strategic objectives have a common basis with those laid out in the Brussels Programme of Action for the Least Developed Countries. Indeed, as stated in the *Agreement Establishing IFAD*, the Fund's objective and functions "shall be to mobilize additional resources to be made available on concessional terms for agricultural development in developing Member States. In fulfilling this objective the Fund shall provide financing primarily for projects and programmes specifically designed to introduce, expand or improve food production systems and to strengthen related policies and institutions within the framework of national priorities and strategies, taking into consideration: the need to increase food production in the poorest food deficit countries; the potential for increasing food production in other developing countries; and the importance of improving the nutritional level of the poorest populations in developing countries and the conditions of their lives". Thus many of the commitments made by LDCs and their development partners in the Brussels Programme of Action are already being efficiently pursued by the Fund through the *Strategic Framework for IFAD 2002-2006*. These serve the overarching goal of enabling the rural poor to overcome their poverty through the fostering of: social development; gender equity; income generation; improved nutritional status; environmental sustainability; mobilizing financial resources for development (including locally); broadening poor people's access to financial and natural resources; fostering a people-centred policy framework; encouraging good governance at the national level through, inter alia, decentralization and devolution; and budgeting to achieve the MDGs.

5. The Brussels Programme of Action recognizes that the majority of the poor in most LDCs live in rural areas, depending on agriculture and related trade, services and processing activities for their livelihood. The only way to achieve a higher rate of growth in these countries is to engage the underutilized capacities of the poor through broadbased rural development centred on improved agricultural production. Increasing the sustainable productive capacity of agriculture and fisheries and the income of people working in these sectors is therefore a key priority for both the implementation and success of the Brussels Programme and the fulfilment of the Fund's mandate. Within its first 25 years of operation, IFAD has, in fact, channelled 39% of its development aid to LDCs, comprising 46% of its project portfolio. In 2001, the Executive Board approved a total of USD 159 million in loans for LDCs, while in 2002, despite the slightly lower figure of USD 130 million due to an overall lower programme of work, the percentage of lending to LDCs was maintained.

6. As stated in IFAD's *Rural Poverty Report 2001*, the most effective approach to reducing poverty levels is to focus on poor groups as agents of change, thus empowering the poor by creating the conditions that allow them to use their capacities more productively. Key elements in this process include allowing the poor to gain a stronger voice and influence in institutions that affect them, at both the local and national level, and promoting better access to health, education and economic services such as credit and savings.

7. The empowerment of the poor and their access to the material basis of production depend first and foremost on the people and governments of LDCs themselves. They need a policy orientation supportive of rural and agricultural development, with greater resources channelled to rural health, education and infrastructure, on the one hand, and to productive activities of the poor on the other, within a comprehensive development framework. The international community has an equal responsibility to offer stronger support to the efforts being made by LDCs.

8. The global campaign to achieve the MDGs, which, inter alia, address the needs of LDCs, has put the development of these countries high on the agenda of the United Nations. The success of the MDGs depends significantly on the success of the development efforts of LDCs. Progress with regard to the development indicators contained in the MDGs will move forward if LDCs do better in achieving those benchmarks. Thus the MDGs and the Brussels Programme are closely interlinked and mutually supportive.

C. PROPOSAL

9. IFAD therefore proposes that, in line with the General Assembly resolutions cited below, the Fund should join with other United Nations agencies, international financial institutions and multilateral organizations to mainstream implementation of the Brussels Programme of Action in their programmes of work and intergovernmental processes.

D. RECOMMENDATION

10. It is recommended that the Executive Board, taking into account the Brussels Declaration (A/CONF.191/12) and the Brussels Programme of Action for the Least Developed Countries (A/CONF.191/11) for the decade 2001-2010 endorsed by the United Nations General Assembly in Resolution 55/279 of 12 July 2001, review the present document and its annexes and authorize IFAD to:

- (a) continue giving special attention to LDCs in its programme and activities, and emphasize the effective implementation of the Brussels Programme within its mandate; and
- (b) take careful account of the Brussels Programme of Action in formulating IFAD's programme/activities and in its intergovernmental processes, as called for in the United Nations General Assembly Resolutions 56/227 of 24 December 2001 and 57/276 of 20 December 2002.

ANNEX I

United Nations

A/RES/55/279



General Assembly

Distr.: General
7 August 2001

Fifty-fifth session
Agenda item 102

Resolution adopted by the General Assembly

[without reference to a Main Committee (A/55/L.88 and Add.1)]

**55/279. Programme of Action for the Least Developed Countries
for the Decade 2001–2010**

The General Assembly,

Recalling its resolution 52/187 of 18 December 1997, in which it decided to convene the Third United Nations Conference on the Least Developed Countries at a high level in 2001, as well as its resolutions 53/182 of 15 December 1998, 54/235 of 23 December 1999 and 55/214 of 20 December 2000,

1. *Endorses* the Brussels Declaration¹ and the Programme of Action for the Least Developed Countries for the Decade 2001–2010,² adopted by the Third United Nations Conference on the Least Developed Countries, held in Brussels from 14 to 20 May 2001;

2. *Decides* to include in the provisional agenda of its fifty-sixth session an item entitled "Implementation of the Programme of Action for the Least Developed Countries for the Decade 2001–2010".

*107th plenary meeting
12 July 2001*

¹ A/CONF.191/12.
² A/CONF.191/11.

ANNEX II

United Nations

A/RES/56/227



General Assembly

Distr.: General
28 February 2002Fifty-sixth session
Agenda item 106 (b)

Resolution adopted by the General Assembly

[on the report of the Second Committee (A/56/569)]

56/227. Third United Nations Conference on the Least Developed Countries

The General Assembly,

Recalling its resolution 55/279 of 12 July 2001, in which it endorsed the Brussels Declaration¹ and the Programme of Action for the Least Developed Countries for the Decade 2001-2010,²

Emphasizing the importance of a highly visible, efficient and effective follow-up and monitoring arrangement for the implementation of the Programme of Action for the Least Developed Countries for the Decade 2001-2010, as well as of the Programme of Action for the Sustainable Development of Small Island Developing States,³ the Global Framework for Transit Transport Cooperation between Landlocked and Transit Developing Countries and the Donor Community,⁴ and relevant paragraphs of the United Nations Millennium Declaration⁵ for those countries,

Taking note with appreciation of the report of the Secretary-General on the follow-up mechanism for coordinating, monitoring and reviewing the implementation of the Programme of Action for the Least Developed Countries for the Decade 2001-2010,⁶

1. *Decides* to establish the Office of the High Representative for the Least Developed Countries, Landlocked Developing Countries and Small Island Developing States, having the functions recommended by the Secretary-General in his report;⁷

¹ A/CONF.191/12.

² A/CONF.191/11.

³ *Report of the Global Conference on the Sustainable Development of Small Island Developing States, Bridgetown, Barbados, 25 April-6 May 1994* (United Nations publication, Sales No. E.94.I.18 and corrigenda), chap. I, resolution I, annex II.

⁴ TD/B/42(1)/11-TD/B/LDC/AC.1/7, annex I.

⁵ See resolution 55/2.

⁶ A/56/645 and Add.1 and Add.1/Corr.1 and 2.

⁷ A/56/645, para. 17.

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ANNEX II

A/RES/56/227

2. *Requests* the Secretary-General to take immediate measures to make the Office of the High Representative operational as soon as possible;
3. *Calls upon* the Secretary-General to enhance the operational capacity of the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development as well as that of other organizations and bodies of the United Nations system in their activities aimed at supporting recipient countries, especially developing countries, and in particular the least developed countries, landlocked developing countries and small island developing States;
4. *Reiterates its invitation* to the organizations of the United Nations system and other multilateral organizations to mainstream the implementation of the Brussels Declaration¹ and the Programme of Action for the Least Developed Countries for the Decade 2001-2010² within their programmes of work as well as in their intergovernmental processes;
5. *Requests* the Secretary-General of the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development to review the title and functions of its current Office of the Special Coordinator;
6. *Invites* Member States to extend all necessary support and cooperation to the Office of the High Representative;
7. *Underlines* the importance of optimal coordination between the Office of the High Representative and the various organizations of the United Nations system and other multilateral organizations;
8. *Invites* the organs, organizations and bodies of the United Nations system, and other relevant multilateral organizations, to provide full support to and cooperation with the Office of the High Representative;
9. *Decides* that the provisions of the present resolution shall be implemented within the approved level of the budget for the biennium 2002-2003, and requests the Secretary-General to seek voluntary contributions for the Office of the High Representative;
10. *Requests* the Secretary-General to submit to the General Assembly at its fifty-seventh session a report on the implementation of the present resolution.

*92nd plenary meeting
24 December 2001*

United Nations

A/RES/57/276



General Assembly

Distr.: General
7 March 2003Fifty-seventh session
Agenda item 96**Resolution adopted by the General Assembly***[on the report of the Second Committee (A/57/541)]***57/276. Third United Nations Conference on the Least Developed Countries***The General Assembly,*

Recalling its resolution 52/187 of 18 December 1997, in which it decided to convene the Third United Nations Conference on the Least Developed Countries at a high level in 2001, as well as its resolutions 53/182 of 15 December 1998, 54/235 of 23 December 1999 and 55/214 of 20 December 2000,

Recalling also its resolution 55/279 of 12 July 2001, in which it endorsed the Brussels Declaration¹ and the Programme of Action for the Least Developed Countries for the Decade 2001–2010,²

Welcoming the establishment of the Office of the High Representative for the Least Developed Countries, Landlocked Developing Countries and Small Island Developing States, pursuant to its resolution 56/227 of 24 December 2001,

Taking note of the outcome of the Ministerial Conference of the Least Developed Countries, held at Cotonou from 5 to 7 August 2002,³

Taking note also of the report of the Secretary-General on the implementation of General Assembly resolution 56/227 on the Third United Nations Conference on the Least Developed Countries,⁴

1. *Reaffirms* that global-level follow-up to the Programme of Action for the Least Developed Countries for the Decade 2001–2010² should be primarily concerned with assessing the economic and social performance of the least developed countries, monitoring the implementation of commitments by the least developed countries and their development partners, reviewing the functioning of implementation and follow-up mechanisms at the country, subregional, regional and sectoral levels and policy developments at the global level that have implications for the least developed countries;

¹ A/CONF.191/12.

² A/CONF.191/11.

³ A/57/436, annex.

⁴ A/57/496.

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A/RES/57/276

2. *Invites* each least developed country, with the support of its development partners, to promote the implementation of the actions contained in the Programme of Action by translating them into specific measures within its national development framework and poverty eradication strategy, in particular poverty reduction strategy papers, where they exist, and with the involvement of civil society, including the private sector, on the basis of a broad-based inclusive dialogue;

3. *Stresses* the need for efficient and strengthened coordination and monitoring of and follow-up to the implementation of the Programme of Action, and in this regard calls for an adequate allocation of resources for the functioning of the Office of the High Representative for the Least Developed Countries, Landlocked Developing Countries and Small Island Developing States, to enable it to carry out successfully its mandate as set out in resolution 56/227;

4. *Welcomes* the decision of the Secretary-General to establish a trust fund to support the activities of the Office of the High Representative, pursuant to its call in resolution 56/227 for voluntary contributions;

5. *Calls upon* Member States, intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations and the private sector to make voluntary contributions to the trust fund, in particular for the implementation of the Programme of Action at the national, subregional, regional and international levels;

6. *Reiterates its call* to the governing bodies of the organizations and bodies of the United Nations system, international financial institutions and other multilateral organizations to mainstream the implementation of the Programme of Action within their programmes of work and intergovernmental processes;

7. *Emphasizes* that the organizations of the United Nations system have a special role to play in the implementation of the Programme of Action and that the full mobilization and coordination of all parts of the United Nations system to facilitate the coordinated and coherent implementation and monitoring of the Programme of Action is crucial, and in this regard welcomes with appreciation the decisions taken by several governing bodies of the organizations of the United Nations system to mainstream the Programme of Action;

8. *Urges* all Member States and the United Nations system, and invites the international financial institutions and other multilateral organizations, to extend to the Office of the High Representative their full support for the fulfilment of its mandate;

9. *Requests* the Secretary-General to submit to the General Assembly, through the Economic and Social Council, a comprehensive annual progress report on the implementation of the Programme of Action for the Least Developed Countries for the Decade 2001–2010.

*78th plenary meeting
20 December 2002*