

**Workshop for the National Focal points on the Implementation of the Brussels  
Programme of Action for Least Developed Countries**

17–21 May 2004, New York, United Nations Headquarters

**Opening remarks**

By Mr. Anwarul K. Chowdhury

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Landlocked Developing Countries and Small Island Developing States

Let me first introduce myself. My name is Anwarul Chowdhury. I am the High Representative of the LDCs, the LLDCs and the SIDS, the three most vulnerable groups of countries within the membership of UN.

My office, in very close consultations with the group of the LDCs, has organized this workshop of the National Focal Points in the LDCs and I convey to you a very, very warm welcome to NY. I hope that the coming days will be of great use to you in your responsibilities and also we will find the spirit of five days here in NY of tremendous support to the implementation process of the Brussels Programme of Action for the Least Developed Countries (BPOA). And I hope that your arrival here and this morning administrative arrangements went on well and I am very happy to see all of you here.

After saying a few words, I will introduce the colleagues here on the podium. But let me first of all very quickly say how particular delighted we are to have with us on the podium firstly, the chairman of the LDCs group Mr. Aho-Glele, Ambassador de Ruyt of Belgium, the host country of the Brussels conference and the place where the Program of Action was adopted for the decade that we are going through now, we are also happy to have our colleague and partner with us: the Associate Administrator of UNDP Mr. Diabre.

We are very happy that this workshop is the result of collaboration of my office – OHRLLS - and the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), the United Nations Department for Economic and Social Affairs (UN DESA), United Nations Conference in Trade and Development (UNCTAD) and the World Bank (WB). Our development partners and colleagues have also joined us in this workshop, and we hope that with their participation and introduction there will be a bigger opportunity for the National Focal Points to understand the interaction that goes in here as we participate in the UN discussions and debates with regard to the implementation of the Brussels Programme.

We believe that this workshop will help us to reinforce our collaboration and introduction with all stakeholders, both the LDC's and their development partners, in the process of implementation of the Brussels Programme. We hope that the workshop will not only

foster individual country level development in the context of shared expertise and experience in the implementation of the Brussels Programme, but will also allow all of us to have a perspective of each other with regard to the implementation of the Brussels Programme.

The binders that you have been given include the programme for five days and the names of presenters and facilitators for each segment, but as I have mentioned earlier at the meeting of the group of the LDCs, the most important element in this workshop is flexibility, its ability to adjust to the needs of the participants: according the way they like to see this workshop and benefit from it, and how they get the best advantage of this workshop. That is why this programme is guidance to you in facilitating your work, but as we move ahead we will see how this can be best adjusted to your needs and to your requirements.

The Brussels Programme have underlined that this is a global partnership between the LDCs and their development partners “to accelerate economic growth and sustainable development in the LDCs, to end their marginalization and enable them to integrate beneficially into the global economy”. The goal of the Programme is “to make substantial progress towards halving the proportion of people living in extreme poverty and suffering from hunger by 2015 and promote sustainable development of the LDCs” To this end, LDCs and their development partners have made joint commitments based on shared differentiated responsibilities in a number of areas.

In addition to the commitments, the BPOA has also identified a few cross-cutting issues, notably, poverty eradication, gender equality, employment, governance at the national and international levels, capacity building, sustainable development, special problems of land-locked and small-island LDCs, and challenges facing LDCs affected by, or emerging from, conflict.

Of particular reference to the proposed Workshop is the provision in the BPOA for various arrangements for the follow-up, implementation, monitoring, and review (Part III). Recognising that the achievement of the underlying objectives of the Programme hinges on the effectiveness of the follow-up arrangements the workshop will address the extent to which appropriate and effective measures have been instituted at the national level to build and deploy capacities for the implementation of the Programme, and for promoting linkages and synergies with other development programmes such as the PRSPs, CCA/UNDAFs, NEPAD, and Millennium Development Goals. Equally relevant are the issues of monitoring and evaluation.

Without prejudice to the conclusions to be reached at the workshop, one important lesson learnt from the past UN experience is that it is easier to adopt a Programme of Action than to ensure its successful implementation.

While a number of LDCs had embarked on reforms shortly after the launching of the Paris Programme of Action, the results of their efforts had been generally well below expectations. Among the obstacles to the realization of the Paris Programme’s objectives

were declining resource flows, a heavy and unsustainable debt burden, falling or volatile commodity prices, complex trade barriers, lack of economic and export diversification, and limited market access for key LDCs products, and supply-side constraints.

If national capacity for progress monitoring and reporting had been developed, most of the above-listed constraints would have been anticipated, and appropriate remedial measures might have been instituted.

With the development of national capacity to monitor progress and report on those I believe that many of these constrains can be individually identified for special attention by the various UN system organization, in accordance with their responsibilities. As noticed in the first progress report of the Secretary General presented last year in July in the Economic and Social Council on the implementation of BPOA it was mentioned that only few LDSc have put in place the national arrangements that the Brussels Conference . Besides, these existing mechanisms for the implementation, follow-up and monitoring of the Programme are weak.

It is against this background of the limited capacity of the least developed countries to implement, report, monitor and evaluate national implementation of BPOA, that we are holding this workshop to benefit from and exchange our views and share experience at the national level.

Once again, let me convey to you a very warm welcome to NY and to this workshop. We will be available for you during the coming days to help making your stay as pleasant and as productive as possible. So, please feel free to ask me or my colleagues if you have any needs or anything that you would like to know with regard to your participation here we will be very happy to be of assistance to you. With those few remarks let me know turn to Mr. Diabre Associate Administrator of UNDP.

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