



**United Nations**

**Introduction of the Report of the Secretary-General**

**by**

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**at the**

**Second Committee of the  
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**under**

**Agenda Item 56 (a)**

**on**

***“Implementation of the Programme of Action for the Least  
Developed Countries for the Decade 2001-2010”***

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I am pleased to introduce the fourth annual progress report of the Secretary-General on the implementation of the Brussels Programme of Action of the Least Developed Countries (LDCs) for the Decade 2001-2010 (A/61/82). Relevant General Assembly and ECOSOC resolutions requested that these reports are results oriented and analytical. This year's report has made an effort to include updated refined country-specific statistical data as much was available.

The report of the Secretary-General that I am introducing has been discussed in-depth during the general segment of this year's substantive session of the Economic and Social Council last July in Geneva, as part of the annual review process of the Programme of Action. I would, therefore, bring to the attention of the Committee some information regarding subsequent developments that are of particular relevance to the subject of the report. In this context, I would also like to draw your attention to the comprehensive report of the Secretary-General that was considered by the High-Level Meeting of the UN General Assembly that undertook the mid-term comprehensive global review of the Brussels Programme last September. The preparatory process for the High-Level Meeting was comprehensive and inclusive at the national, regional and global levels. The participation at the Meeting was remarkable, with 75 delegations taking the floor, including six Heads of State and Government, led by President Boni Yayi of Benin as the global Chairman of the LDCs, five Deputy Prime Ministers and 40 Ministers and Vice Ministers. The interactive hearings of civil society, NGOs and the private sector convened by the UN General Assembly President provided substantive inputs to the preparatory process. The consensus outcome has been welcomed by all.

In the Declaration adopted by the High-Level Meeting, Heads of State and Government and heads of delegations reaffirmed that the Programme of Action for the Least Developed Countries constitutes a fundamental framework for global partnership between LDCs and their development partners. They recommitted themselves to the objectives, goals and targets of the Programme and stressed that they could be achieved through the timely implementation of its seven commitments. The High-Level Meeting concluded that despite some progress, the overall socio-economic situation in the LDCs remains precarious and requires continued attention. It further concluded that given the current trends, many LDCs were unlikely to achieve the goals

and objectives set out in the Programme. While acknowledging notable achievements of many LDCs and significant efforts of their development partners, the Declaration also acknowledged that much more was to be done. It reaffirmed that the primary responsibility for the development in the LDCs rested with their governments and called upon their development partners to continue to support their efforts. It also called upon the UN system and its organizations to continue to assist the LDCs in the implementation of the Programme, taking into account the conclusions of the mid-term comprehensive global review.

The High-Level Meeting also welcomed the elaboration of the Cotonou Strategy for the further Implementation of the Programme of Action of the Least Developed Countries, that was articulated at the Ministerial Meeting of the LDCs in June in Benin, as an initiative owned and led by the LDCs.

The Brussels Programme is a comprehensive poverty reduction and development strategy tailored to the special needs of LDCs. It was designed as a framework of partnership between LDCs and their development partners and is the foremost results-oriented programme which includes 30 international development goals, including those contained in the Millennium Declaration. These time bound and measurable goals not only provide benchmarks for monitoring progress, they also serve as an effective means for planning, policymaking, institutional reform and resource mobilization.

In recent years, the LDCs have benefited from their reforms and better economic performance. In the Brussels Programme, the LDCs committed themselves to reach an annual 7 per cent GDP target. The fourth annual report of the Secretary-General shows that during 2001-2004 the LDCs grew at the average annual GDP growth rate of 5.5 per cent - much faster than during the period 1996-2000 and almost at their double average annual growth rate in 1990-1995. However, this growth has not resulted in meaningful reduction of extreme poverty in LDCs. The report suggests that extreme poverty has been decreasing in few LDCs and increasing in many. In almost half of LDCs, over 50 per cent of population lives in extreme poverty.

Social indicators, however, are improving thanks to the determined efforts by the LDCs with direct support from the international community. Most LDCs are making good progress on universal enrollment and gender equality in primary education. HIV/AIDS incidence rates in most affected LDCs have begun to decline, as a result of effective policy and programme interventions, but TB infection cases have increased due to the weakened human immune system caused by HIV infection. Significant investments in HIV/AIDS prevention and treatment programmes are needed to consolidate this emerging trend.

Some progress has been also made in the increase of the volume of the Official Development Assistance (ODA) and untying of aid to LDCs. The announcements by the European Union and other donors of their time-bound schedules for ODA increase would enhance the achievement of the Brussels ODA targets for LDCs. The agreement reached in 2005 in Paris on ownership, harmonization, alignment, results and mutual accountability holds promises to further improve aid effectiveness. In addition, considerable attention was being given recently to new and innovative efforts for mobilization of resources for LDCs. Redeeming the promises on ODA, debt relief and market access is crucial for achieving in a significant way the objectives of the Brussels Programme.

Another area of progress in the past year has been the serious efforts made by LDCs to address the critical issues of effective governance and the UN system's support in this regard has yielded positive results.

The Secretary-General's report identifies obstacles, constraints and emerging challenges to the implementation of the Programme. It emphasizes that effective implementation of the Brussels Programme requires strengthening country ownership, genuine partnership, an integrated approach, market consideration and results-orientation.

The just-concluded five-year review exercise has highlighted the need for focused attention with regard to the support provided by the UN Resident Coordinators to the 50 LDCs, increased national ownership by the LDCs for the implementation of the commitments made in the Brussels Programme, enhanced engagement of the international community to address the

special needs of these most vulnerable countries, increase in ODA and its effectiveness, effective governance, particularly at the local level, empowerment of women and infrastructure development. These are the areas which should get the supportive attention of the international community.

The wide-ranging support of the UN system emerged as a major contribution to the development of LDCs particularly during the last five years and should continue to be so in the next five. The Chief Executives Board of the UN under the chairmanship of the Secretary-General considered the outcome of the Mid-Term Review and decided on 27 October on the proposals for further coordination of the UN system's support to LDCs. The inter-agency consultations that were held at regular intervals during the preparatory process of the review has been transformed into an Inter-Agency Consultative Group (IACG). Mainstreaming of the implementation of the Brussels Programme in the work programmes of the organizations of the UN system and other multilateral bodies has generated considerable synergies that could be further harnessed through this Consultative Group.

Allow me to conclude by drawing attention of the Committee to the conclusions and recommendations in section III of the report.

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