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Bangladesh

Statement
on behalf of the Least Developed Countries (LDCs)

by

Her Excellency Ismat Jahan
Ambassador and Permanent Representative

at

at the high level segment of the substantive session of ECOSOC

New York, 02 July 2008

PERMANENT MISSION OF BANGLADESH
TO THE UNITED NATIONS

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Mr. President,

I have the honour to speak on behalf of the Least Developed Countries. The Group aligns itself with the statement of G77 and China.

Our session this year, is taking place against the backdrop of certain daunting challenges : the deepening global economic slowdown ; soaring oil and food prices and the growing threats of climate change. The impact of all these on the development prospects of the developing countries, in particular those of the LDCs, is indeed worrisome.

The United Nations , particularly the ECOSOC can and must play an effective role in terms of policy review, policy dialogue and recommendations to overcome the current crisis.

It is in such vein, we believe , that our session this year , provides an opportunity for in-depth inter-governmental discussions as well as a forum to exchange views with leading experts in specific fields ,on how the current global challenges could be best addressed. Needless to say , discussions under its two new mandates namely AMR and DCF, further enhances ECOSOC's coordinating role in the implementation and follow-up on the outcomes of the major international Conferences and summits in the economic, social and related fields.

Mr. President,

The food price has surged to record high levels. We had an opportunity to discuss the issue at a special session of ECOSOC in May. The LDCs , which are now net importers of agricultural and food products are the hardest hit by the current global food crisis. In the countries where poor households spend nearly 75% of their income on food items, a sharp increase in food price is bound to have strong adverse impact on the incidence of poverty and human development.

In dealing with the multifaceted challenges of food price hike, we need to respond through a coherent and multi-pronged approach, addressing short, medium and long-term needs. The Rome declaration called upon all donors and the United Nations System to increase their assistance for developing countries, in particular least developed countries. This must be implemented. We are looking forward to the recommendations of the Secretary General's Task Force on addressing the current food crisis. The international community may consider establishing a global food bank and an International Food Fund to ensure long-term food security for developing countries, in particular for the LDCs.

Investment in agriculture and rural infrastructure should be significantly scaled up to enhance agricultural production and improving the livelihood

appropriate policy recommendations on how to improve the quality of aid.

We call for the successful and early conclusion of the Doha Round of trade negotiations, with the full realization of the development dimensions of the Doha Work Program. Developed countries and developing ones in a position to do so must provide duty-free, and quota free market access to all products from all LDCs, unilaterally and without discriminations, even before the conclusion of the Doha Round. The Doha Round should tackle the systemic distortions in the international market for food and other agricultural products. LDCs must have an effective Special Product Provision (SP) and Special Agricultural Safeguard Mechanism (SSM) in place. Necessary support should be extended to net food-importing LDCs in order to ensure their social protection programmes.

Many LDCs are facing chronic problems from servicing their external debts. All outstanding debt of all LDCs needs to be written off immediately. This will release much needed resources to meet their pressing socio-economic needs.

Greater international efforts are needed to promote transfer of technology to LDCs. Increased investment is needed to develop cleaner and energy efficient technologies, renewable energy systems and climate-resilient high-yield varieties. Current IP regime should provide access to appropriate technologies and related field on a concessional and preferential basis. LDCs need increased international support from additional sources to build their climate resilient development.

Mr. President, the international community has long been aware of the specific problems and needs of the LDCs. What has however, sadly been lacking is adequate and sustained global response in ameliorating their conditions. We still believe that concerted global efforts undertaken with a sense of genuine partnership can make a difference. The LDCs are calling for urgent materialization of such a partnership.

I thank you Mr. President.