

ECOSOC 2004 High-Level Segment Preparatory Meetings

“Resources mobilization and enabling environment for poverty eradication in the context of the implementation of the Programme of Action for the Least Developed Countries for the decade 2001-2010”

Closing remarks for the President by
H.E. Ambassador Marjatta Rasi
President of the Economic and Social Council

18 March 2004

Excellencies,
Distinguished Colleagues,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

I am pleased to welcome all of you back to this closing session of the series of roundtables held in preparation for the High-Level Segment of the upcoming Substantive Session of the Council.

Today’s debate clearly demonstrated that Least Developed Countries are confronted with numerous formidable challenges:

- Too many LDCs are currently engulfed in conflict. The experience of Guinea Bissau and Burundi emerging from conflict demonstrates the need for these countries themselves to make a special effort in managing post-conflict transition and for the international community to provide support for the transition from war to peace and long-term development. The creation of the Ad Hoc Advisory Groups in these two countries is a positive step in mobilizing support from all sources. The extension of this initiative to other countries could be considered by ECOSOC.
- We recognized that a central aspect of creating an enabling environment in LDCs is that there can be no peace without development and no development without peace.
- Development partners can and must do more to support the national efforts by LDCs.
- The UN system itself can maintain focus on better coordination of the peacemaking and peacekeeping activities with emergency relief, peace building and development efforts in a seamless, multidimensional and long term approach.
- Other crucial elements for the LDCs emerging from conflict include capacity building to design and implement reconstruction plans and policy, appropriate funding for post-conflict transition, and enhanced coordination among partners in post-conflict reconstruction.
- We also considered trade and market access preferences for LDCs. There has been clear increase in market access schemes for the LDCs, although the need for further improvement is also recognized. It is important that trade and development have been brought together.

- But the most important message still remains that the targets contained in the Brussels Plan of Action and the MDGs cannot be achieved in the LDCs without sustained commitment and targeted action from national and international stakeholders to mobilize resources to root out the deep-seated poverty in these 50 countries.

Before I conclude, let me thank all of you for your active participation in our meetings these past two days. I wish to especially thank our distinguished co-chairs for their excellent guidance of our discussions. I am very pleased with the interactive and lively debate we had on the wide range of issues relevant to the theme of the high-level segment. Your ideas and recommendations will provide a major input to the high-level segment, to the report of the Secretary-General and will be compiled into a book. I also wish to thank the secretariat, Mr. Sarbuland Khan, Ms. Aliye Celik and their team, for organizing these meetings.

I would also like to draw your attention to the NGO Forum that will be held this afternoon in the ECOSOC Chamber. The Forum will focus on poverty eradication in Least Developed Countries and the role of NGOs in promoting sustainable development in these countries. NGOs have a crucial role in this year's high-level segment.