

**Opening Remarks at the Plenary
by Mr. Ibrahim A. Gambari
Under-Secretary-General and Special Adviser on Africa
18 March 2004**

Excellencies, ladies and gentlemen,
Distinguished colleagues,
Madam President,

I welcome the opportunity to make a few brief comments at the opening of the second day of the ECOSOC Preparatory meetings on the subject of “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”.

The Brussels Programme of Action (BPoA) created a global platform to highlight the special needs of the Least Developed countries and to address the growing poverty in LDCs, their marginalization in the global economy as well as enhance their prospects of achieving the Millennium Development Goals. By May this year, three years would have elapsed since BPoA was adopted and perhaps the question that needs to be asked is what progress has been made by the LDCs? Sadly, the minimalist answer will be that some progress has been achieved. The reality is that more still needs to be accomplished on the part of all the stakeholders within the LDCs and also the partners in the international community.

The Roundtables that will be held today and the High Level Segment itself in June provide unique opportunities for the international community and the LDCs themselves to reaffirm their commitment and, more important, to re-double their efforts to achieve the goals of the BoPA. At a time when the international community has established clear and inspiring goals for development, in the form of the MDGs; and when security has become indivisible and the collapse of a State in one part of the world can have terrible consequences for other distant parts of the world; BoPA cannot be allowed to go the way of the first and second programmes of action for the LDCs. The days when commitments were not sufficiently backed up by action should be considered over. Inaction or complacency by the international community will exact high and painful costs not only in terms of increased hunger and poverty, increased infant and maternal mortality and rising level of illiteracy but also in the festering of political turmoil and instability at the national, regional and global levels.

None of these need happen, if we act creatively and courageously. In Africa, the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD) has emerged as the African Union's programme that embodies the vision leadership of African leaders for peace and development on the continent. African countries, including the LDCs among them, are committed to the objectives and goals of NEPAD which provides an excellent framework for global support for its objectives through the combination of the principle of African ownership and the offer of partnership with the international community. They stand to benefit most from the synergies created at the continental, sub-regional and national level from linking their efforts under the Brussels POA to the Millennium Development Goals and NEPAD's priority areas.

Excellencies,

Distinguished Participants,

The wind of peace appears to be blowing over Africa as illustrated by the progress being made in resolving the conflicts in Burundi, Guinea-Bissau and elsewhere on the continent. Hence, there is need for renewed efforts by the Africans themselves with the support of the UN system and the international community in terms of addressing the challenges of post-conflict peace-building.

Let me conclude by highlighting that resource mobilization is important to achieving the goals of BOPA and other commitments for all developing countries particularly the LDCs. During the deliberations at the Third UN Conference on the LDCs in Brussels, much emphasis was placed on the notion of **deliverables** – concrete measures and actions needed to implement the Brussels Programme of Action. Now is the time for promises made and pledges offered to be redeemed.

Thank you.

Welcoming Remarks by Mr. Gambari
Roundtable on “Creating an enabling environment and resource mobilization for Least Developed Countries emerging from conflict”
18 March, 2004

Excellencies, ladies and gentlemen,
Distinguished colleagues,

I am most delighted to welcome you all to this Roundtable on “Creating an enabling environment and resource mobilization for Least Developed Countries emerging from conflict”.

In particular, I am delighted to extend a special welcome to H.E. Mr. Joao Jose Monteiro, Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Guinea Bissau and H.E. Mrs Serafine Wakana, Minister for Planning, Development and Reconstruction of the Republic of Burundi as co-chairs. We are honoured that you could join us today to share your insights and knowledge. I would also like to welcome H. E. Mr. Dumisani Kumalo, Permanent Representative of the South Africa to the United Nations in his capacity as the Chairman of the two Ad Hoc Advisory Groups on Guinea Bissau and Burundi as well as H.E. Koichi Haraguchi, Permanent Representative of Japan to the United Nations.

May I also welcome the representatives of several agencies that have gathered to participate in our roundtable today, including:

1. Mr. Jean Jacques Graisse, Deputy Executive Director of the WFP;
2. Mr. Berhanu Dinka, Special Representative of the SG for Burundi
3. Mr. Harry Snoek, Deputy Division Chief, African Department of the IMF;
4. Ms. Sarah Cliffe, Program Coordinator, Low Income Countries Under Stress Initiative, the World Bank; and
5. Mr. Ad Vaher, Director, External Relations and UN Affairs, UNICEF

I would like to take this opportunity to inform the participants about the arrangements for our meeting today. The purpose of this roundtable is to have a meaningful and interactive dialogue between the roundtable participants and the Member States. Interventions by roundtable participants should be short and concise and not exceed 3 minutes. I urge all roundtable participants to summarise the main points of their presentations rather than read detailed, prepared statements. Finally, Foreign Minister Monteiro will present a summary report of our discussions at the closing session following our roundtable from 12:45 –1:00 pm. I hope you will all be there to appreciate the results of the roundtables that will be held today. I thank you all in advance for your cooperation and understanding on this matter.

In closing, I would like to underline that the intention of this Roundtable is not to evaluate the Ad Hoc Advisory Group Mechanism, but to look broadly at the special needs and requirements of post-conflict LDCs. We will draw on the experience of Guinea Bissau and Burundi as examples of two countries that have received some special attention in meeting their challenges. Fortunately, the Ministers of these two countries are here to share their national experiences with us.

It is now my pleasure to give the floor to H.E. Mr. Monteiro, Minister of Foreign Affairs of Guinea Bissau – you have the floor.

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I would now like to ask H.E. Mrs Serafine Wakana, Minister of Planning, Development and Reconstruction to take the floor.