



ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL COMMISSION FOR ASIA AND THE PACIFIC

Special Body on Least Developed and Landlocked Developing Countries

Seventh session  
10-11 May 2005  
Bangkok

**IMPLEMENTATION OF THE PROGRAMME OF WORK, 2004-2005**

(Item 6 of the provisional agenda)

*Note by the secretariat*

**SUMMARY**

The present note reviews the implementation of activities in the secretariat's programme of work, 2004-2005, for the benefit of least developed and landlocked developing countries. The review is organized under activities implemented for the least developed countries in line with the Brussels Programme of Action and for the landlocked developing countries in line with the Almaty Programme of Action. It also reports on the implementation of the Commission resolution 59/4 on the implementation of the Programme of Action for the Least Developed Countries for the Decade 2001-2010.

The Special Body may wish to review the status of implementation and propose measures to improve it for the benefit of least developed and landlocked developing countries.

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## I. IMPLEMENTATION OF THE PROGRAMME OF WORK, 2004-2005

1. The present note provides a brief review and analysis of activities undertaken by the secretariat during the biennium 2004-2005 primarily for the least developed and landlocked developing countries as at 28 February 2005.<sup>1</sup> The activities for the least developed countries were implemented in line with commitments made in the Brussels Programme of Action for the Least Developed Countries for the Decade 2001-2010, while those for the landlocked developing countries were implemented in line with the Almaty Programme of Action: Addressing the Special Needs of Landlocked Developing Countries within a New Global Framework for Transit Transport Cooperation for Landlocked and Transit Developing Countries. These activities were also implemented in line with the Millennium Declaration, as well as the outcomes of recent global conferences, such as the International Conference on Financing for Development, held in Monterrey, Mexico, from 18 to 22 March 2002, the World Summit on Sustainable Development, held in Johannesburg, South Africa, from 26 August to 4 September 2002, the Fifth Ministerial Conference of the World Trade Organization (WTO), held in Cancún, Mexico, from 10 to 14 September 2003, and the first phase of the World Summit on the Information Society, held in Geneva from 10 to 12 December 2003, which recommended specific measures for these groups of countries.

2. In order to provide greater visibility and ensure the implementation of the global programmes of actions for the least developed, landlocked and small island developing States, the secretariat has instituted a number of changes in its structure and the implementation of its programme of work. The Least Developed Countries Coordination Unit was established within the Office of the Executive Secretary in August 2002. It is responsible for bringing the particular concerns of these groups of countries to the attention of the Commission through the Special Body on Least Developed and Landlocked Developing Countries, monitoring economic developments in the least developed countries through the annual *Economic and Social Survey of Asia and the Pacific* and coordinating activities for the least developed and landlocked developing countries. The programme of work has increasingly placed greater focus on the views of the least developed and landlocked developing countries in its legislative activities and upon the implementation of technical cooperation activities by each substantive division.

3. Given the cross-cutting nature of the commitments and priorities, activities to address the specific concerns of the least developed and landlocked developing countries have been implemented by various substantive divisions of the secretariat. Of the 153 technical cooperation projects

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<sup>1</sup> The least developed countries in the Asian and Pacific region are Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Bhutan, Cambodia, Kiribati, the Lao People's Democratic Republic, Maldives, Myanmar, Nepal, Samoa, Solomon Islands, Timor-Leste, Tuvalu and Vanuatu. The landlocked developing countries in Asia are Afghanistan, Armenia, Azerbaijan, Bhutan, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, the Lao People's Democratic Republic, Mongolia, Nepal, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan. This note considers activities for both the landlocked (Afghanistan, Bhutan, Lao People's Democratic Republic and Nepal) and island (Kiribati, Samoa, Solomon Islands, Timor-Leste, Tuvalu and Vanuatu) least developed countries under the least developed category to avoid double counting.

implemented by ESCAP during the biennium 2004-2005, 103 involved the participation of the least developed countries and 74 involved the participation of landlocked developing countries.<sup>2</sup> In addition to activities implemented by the ESCAP secretariat in Bangkok, activities implemented for the benefit of Pacific island least developed countries were undertaken jointly with or by the ESCAP Pacific Operations Centre in Port Vila. The four regional institutions, namely, the Asian and Pacific Centre for Agricultural Engineering and Machinery, in Beijing, the Asian and Pacific Centre for Transfer of Technology in New Delhi, the Centre for Alleviation of Poverty through Secondary Crops Development in Asia and the Pacific in Bogor, Indonesia, and the Statistical Institute for Asia and the Pacific (SIAP) in Chiba, Japan, also implemented activities for these countries during this period.

**A. Implementation of the Brussels Declaration and the Programme of Action for the Least Developed Countries for the Decade 2001-2010**

4. The Brussels Declaration and the Programme of Action for the Least Developed Countries for the Decade 2001-2010, adopted by the Third United Nations Conference on the Least Developed Countries in Brussels on 20 May 2001, were endorsed by the General Assembly in its resolution 55/279 of 12 July 2001. The Programme of Action identified a number of cross-cutting priority issues, namely, poverty eradication, gender equality, employment, governance at the national and international levels, capacity-building, sustainable development, special problems of landlocked and small island least developed countries, and challenges faced by countries affected by conflict, that need to be addressed. The Programme of Action identified seven commitments made by the least developed countries and their development partners in a spirit of genuine solidarity and shared responsibility. The seven commitments are enumerated in table 1.

Table 1. Commitments in the Programme of Action for the Least Developed Countries for the Decade 2001-2010

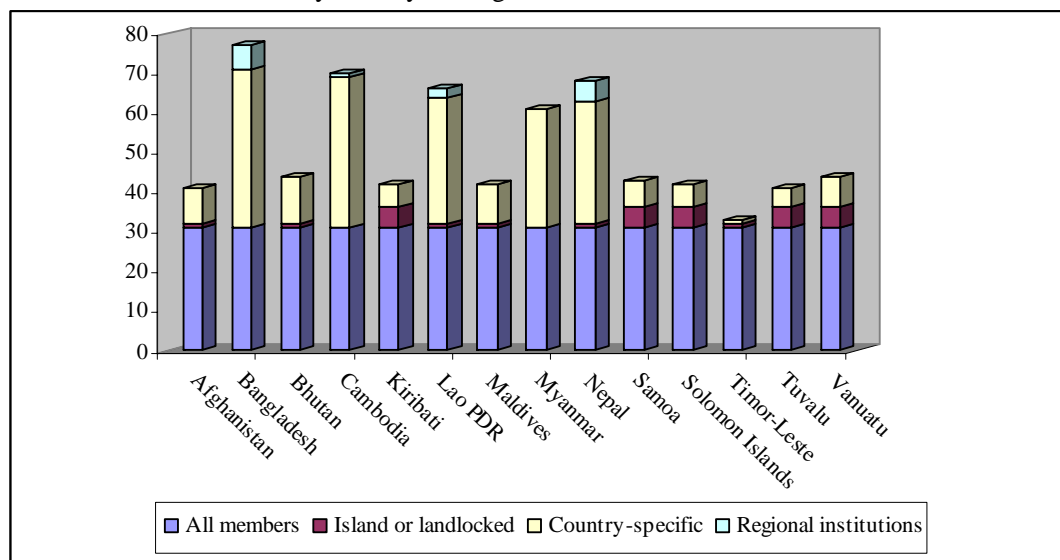
Commitment 1: Fostering a people-centred policy framework (includes statistics)
Commitment 2: Good governance at national and international levels
Commitment 3: Building human and institutional capacities (includes social infrastructure and social service delivery, population, education and training, health, nutrition and sanitation, and social integration)
Commitment 4: Building productive capacities to make globalization work for LDCs (includes physical infrastructure, technology, enterprise development, energy, agriculture and agro-industries, manufacturing and mining, rural development and food security, and sustainable tourism)
Commitment 5: Enhancing the role of trade in development (includes trade, commodities and regional trading arrangements, services and reducing the impact of external economic shocks)
Commitment 6: Reducing vulnerability and protecting the environment (includes protecting the environment and alleviating vulnerability to natural shocks)
Commitment 7: Mobilizing financial resources (includes domestic resource mobilization, aid and its effectiveness, external debt and foreign direct investment and other private external flows)

<sup>2</sup> Projects listed on the electronic technical cooperation reporting system (e-TC), dated 28 February 2005. These figures include 31 projects which mention all countries in Asia and the Pacific as beneficiaries, 5 projects that list all island developing countries as beneficiaries and 1 project that lists all landlocked developing countries as beneficiaries.

5. The Programme of Action requested regional commissions to ensure that the needs and problems of the LDCs were addressed as part of their ongoing work. At its first review of the implementation of the Programme of Action in 2003, the Economic and Social Council, however, expressed its deep concern over its weak implementation and reiterated that the Programme of Action offered a framework for partnership, based on mutual commitments by least developed countries and their development partners to undertake concrete actions. It called upon least developed countries to promote its implementation by translating it into specific measures within their national development frameworks and poverty reduction strategies, and upon developed countries to make concrete efforts to effectively implement their commitments. It invited the United Nations system to support, as a priority, the implementation of the Programme of Action, including programmes of financial and technical cooperation devoted to LDCs in support of their national development programmes, including their poverty reduction strategies.<sup>3</sup>

6. The technical cooperation projects implemented for the least developed countries by the secretariat during the first 14 months of the biennium 2004-2005 in line with the Brussels Programme of Action are illustrated in figure I. The distribution of projects to address the commitments made in the Brussels Programme of Action is illustrated in figure II.<sup>4</sup> Since it is a regional commission, ESCAP's projects under the Programme of Action focus largely on commitments 2, 3 and 4.

Figure I. Number of technical cooperation projects implemented in line with the Programme of Action for the Least Developed Countries for the Decade 2001-2010, by country, during the biennium 2004-2005



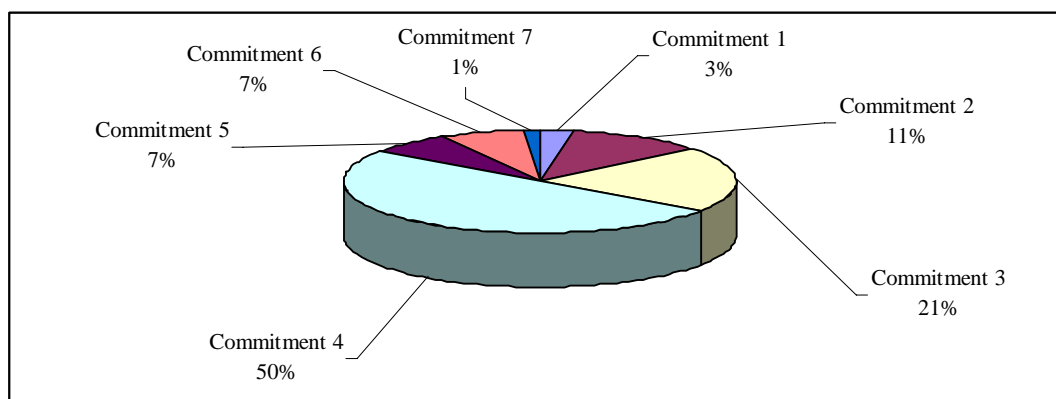
Source: Electronic technical cooperation reporting system (e-TC), as at 28 February 2005.

Note: These figures reflect activities involving the least developed countries as well as those implemented for the benefit of member countries.

<sup>3</sup> Economic and Social Council resolution 2003/17.

<sup>4</sup> Figure II excludes activities reported as being implemented for all members in the Asian and Pacific region.

Figure II. Technical cooperation projects implemented in line with the Programme of Action for the Least Developed Countries for the Decade 2001-2010, by commitment during the biennium 2004-2005



*Source:* Electronic technical cooperation reporting system (e-TC), as at 28 February 2005.

*Note:* These figures reflect activities specifically listing the participation of the least developed countries.

7. Commitment 1 fosters a people-centred policy framework and stresses the importance of supporting the efforts of the LDCs in promoting a comprehensive and integrated information base through strengthening national statistical systems. In response, two post-conflict LDCs, Afghanistan and Cambodia, participated in the project to improve disability statistics and measurement in support of the Biwako Millennium Framework. In addition to supporting the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals in Asia and the Pacific, SIAP, a dedicated statistical training institute, held courses to strengthen statistical capacity in those countries.

8. Commitment 2 focuses on good governance at the national and international levels. In this regard, the secretariat implemented pilot field projects under the Human Dignity Initiative. Under these field projects, community-based safety nets were developed as tools for human development in Phnom Penh in collaboration with the Cambodia Volunteers for Community Development and in Vientiane in collaboration with Village Focus International. The two field projects aimed at identifying the policy environment and changes required to allow communities to undertake activities to effectively reduce poverty and at identifying the types of external assistance needed by those communities in order to make better use of available government resources. The secretariat also assisted in strengthening the replication of best practices in community development in Nepal.

9. Commitment 3 promotes building human and institutional capacities. In this context, the secretariat continues to implement a number of technical cooperation activities on social issues and on poverty and development. The secretariat assisted in mainstreaming girls' education into the development process of Bangladesh and Cambodia and in integrating youth health concerns into non-formal education in Bangladesh, Cambodia, the Lao People's Democratic Republic and Nepal.

10. Commitment 4 focuses on eight areas, namely, physical infrastructure, technology, enterprise development, energy, agriculture and agro-industries, manufacturing and mining, rural development and food security, and sustainable tourism, in order to build productive capacities to make globalization work for the least developed countries. Bangladesh, Cambodia, the Lao People's Democratic Republic, Myanmar, Nepal and the LDCs in the Pacific participated in the project to increase access by rural populations to clean and affordable energy services. Capacity-building in information and communication technology was undertaken in Bangladesh, Bhutan, Kiribati, the Lao People's Democratic Republic, Maldives, Myanmar and Nepal. Activities to promote poverty alleviation and regional cooperation through sustainable tourism development were undertaken in Bangladesh, Bhutan, Cambodia, the Lao People's Democratic Republic, Maldives, Myanmar and Nepal.

11. Many aspects of commitment 5, enhancing the role of trade in development, are directly linked to the WTO-related issues of accession, agriculture, sanitary and phytosanitary measures, technical barriers to trade and dispute settlement procedures and practices. In collaboration with WTO, regional workshops on trade in services negotiation and on customs valuation, trade facilitation and rules of origin were held in Dhaka and Yangon, respectively. Trade and investment promotion activities in Pacific island developing countries through effective use of information technology were designed to address the concerns of Kiribati, Samoa, Solomon Islands, Tuvalu and Vanuatu. The secretariat also assisted Bangladesh in strengthening its capacity to manage globalization through effective integration into the multilateral trading system.

12. Under commitment 6 to reduce vulnerability and protect the environment, awareness of water conservation for ensuring sustainable development was promoted in Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Cambodia, the Lao People's Democratic Republic, Maldives, Myanmar and Nepal.

13. To mobilize financial resources under commitment 7 and in line with the recommendations in the Monterrey Consensus, Cambodia, the Lao People's Democratic Republic, Nepal and Samoa participated in capacity-building for external debt management. In collaboration with the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), the secretariat also conducted technical consultations on achieving the Millennium Development Goals in the least developed countries through trade, aid and debt relief, upon which the note by the secretariat on agenda item 4 of this session of the Special Body is based.

**B. Implementation of the Almaty Declaration and Programme of Action: Addressing the Special Needs of Landlocked Developing Countries within a New Global Framework for Transit Transport Cooperation for Landlocked and Transit Developing Countries**

14. Activities for the landlocked developing countries are designed in accordance with the priorities of the Almaty Programme of Action, which aims to forge partnerships to overcome the specific problems of the landlocked developing countries, such as high transport costs, reduced

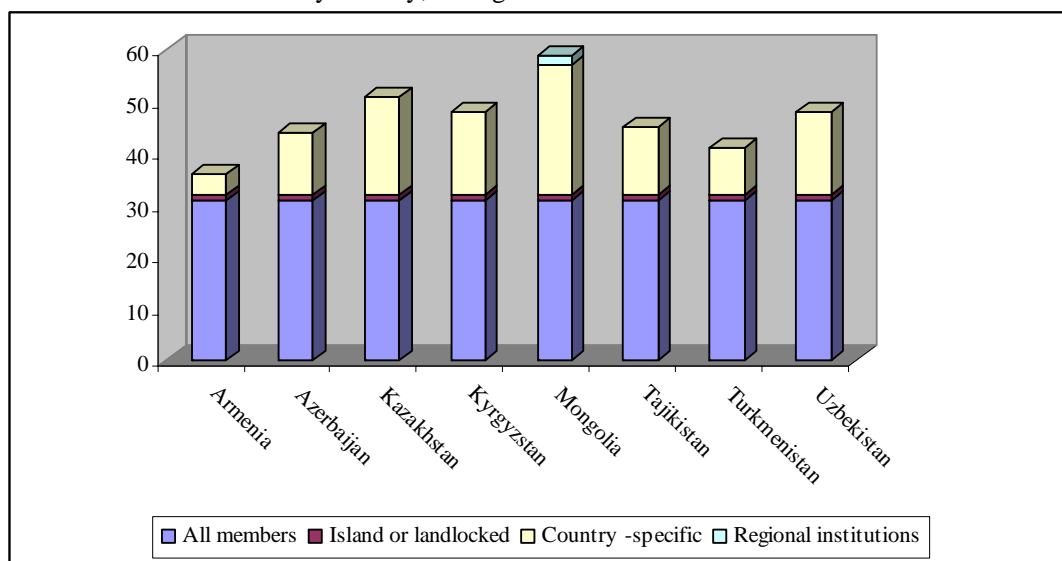
participation in international trade and relative poverty, as a result of their lack of territorial access to the sea and their remoteness and isolation from world markets. The road map for the implementation of the Almaty Programme of Action was subsequently endorsed at an inter-agency meeting convened in New York on 4 February 2004.

15. The priorities of the Almaty Programme of Action are enumerated in table 2. The technical cooperation projects for the landlocked developing countries which have been reported, including those implemented by the secretariat in line with the Almaty Programme of Action during the first 14 months of the biennium 2004-2005, are illustrated in figure III.

Table 2. Priorities of the Almaty Programme of Action

Priority 1. Fundamental transit policy issues
Priority 2. Infrastructure development and maintenance
A. Rail transport
B. Road transport
C. Ports
D. Inland waterways
E. Pipelines
F. Air transport
G. Communications
Priority 3. International trade and trade facilitation
Priority 4. International support measures
Priority 5. Implementation and review

Figure III. Number of technical cooperation projects implemented in landlocked developing countries, including those in line with the Almaty Programme of Action, by country, during the biennium 2004-2005



Source: Electronic technical cooperation reporting system (e-TC), as at 28 February 2005.

Note: These figures reflect activities involving the landlocked developing countries as well as all other member countries.



16. The secretariat implemented a number of technical cooperation activities in the areas of trade and transport in the landlocked developing countries. In accordance with the mandate given by the Ministerial Conference on Infrastructure in 2001, the secretariat presented a draft Intergovernmental Agreement on the Trans-Asian Railway Network at a regional meeting held in Bangkok on 22 and 23 November 2004. This Agreement, which is based on the European Agreement on Important International Combined Transport Lines and Related Installations (1991), provides a framework for coordinated planning and improvement by identifying international railway lines, including rail-linked container terminals. The Subcommittee on Transport Infrastructure and Facilitation and Tourism recommended that an intergovernmental meeting be organized in 2005 to finalize the Agreement so that it can be adopted by the Commission at its sixty-second session.

17. The Intergovernmental Agreement on the Asian Highway Network was opened for signature during the Ministerial Segment of the sixtieth session of the Commission. At that time, 26 member States signed the Agreement, with three signatures, including that of Uzbekistan, being definitive. The Agreement will come into force when 8 States consent to be bound by it. After the Agreement comes into force, the secretariat will organize the first session of the Working Group on the Asian Highway, which is expected to meet every two years, to negotiate revisions of the Asian Highway routes and discuss policies related to highway infrastructure. Improving the Asian Highway network to satisfy the requirements of international transport is an important consideration underlying the Intergovernmental Agreement. The secretariat is therefore working with member countries and subregional organizations to identify the investment needs and priorities for the Asian Highway network, its inter modal connections and freight terminals.

18. A number of activities are being implemented in collaboration with other regional and subregional organizations. A project to develop Euro-Asian transport linkages is also being implemented jointly with the Economic Commission for Europe under the United Nations Development Account project to build capacity for developing interregional land and land-cum-sea transport linkages. The project will identify the main international transport routes and inter-modal connections linking Asia and Europe. In addition to the member countries of the Special Programme for the Economies of Central Asia (SPECA), Afghanistan and Armenia have been invited to participate in the project.<sup>5</sup> Although members of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO) have opened 80 border crossings for cross-border road transport and transit through their countries since the early 1990s, international road transport still faces numerous difficulties which adversely affect trade.<sup>6</sup> These countries have therefore proposed the establishment of a common multilateral agreement on facilitation of international road transport that could result in smooth movement of goods and people between and among member countries and with non-SCO countries. The secretariat

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<sup>5</sup> The members of SPECA are Azerbaijan, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan.

<sup>6</sup> The members of SCO are China, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, the Russian Federation, Tajikistan and Uzbekistan.

has developed a draft agreement on facilitation of international road transport, which lays down the main principles governing international road transport among the parties and spells out the details through eight supporting protocols, for their consideration.

19. In addition to these activities, the secretariat was to participate in a meeting on the role of international, regional and subregional organizations for the implementation of the Almaty Programme of Action, to be organized by the Office of the High Representative for the Least Developed Countries, Landlocked Developing Countries and Small Island Developing States in Almaty, on 29 and 31 March 2005. The meeting was expected to bring together senior officials dealing with regional transport infrastructure development and trade facilitation from more than 30 regional and subregional organizations in Africa, Asia and Latin America to consider strategies for the establishment of efficient transit systems in their respective subregions.

### **C. Implementation of future technical cooperation activities for the least developed and landlocked developing countries**

20. The secretariat is continuously reviewing its technical cooperation services in order to ensure that the needs of the least developed countries, landlocked developing countries, small island developing States and countries with economies in transition are being fully addressed. In the selection of technical cooperation services, comprising technical assistance projects, regional advisory services and South-South cooperation activities, those which involve these special groups of countries and include a gender dimension are given preference. Technical cooperation services are selected according to the needs of member countries as reflected in the Common Country Assessments and the United Nations Development Assistance Framework, or in the case of regional advisory services, from direct requests by Governments. The activities are also selected based on the degree to which they complement the overall programme of work.

#### **1. Sources of support for technical cooperation activities**

21. Of the estimated US\$ 25.5 million available for technical cooperation services during the biennium 2004-2005, extrabudgetary funds received from donors such as Governments, bilateral and multilateral agencies and private entities comprised 80 per cent of the total while regular budgetary funds received from the assessed contributions of all United Nations Member States, as approved by the General Assembly, comprised 20 per cent. More than 40 per cent of the technical cooperation budget for the biennium 2004-2005 was allocated to projects aimed at managing globalization, while 35 per cent was allocated to projects aimed at reducing poverty and 15 per cent to projects targeted towards addressing emerging social issues. The remaining funds were allocated to multi-theme projects related to monitoring and evaluation of technical cooperation projects, development of partnerships and promoting South-South cooperation. The sources of funds for technical cooperation activities are enumerated below:

- Donor countries. Traditional donor countries, namely, China, Japan and the Republic of Korea, annually give lump-sum funds to the Commission while others, including Australia, France, Germany, the Netherlands, Norway, Sweden and Switzerland, contribute to specific technical cooperation activities of the Commission. These extrabudgetary funds are used to cover the cost of most technical cooperation activities implemented by the secretariat.
- Regular programme of technical cooperation – section 23. Funds from section 23 of the United Nations regular budget are available for the funding of advisory services, small-scale field projects or training. The activities should be consistent with the Commission's technical cooperation strategy and linked to the programme of work, strategic framework and expected accomplishments. Preference is given to activities involving the least developed countries, landlocked developing states, small island developing States and countries with economies in transition. Regional advisory services in environment and sustainable development, poverty reduction, poverty statistics, information and communication technology policies and strategies, economic statistics, development policy and strategic planning, and trade and investment policy are available to members at their request. The regional advisory services support capacity-building efforts by developing countries by responding to requests for advice on policy-related issues and by assisting Governments in the formulation of projects and in programme evaluations.
- Development Account – section 35. The Development Account, funded from the regular budget, is an integral part of the technical cooperation activities of the economic and social entities of the United Nations. Projects aim at capacity-building and promotion of regional and interregional economic and technical cooperation among developing countries. The General Assembly approves the appropriations for the financing of the Development Account projects. Project proposals are reviewed by the Under-Secretary-General for Economic and Social Affairs and a technical peer review committee, and selections are made based on the resources available for the next budget period.
- Trust Fund for Human Security. The Human Security Fund was established to support the implementation of activities that protect the vital core of all human lives in ways that enhance human freedoms and human fulfilment, as agreed jointly by the United Nations Secretariat and the Government of Japan. Projects should provide concrete and sustainable benefits to people and communities threatened in their survival, livelihood and dignity, include both top-down protection and bottom-up empowerment measures, promote partnerships with civil society groups, NGOs and other local entities and address a broad range of interconnected issues, given the multisectoral demands of human security. Priority is given to countries and regions where insecurities of people are critical and pervasive, such as the least developed countries and countries in conflict.

- United Nations Foundation/United Nations Fund for International Partnerships. The United Nations Foundation's mission is to support the goals and objectives of the United Nations and its Charter, with special emphasis on the Organization's work on behalf of economic, social, environmental and humanitarian causes. The United Nations Fund for International Partnerships coordinates, channels and monitors contributions from the United Nations Foundation. The Fund supports projects to promote the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals in the areas of children's health, population and women, environment and peace, security and human rights. Projects should focus on prevention of problems, provide human services targeted to the poor, involve broad partnerships and incorporate a gender perspective.

## 2. Partnerships

22. The Commission has also established a number of partnerships and signed memorandums of understanding with a number of Governments, United Nations agencies and other international organizations. Under a partnership, two or more entities jointly implement aspects of a project or programme. Such arrangements require joint goals and commitments, responsibility and a clear division of labour. These partnerships can be formalized through a memorandum of understanding to develop an overall coordination framework between the partners.

23. Current partnerships between the Commission and United Nations agencies and international organizations include those with the Asian Development Bank and UNDP to support the achievement of internationally agreed development goals, including those contained in the Millennium Declaration, and with WTO to implement joint training programmes for developing countries in the Asian and Pacific region.

24. Developing countries could also exchange knowledge, skills, resources and technical know-how in economic and social sectors through South-South cooperation. The Commission plays a catalytic and supportive role in building national capacities for development and strengthening national and collective self-reliance, identifies and promotes such cooperation through regional project activities, co-funds and mobilizes funds, and coordinates with the network of national focal points. A supplementary fund has been established from contributions from China, the Republic of Korea and the Netherlands to promote South-South cooperation. Funds are used to cover international travel costs, support workshops, training courses and study visits hosted by other countries and enhance managerial and technical capacities related to the environment, social issues, trade, and information and communication technology. The host countries, as at October 2004, were India, Indonesia, Malaysia, Pakistan, Singapore and Sri Lanka.

3. Issues for consideration

25. In view of the possible support that could be made available for technical cooperation activities for the least developed and landlocked developing countries, the Special Body could propose measures to ensure that these countries are able make use of the opportunities available to them.

26. Greater participation by these countries in intergovernmental forums could ensure that technical cooperation activities address their needs. Since the majority of the least developed and landlocked developing countries do not have their own permanent representatives in Bangkok, the Special Body could also propose a mechanism to ensure that the views of these countries are adequately reflected in the ongoing activities of the Commission. On behalf of all least developed and landlocked countries in the Asian and Pacific region, countries with representation in Bangkok could, for example, coordinate and present the consolidated view of these countries in intergovernmental forums in order to ensure that the overall work programme of the Commission as well as individual technical cooperation activities address their needs.

27. The least developed and landlocked developing countries could also submit more concrete proposals for technical cooperation services to address their needs. If such requests are received, greater resources could be allocated specifically to activities being implemented in response to these requests. Greater use of economic and technical cooperation among developing countries, which would enable the least developed and landlocked developing countries to learn from the experiences of other developing countries, could also be an appropriate response to the needs of these countries.

**II. IMPLEMENTATION OF COMMISSION RESOLUTION 59/4 ON THE  
IMPLEMENTATION OF THE PROGRAMME OF ACTION FOR THE  
LEAST DEVELOPED COUNTRIES FOR THE DECADE 2001-2010**

28. In its resolution 59/4, the Commission reaffirmed its support for the full realization of the seven commitments made at the Third United Nations Conference on the Least Developed Countries, stressed that successful implementation depends on shared responsibility and strengthened partnerships and invited all members and associate members and subregional, regional and international organizations to support the efforts of the least developed countries in Asia and the Pacific. It also requested the Executive Secretary to report to the Commission on the implementation of the resolution.

29. In addition, it requested the Executive Secretary, in coordination with the Office of the High Representative for the Least Developed Countries, Landlocked Developing Countries and Small Island Developing States, the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development, UNDP and specialized agencies:

(a) To ensure that the programme of work under the themes of poverty reduction, managing globalization and emerging social issues mainstreams the relevant priorities and commitments identified in the Programme of Action, as called for in General Assembly resolutions 56/227 of 24 December 2001 and 57/276 of 20 December 2002;

- The Working Group on Least Developed and Landlocked Developing Countries, comprising the permanent representatives of those countries, meets twice a year to discuss how the secretariat could address their specific needs. Matters related to the work programme were discussed at its first and third sessions.

- In order to ensure that the concerns of the least developed countries are incorporated into the subprogramme on poverty reduction practices, a workshop on implementing partnerships for development in least developed countries of Asia and the Pacific was held in Bangkok on 29 June 2004, immediately prior to the first session of the Subcommittee on Poverty Reduction Practices, held from 30 June to 2 July 2004. The outcome of the workshop focused on ways to identify the necessary elements of effective partnerships between Governments, civil society and the private sector, and formed an input to the Subcommittee session.

(b) To review, analyse and disseminate information on economic and social developments in the least developed countries in line with the Programme of Action;

- The annual *Economic and Social Survey of Asia and the Pacific* enumerates economic and social developments in the least developed countries in the subsections devoted to them. The secretariat's regular publications, such as the *Statistical Yearbook of Asia and the Pacific*, also contain sectoral data and identifies trends in these countries. Progress by the least developed and landlocked developing countries towards attaining internationally agreed development goals, including those contained in the Millennium Declaration, will determine whether the Asian and Pacific region, as a whole, will achieve these goals. The publication emanating from the second phase of the project being implemented jointly with UNDP to support the achievement of these internationally agreed development goals will highlight the progress that needs to be made by these countries.

(c) To assist the least developed countries, where appropriate, in the formulation of appropriate sectoral development strategies and policies, paying due regard to the diverse development circumstances and constraints facing the least developed countries, in accordance with the Programme of Action;

- The technical cooperation activities of the secretariat give priority to activities being implemented for special groups of countries, including the least developed and landlocked developing countries. The services provided by the regional advisers have also been instrumental in assisting these countries in formulating sectoral strategies.

(d) To conduct a regional mid-term review of the implementation of the Programme of Action in 2005 to consider the developments affecting the countries concerned subsequent to the Third United Nations Conference on the Least Developed Countries.

- In its resolution 59/244 of 22 December 2004, the General Assembly decided to hold a comprehensive review of the Programme of Action for the Least Developed Countries at its sixty-first session in 2006 and to consider the modalities for such a review at its sixtieth session in 2005.

- The secretariat, in collaboration with the Office of the High Representative and UNDP, will conduct a regional mid-term review of the implementation of the Programme of Action for the least developed countries in Asia and the Pacific during the second half of 2005. In this connection, the secretariat proposes that the next session of the Special Body on Least Developed and Landlocked Developing Countries be scheduled in 2006, prior to the sixty-second session of the Commission, so that the regional mid-term review can be considered for endorsement as an input from the Asian and Pacific region to the global mid-term review.

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