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Third United Nations Conference on the  
Least Developed Countries  
Brussels, Belgium, 14-20 May 2001

**Parallel event**

**HIGH-LEVEL PARLIAMENTARIANS ROUND TABLE**

**Specific recommendations**

Summary prepared by the Conference secretariat

1. Further to the actions by parliamentarians outlined in the Summary prepared by the Conference secretariat (A/CONF.191/L.3), parliamentarians stressed that the focus should be on goals that can be achieved, that are realistic and that can be applied. Recommendations made by parliamentarians included the following:

- Trade liberalization should truly benefit the poorest countries to allow them a real chance of success in pulling themselves out of poverty;
- The tariffs on agricultural products, established by Northern countries must come down; this should include important commodities such as rice and sugar; all non-tariff barriers on agricultural products should also be abolished;
- With regard to subsidies established by industrialized countries on their agricultural products, LDCs should be given a fair chance to export their products;
- The need to take into account self-reliance and security in food production which is at the origin of a large part of national expenditures;

- The importance to reinforce institutional capacity-building and to consider measures to implement them;
- Parliamentarians should make their presence felt with the executive branch of their governments with regard to financial agreements, investment policies and trade negotiations;
- Efforts must be made to adopt broader and stronger measures to address the issue of debt relief;
- In order to create a stable atmosphere in countries the rule of law and good governance are important in combating poverty;
- Basic, obligatory and free education should be accessible particularly to all women. In this respect, new forms of collaboration between women from South and North could be established and parliamentarians could create a favourable environment for such partnerships;
- To make women's contribution more visible in different sectors, such as agriculture, parliamentarians should address socio-cultural and gender biases;
- Banks, lending institutions and other financing institutions, should be held co-responsible for projects insufficiently evaluated and for debts accumulated by LDCs. Those who transfer funds illegally should be held accountable in debt-relief efforts;
- Forums including the adoption of new technologies (virtual conferences) to perpetuate common debate, are required;
- The idea of a currency transaction tax (Tobin tax) should be evaluated;

2. Running as the common thread through the Round Table, parliamentarians called for the initiation of a network to oversee the follow-up and monitoring of the implementation of the Programme of Action adopted at UN LDC III. This network would initially consist of a core group of parliamentarians who were present at the Conference. Such a network could also serve as a lobbying body and engage in partnerships with a range of civil society and public actors, such as NGOs, governments, both local and national, the private sector and international organizations.

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