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**Second Committee****Summary record of the 35th meeting**

Held at Headquarters, New York, on Monday, 30 November 2001, at 10 a.m.

*Chairman:* Mr. Seixas da Costa . . . . . (Portugal)  
*later:* Mr. Mbayu (Vice-Chairman) . . . . . (Cameroon)

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*The meeting was called to order at 10.15 a.m.*

**Agenda item 106: Third United Nations Conference on the Least Developed Countries** (*continued*)  
(A/56/222-S/2001/736, A/56/306 and A/56/358)

**(a) Third United Nations Conference on the Least Developed Countries** (*continued*) (A/56/297 and Corr.1, A/56/306, A/56/434, A/56/645 and Add.1; A/C.2/56/5)

**(b) Implementation of the Programme of Action for the Least Developed Countries for the Decade 2001-2010** (*continued*) (A/56/208 and A/56/306)

1. **Mr. Chowdhury** (Bangladesh) said that the Secretary-General, in his report entitled "Follow-up mechanism for coordinating, monitoring and reviewing the implementation of the Programme of Action for the Least Developed Countries for the decade 2001-2010" (A/56/645), had responded in a balanced manner to paragraph 116 of the Programme of Action for the Least Developed Countries, adopted at the Third United Nations Conference on the Least Developed Countries, held in Brussels, in which he had been requested to submit recommendations on the establishment of a follow-up mechanism. His delegation agreed with the Secretary-General's diagnosis of the limitations of the follow-up arrangements for previous Programmes of Action, welcomed his suggestions for a highly visible and efficient follow-up mechanism for the new Programme of Action and fully supported his recommendations to establish in New York an Office of the High Representative for the Least Developed Countries, Landlocked Developing Countries and Small Island Developing States, with the High Representative at the level of Under-Secretary-General. It also endorsed the functions of the Office as outlined in the report and took note of the proposed staffing arrangements, particularly the mix of resources from three sources: the regular budget of the United Nations, secondment from other United Nations entities and extrabudgetary resources. It was essential to ensure that the Office of the High Representative had adequate, stable and predictable resources, since a lack thereof could be a major impediment to the effectiveness of the follow-up process. Development partners should show their support for the Office through the provision of extrabudgetary resources and entities of the United Nations system should respond positively and

expeditiously to the Secretary-General's request to provide staff on secondment. His delegation urged the Secretary-General to ensure that the Office had the highly qualified staff that were critical to its efficient and effective functioning.

2. The new Office should have a coordination role and not assume any operational or technical responsibilities. The United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD) had developed capacity in the area of trade-related technical assistance for the benefit of least developed countries (LDCs) and should maintain close linkages with the Office of the High Representative. The ensuing arrangements should also strengthen the technical and operational delivery capacity of all relevant parts of the United Nations system. In that regard, his delegation welcomed the request addressed to the Secretariat by the Chairman of the Group of 77 to provide further explanations on paragraphs 21 to 23 of the report and to give an assurance that the capacity of UNCTAD in its area of competence would not be adversely affected.

3. Following the recommendation of the Brussels Conference, the Economic and Social Council had decided to conduct the annual intergovernmental review. In addition, it had decided to consider devoting a high-level segment to the review and coordination of the implementation of the Programme of Action before the end of the decade. Those decisions reflected the importance attached by the international community to the follow-up of the Programme of Action.

4. **Ms. Izata** (Angola) praised the Economic and Social Council for its decision to consider devoting a high-level segment to the review and coordination of the implementation of the Programme of Action.

5. Her delegation was grateful for the Secretary-General's report on the outcome of the Brussels Conference and its preparatory process (A/56/297). The Programme of Action adopted at the Conference provided an excellent framework for a strong global partnership to accelerate sustained economic growth and development in the world's neediest countries and enable them to integrate positively in the global economy.

6. On many occasions, her delegation had pointed out that without the coordinated involvement of the entire United Nations system, there would be little for the least developed countries (LDCs) to achieve. The Secretary-General's report on the follow-up mechanism

(A/56/645) stressed the necessity of improving the effectiveness of the existing arrangements and allocating responsibility for control and follow-up more rationally to take into account the wider scope of the new Programme of Action. Her delegation welcomed the proposals made by the Secretary-General in his report. The overall objectives of the Programme of Action, namely, to halve the proportion of people living in extreme poverty by the year 2015 and to promote sustainable development, must be a global but differentiated responsibility of developed and developing countries.

7. There could be no discussion about the least developed countries without looking at the critical situation of the African LDCs. Their weakest economic performance in recent years, especially the financial crisis in Angola, had been due to changes in the world economy that had triggered the collapse in commodity prices, on which most of those countries depended. Some of them had continued to suffer from civil strife and instability that had set them back economically. The external debt burden continued to hamper efforts to mobilize both domestic and foreign resources and limited their capacity to address structural weakness and accelerate growth and development. That was why, at the beginning of the new millennium, there was no greater challenge in the current context of globalization and liberalization than that of integrating LDCs into the global economy and the world trading system.

8. **Mr. Casado** (United Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO)), reporting on the progress made by UNIDO in implementing the Brussels Programme of Action, said that its contributions in that regard were oriented towards three major areas: building productive capacities and enhancing the role of trade; promoting sustainable energy systems; and participating actively in the inter-agency collaborations initiated by the Third United Nations Conference on the Least Developed Countries.

9. With regard to building productive capacities and enhancing the role of trade, UNIDO had launched a portfolio of programmes, one of which was aimed at facilitating the participation of LDCs in international trade and enhancing their export competitiveness through the upgrading of quality and accreditation infrastructures, focusing primarily on sectors with high export potential, such as food products, textiles and leather.

10. Within the framework of that programme, the European Union had funded a regional programme for the countries of the West African Economic and Monetary Union (UEMOA) in the amount of 12.5 million euros, to be implemented over a three-year period. UNIDO had begun consultations with the countries of the Southern African Development Community (SADC) regarding a similar programme. It had also obtained approval from Germany to prepare a full-fledged trade facilitation programme for non-UEMOA member LDCs from the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) region.

11. At the Brussels Conference, UNIDO had chaired the thematic session on energy, which had generated a wealth of projects and follow-up activities in the areas of rural energy supply and industrial energy efficiency. Renewable energy projects promoting solar, wind and biomass energy in rural areas had been formulated in five countries. In addition, with financing from the Austrian Government, UNIDO and UNCTAD were to host jointly in Vienna a conference on efficient hydrocarbon pricing and procurement and on managing oil price volatility in LDCs.

12. He stressed the impetus which the Third United Nations Conference on the Least Developed Countries had given to inter-agency collaboration. Initiatives to involve other agencies had occurred in the areas of both trade facilitation and investment. In that context, UNIDO looked forward to receiving the road map being developed by UNCTAD, which it believed could provide important guidance for mainstreaming the Programme of Action in UNIDO programmes. Such a road map should, however, be fully coordinated with other system-wide efforts, particularly the road map for the implementation of the Millennium Declaration, and with the New Partnership for Africa's Development.

13. UNIDO had been undergoing a difficult but encouraging process of transformation, based on the business plan adopted at the seventh session of its General Conference and within the framework of United Nations reform. At its ninth session, the General Conference would discuss the results achieved and the need to update the priorities of the business plan to adapt it to the new global environment. He hoped that, on that occasion, UNIDO member States would reaffirm the organization's support for the least developed countries and the implementation of the Brussels Programme of Action.

14. *Mr. Mbayu (Cameroon), Vice-Chairman, took the Chair.*

15. **Mr. Vienravi** (Thailand) noted that, in 30 years, the number of LDCs had increased from 25 to 49, with a combined population of more than 600 million people. That trend should not be allowed to continue, at a time when, in a globalized world, the risk of marginalization was high.

16. The Brussels Declaration and Programme of Action provided a good platform for a strong partnership to accelerate sustained economic growth and sustainable development in the least developed countries, eradicate poverty and inequality and integrate those countries beneficially in the global economy. The new Programme of Action focused on action-oriented commitments by both the least developed countries and their development partners and it must be implemented effectively in order for real progress to be made.

17. Each LDC must translate the national policies and measures prescribed in the Programme of Action into concrete measures within the framework of its own national programme of action, taking into account its particular priorities. The international community must render all necessary assistance, especially in the areas of private financial flows, official development assistance, debt relief and trade. South-South cooperation could also play a significant complementary role in providing assistance, both as a strategy in support of the development efforts of developing countries and as a means of enhancing their participation in the global economy. Moreover, it could be substantially strengthened with the assistance of developed countries through a variety of triangular arrangements, including direct support or cost-sharing arrangements, joint research and development projects and third-country training programmes. His delegation was pleased to note that an increasing number of developed countries and development foundations were supporting South-South cooperation.

18. Although Thailand was still slowly recovering from its financial crisis, it already provided assistance to LDCs, primarily in the Mekong subregion, and contributed through various programmes to other countries in Asia, the Pacific, Africa and Eastern Europe. It also provided forums for participants from developing countries to exchange information and views.

19. His delegation believed that regional and subregional cooperation had a complementary role to play in assisting LDCs in their development. In South-East Asia, economic cooperation within the framework of the Association of South-East Asian Nations (ASEAN) could support the integration of member countries in the world economy and help many LDCs improve their economic situation. In conclusion, his delegation believed that, in order to ensure the success and full implementation of the Brussels Programme of Action and the respective national programmes of action, there must be effective follow-up and monitoring arrangements at the national and global levels.

20. **Mr. Lorenzo** (Mexico) noted that the Millennium Declaration stressed the importance of addressing the special needs of LDCs, in particular by calling on the industrialized countries to adopt policies giving LDCs access to their markets, implement debt relief measures for heavily indebted poor countries and increase official development assistance (ODA). The Brussels Conference had been an important milestone in achieving those objectives. The Declaration and Programme of Action adopted on that occasion reaffirmed the commitments made in the Millennium Declaration, including the commitments to improve the quality of life of the populations of the least developed countries and to halve by the year 2015 the proportion of the world's people living in extreme poverty. While LDCs bore primary responsibility for their own development, tangible support from Governments, international organizations, civil society and the private sector remained indispensable.

21. Mexico remained committed to the new spirit of international cooperation that had emerged from the Conference, based on the search for mutual benefit and on the shared but differentiated responsibilities of developing and developed countries. It was determined to contribute, to the best of its ability and within the framework of South-South cooperation, to the efforts made at the Brussels Conference in favour of LDCs. In that connection, he drew attention to the document submitted by his Government to the tenth meeting of the Intergovernmental Follow-up and Coordination Committee on Economic Cooperation among Developing Countries, held in Teheran in August 2001, which described the goals it had set and the measures it proposed to take within the framework of South-South cooperation.

22. **Mr. Nguma** (United Republic of Tanzania) welcomed the Secretary-General's report entitled "Follow-up mechanism for coordinating, monitoring and reviewing the implementation of the Programme of Action for the Least Developed Countries for the decade 2001-2010" (A/56/645), which contained useful recommendations that were in line with General Assembly resolution 55/279. His delegation agreed that implementation of the Programme would depend on the effective functioning of the arrangements for implementation, follow-up, monitoring and review at the national, regional and global levels and hoped that the mechanism in question would be set up quickly. Given the broad scope of the Programme of Action, any monitoring mechanism would require the support of all stakeholders. The United Nations, which possessed the necessary tools for coordination, had a major role to play in that regard. Steps had already been taken in that direction. For instance, the Secretary-General had invited governing bodies of the organizations of the United Nations system and other multilateral organizations to mainstream the implementation of the Programme of Action in their work programmes. The Economic and Social Council had decided to devote a high-level segment to the issue and UNCTAD had decided to change its Sessional Committee on LDCs to a standing committee. UNCTAD had been the focal point for the review and implementation of the programmes of action for LDCs for many years and the structural changes proposed by the Secretary-General would have an impact on its staffing and some aspects of its operations. In recognition of its contribution to the development of LDCs, UNCTAD should be strengthened, especially with regard to its analytical work and back-up services. Consequently, it must be given adequate resources and the proposed new mechanism must not be created at its expense.

23. **Mr. Kogda** (Burkina Faso) recalled that LDCs accounted for 10.5 per cent of the world's population, while their share in world trade was only 0.5 per cent. They were characterized by extreme poverty and the fragility of their economies, institutions and human resources. Despite United Nations efforts to assist them, their number was increasing steadily. In that context, the Brussels Conference afforded an opportunity to reactivate the partnership dialogue in connection with the implementation of the Programme of Action.

24. LDCs must succeed in their poverty-reduction efforts and meet the challenges of demographic and economic growth, competitiveness and stronger democratic governance. To do so, they must overcome the main obstacles to their development, maximize their strengths and build their human resources. It was from that standpoint that Burkina Faso had opted for an economic and social policy that was guided by the fundamental principles of equity, equal opportunity, community participation and transparent management of public resources. Despite their political will, however, LDCs lacked the necessary financial resources and often faced civil war, famine and epidemics, meaning that they could eliminate the structural weaknesses that hampered their development only with the help of the developed countries.

25. In response to that situation, the Programme of Action for the Least Developed Countries for the 1990s had stressed the need to free up public and private funding for them, give them debt relief, facilitate their access to markets and increase official development assistance. Regrettably, many developed countries had not made good on their pledges in that regard. Under the new Programme of Action, therefore, LDCs must receive both substantial support from bilateral and multilateral donors and assistance from non-governmental organizations.

26. His Government was eager to strengthen its partnerships. In cooperation with various development partners, a mechanism for reformulating the conditions attached to the aid it received had been set up and a poverty reduction strategy paper and a United Nations development assistance framework had been drawn up with the United Nations system. Given the ambitious nature of the new Programme of Action, his Government hoped to take advantage of the complementarities among donors and was determined to build its capacity for aid management. To ensure better follow-up of the national programme of action, it planned to strengthen the mechanism set up for reformulating development assistance conditionality, decentralize information, create a poverty and human development observatory and draw up a midterm and an end-of-decade progress report.

27. His delegation welcomed the Secretary-General's report on the follow-up mechanism (A/56/645) and endorsed the proposal to create an Office of the High Representative for the Least Developed Countries, Landlocked Developing Countries and Small Island

Developing States. It called on all partners to support the new mechanism.

28. **Mr. Akinsanya** (Nigeria) said that the lack of progress in the social and economic development of LDCs and in the implementation of the Programme of Action for LDCs for the 1990s had been a result of inadequate international support and the absence of national capacities. A firm commitment by the international community to improving the socio-economic situation of LDCs was therefore essential. The Brussels Declaration and Programme of Action constituted a framework of global commitment in that regard.

29. His delegation took a particular interest in the issue because 36 of the 49 LDCs were in Africa. His Government had participated actively in the United Nations conferences on LDCs and had supported the implementation of the various programmes of action designed to address their situation. Despite its limited means, it had initiated bilateral projects in some African LDCs and also a technical assistance programme to help African, Caribbean and Pacific LDCs meet their manpower needs. He noted that LDCs, for their part, had prepared national programmes of action committing themselves to actions and reforms to support the implementation of the Brussels Programme of Action.

30. His delegation endorsed the recommendations in the Secretary-General's report on the Brussels Conference (A/56/297), namely, that the actions to be undertaken by LDCs and their partners should focus, inter alia, on: strengthening efforts to integrate trade policies into national development policies towards poverty eradication; improving economic openness and policy predictability; and developing human and institutional capacities for participation in the multilateral trading system. It also believed that those efforts should ensure horizontal and vertical diversification for LDCs, including local processing of primary commodities. It welcomed the multilateral initiatives announced at the Brussels Conference, including the European Union's "Everything but Arms" initiative, anti-dumping measures and a multi-agency technical assistance programme on foreign direct investment. The commitments made in the Programme of Action were encouraging but must be translated into concrete measures.

31. Unequivocal support for forging a global partnership to support 49 of the poorest and most marginalized countries in the world economy should be a continuing priority, for it would be impossible to achieve international development goals on malnutrition and poverty eradication without improving the lot of LDCs. The international community should also take decisive action to write off their debts, bridge their technology gaps and facilitate their access to markets. In a world shaped by globalization and new technologies, LDCs, lacking basic infrastructures, would continue to be marginalized — notwithstanding the reforms undertaken by them as prescribed by the developed countries and the international financial institutions — unless substantial support was forthcoming from the developed countries. The World Trade Organization must therefore address the development dimension of trade in order to improve the preferential market access of LDCs and help integrate them in the global economy. That required complementary mechanisms that would guarantee full participation by the countries of the South in international decision-making.

32. The creation of a new follow-up mechanism should not be at the expense of the activities or resource level of UNCTAD. The Office of the High Representative should therefore be financed from extrabudgetary and new resources. Coherent action by the United Nations system, the Bretton Woods institutions and the World Trade Organization should form part of the policy reform for effective implementation of the new Programme of Action.

33. While the primary source of financing for development in LDCs must be domestic, its mobilization must be complemented by foreign direct investment and official development assistance. The latter had a critical role to play in supporting the development of LDCs and their integration in the global economy.

34. **Mr. Adechi** (Benin) said that the Secretary-General's report on the follow-up mechanism (A/56/645) must be examined in the light of both the report of the High-Level Panel for the Review of Progress in the Implementation of the Programme of Action for the Least Developed Countries for the 1990s (A/CONF.191/IPC/16), which contained major recommendations regarding a monitoring mechanism for the Programme of Action, and General Assembly resolution 55/214, particularly paragraph 13 thereof,

which requested the Secretary-General to recommend concrete steps in that regard.

35. His delegation endorsed the recommendations in the Secretary-General's report, which were flexible and realistic and defined the respective responsibilities of the High Representative and the United Nations agencies. It supported the creation of an Office of the High Representative and noted with interest the arrangements recommended by the Secretary-General concerning its mandate and staffing. It was also encouraged to note that the Economic and Social Council had decided to include the issue of LDCs in its agenda.

36. The Secretary-General should therefore be invited to implement his recommendations so that the Office of the High Representative could become operational as soon as possible, thereby stimulating and coordinating the implementation of the Programme of Action.

37. **Mr. Paudel** (Nepal) noted that at the Brussels Conference specific commitments had been made to address the economic and social problems facing the least developed countries. Those countries, which were increasingly embracing democracy and freedom, had to deliver development, justice and stability to their people, despite extremely limited resources and capability, restricted access to markets and trade constraints, as well as inadequate institutions and norms. The people's frustration had serious consequences; in Nepal, the authorities had been compelled to declare a state of emergency. Those difficulties were common to many newly established democracies in the world.

38. The least developed countries were primarily responsible for their development, but they could not act without assistance from the international community. The various commitments made at the Third Conference must be fulfilled, in particular the commitment concerning resources, since the shortage of resources was the main obstacle to social and economic development and democracy in LDCs. His delegation welcomed the donor community's pledge to provide up to 0.2 per cent of GNP as ODA and believed that the Heavily Indebted Poor Countries (HIPC) Initiative should be expanded and sufficiently funded.

39. The least developed countries must be integrated in the global economy and, in order to achieve that goal, they must be helped to enlarge their production

base, markets must be opened to their products and their membership in the World Trade Organization must be facilitated. The South Summit had shown its solidarity with LDCs and increased cooperation between the countries of the South could give new momentum to poverty eradication and progress in the developing countries, thanks to factors such as geographical proximity and economic, social and cultural similarity.

40. His delegation supported the proposals made in the report of the Secretary-General on the follow-up mechanism (A/56/645), particularly concerning the creation of an Office of the High Representative.

41. **Mr. Kittikhoun** (Lao People's Democratic Republic), speaking as Chairman of the Group of Landlocked Developing Countries, said that the Group supported the recommendation made by the Secretary-General to create an Office of the High Representative and endorsed his decision not to entirely transform the UNCTAD Office of the Special Coordinator for the Least Developed, Landlocked and Island Developing Countries, which should continue its mandate and its work to assist that most disadvantaged group of countries. The Office of the Special Coordinator dealt with the specific problems of landlocked developing countries and had become the global focal point for programmes to help them. In particular, it was responsible for regular review of transit transport systems, support for deliberations on actions related to landlocked developing countries, preparation of reports, provision of advisory and technical cooperation services and participation in those countries' annual ministerial meeting.

42. The Group therefore believed that the programmes developed for those countries and undertaken by the UNCTAD Office of the Special Coordinator should not be sacrificed in order to create the Office of the High Representative. Instead, more resources were needed, in the light of the forthcoming International Ministerial Meeting of Landlocked and Transit Developing Countries. The Group of Landlocked Developing Countries would participate actively in the discussions concerning the Secretary-General's recommendation and would cooperate with other countries to find a solution acceptable to all.

43. **Mr. Hussein** (Ethiopia) said that his country had participated actively in the Brussels Conference and called for full implementation of the Programme of

Action adopted on that occasion. With respect to the follow-up mechanism, it fully supported the Secretary-General's proposal for the establishment of an Office of the High Representative and said that the responsibilities of the Office should be limited to coordination, advocacy and reporting, so as to reflect the distinction made between the political, technical and substantive issues relating to the implementation of the Programme of Action.

44. He attached great importance to the establishment of the Office of the High Representative in New York but had strong reservations about the fact that it was being proposed at the expense of the work of another office. He stressed the need for continuity in the work of UNCTAD on behalf of the least developed countries, which required strengthening of the Office of the Special Coordinator. The reduction of UNCTAD core resources would severely undermine the work of the Special Coordinator. His delegation, for its part, was prepared to participate actively and constructively in the discussions on that important recommendation, so that an optimal follow-up mechanism could be adopted.

45. **Mr. Almeida** (Cape Verde) recalled that, in the Millennium Declaration, the international community had set as a priority goal to halve by 2015 the number of people living on less than one dollar a day and that the Brussels Conference had adopted a Programme of Action for the Least Developed Countries which represented a population numbering over 600 million. The Conference had provided an opportunity to note that, despite the efforts made by the least developed countries, earlier programmes of action had not produced the desired results. It was therefore essential for the parties concerned fully to play their role. The least developed countries, which had primary responsibility for their development, must do everything possible to adapt and adopt at the national level the measures envisaged in the Programme of Action, and development partners must increase the volume and effectiveness of assistance and gear ODA to the targets set in the Programme. In addition, the international community must ensure that the current slow-down in the world economy did not jeopardize its implementation.

46. The success of the Programme of Action did not only depend on the political will of the countries concerned and of development partners; among other essentials, mention must be made of the vital importance of the follow-up mechanism. He appealed

for strengthening of the relevant organs of the United Nations system, particularly UNCTAD, and strongly supported the establishment of an Office of the High Representative, in accordance with the recommendation made by the Secretary-General in his report (A/56/645).

47. **Mr. dos Santos** (Mozambique) said that the Brussels Declaration and Programme of Action reflected the commitment to engage in a new partnership with a view to achieving economic growth and development in the least developed countries. However, national implementation remained crucial; LDCs must ensure the creation of an environment conducive to economic and social development. Mozambique had therefore recently approved a poverty reduction strategy for the period 2001-2005, which stressed peace and stability, and a longer-term initiative based on a constructive dialogue on the country's future.

48. The efforts of the least developed countries could be successful only with the required support from development partners, in particular through adequate ODA, increased foreign direct investment, a supportive trading system and a lasting solution to the problem of external debt. The forthcoming Monterrey Conference on Financing for Development and the World Summit on Sustainable Development would be instrumental in reshaping the world economic order towards more equity and fairness. Implementation of the Brussels Programme of Action required an effective follow-up mechanism. Mozambique welcomed the Secretary-General's proposal for the establishment in New York of an Office of the High Representative but stressed the need for the new Office to cooperate closely with UNCTAD, which must continue to play an important role in activities related to implementation of the Programme of Action, including technical assistance and capacity-building. The Secretary-General was proposing an innovative staffing arrangement that relied on the regular budget, secondment from other United Nations bodies and extrabudgetary resources. The Office must have adequate resources for its smooth functioning. It would be preferable for all activities of the United Nations, including those relating to the Office of the High Representative, to be financed from the regular budget. The staffing proposal was disturbing, because it entailed weakening other institutions. Assigning UNCTAD resources to the new Office would not serve the interests of LDCs, as those



countries still relied on UNCTAD to provide much-needed support.

49. **Mr. Olobo** (Uganda) emphasized that the Programme of Action for the Least Developed Countries, adopted recently in Brussels, represented considerable progress in the consensus of the international community on the development problems facing those countries and on the best way of solving them. The Programme contained a number of action-oriented commitments by LDCs and their development partners. Those new commitments were a marked departure from the two previous programmes, in that they stressed the complementarity of the various actors. The fulfilment of those commitments would require an effective mechanism for implementation, follow-up, monitoring and review at the national, regional and global levels. In that connection, he supported the Secretary-General's proposal for the establishment in New York of an Office of the High Representative, since that would increase the visibility of the problems facing LDCs. However, the Office must be given all necessary support in order to carry out its functions. In addition, the resources to be allocated to the Office must not be taken from resources used for programmes to assist those countries. The idea of providing additional resources for follow-up to the Programme of Action reflected the principles set forth in General Assembly resolution 54/235.

50. His delegation also supported the Secretary-General's view that operational and technical roles should continue to be played by relevant United Nations bodies such as UNCTAD, which should retain their mandates and competencies. It also welcomed the other proposals made by the Secretary-General in his report (A/56/645).

51. **Mr. Siddharth** (International Labour Organization (ILO)) said that the major problem facing the least developed countries was the persistent incidence of poverty. Jobs were generally the first step out of poverty and the main source of income. Employment must therefore be central to poverty reduction strategies. The Programme of Action for the Decade 2001-2010 recognized employment as a cross-cutting priority with poverty eradication, gender equality, sustainable development, governance and capacity-building. It also emphasized the importance of dialogue between government and the private sector.

52. The ILO contribution to the Third United Nations Conference on the Least Developed Countries had been made within the general framework of achieving decent work, a concept based on creating good-quality jobs. It was also necessary to provide social protection against unexpected shocks, particularly through social dialogue between employers, workers and Governments.

53. In order to achieve the Millennium Declaration goal of halving poverty by 2015, it would be necessary to integrate the decent work agenda into national poverty reduction strategies. Therefore, ILO had elaborated a number of specific action proposals to assist the least developed countries in their national development, covering employment generation and human resources development, social protection, promotion of social dialogue and special programmes for vulnerable groups. Those measures were currently being implemented at the national level with various partners. ILO was also contributing to the achievement of the goals of the Third United Nations Conference on the Least Developed Countries by providing support for national poverty reduction strategy papers, supported by the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund.

54. The recent Global Employment Forum had emphasized productive employment as a basis for effective development strategies. One billion people were currently unemployed, underemployed or working poor, while 80 per cent of people of working age had no access to basic social protection. The persistence of poverty was due less to unemployment than to the fact that many types of work failed to ensure decent levels of income; inequalities were growing, as was insecurity.

55. Many developing countries needed to adopt specific measures to raise the productivity and incomes of the working poor, focusing on skills, terms of exchange for their products, access to finance and their bargaining power.

56. Poverty reduction, particularly by means of decent work, was a goal which could not be attained by any one country or institution; it required a coherent common approach involving the Governments, communities and agencies of the least developed countries and the sustained support of the international community. Policy options needed to favour solutions that improved the lives of ordinary people and their

families. To do that, socially responsible governance of the global economy was essential. Institutions and policies were needed at the global and national levels which reflected common values and goals. For its part, ILO was striving to promote the creation of a coherent global employment strategy.

57. **Mr. Manis** (Sudan) stressed that the Committee was considering a question of vital importance for the 600 million people living in poverty. The marked deterioration in their economic and social situation demonstrated the failure to implement development programmes for the least developed countries over the past 20 years. The debt burden was increasing, as was the number of people living on less than one dollar a day, the number of marginalized people and the number of countries classified as being least developed. Those difficult conditions were among the main reasons for the weakening of the social fabric and the emergence of conflicts and civil wars that were threatening international peace and security.

58. However, the political will displayed by the international community at the Third United Nations Conference on the Least Developed Countries, held recently in Brussels, had made it possible to overcome the frustrations caused by that bleak reality. The participants had adopted a Programme of Action setting precise goals and achievable commitments which represented fundamental elements for the success of the Programme in the coming decade.

59. The months following the Conference had been marked by several positive developments, including the "Everything but Arms" initiative launched by the European Union with a view to opening its markets to exports from LDCs. Emphasis must also be placed on the encouraging results of the Fourth Ministerial Meeting of the World Trade Organization, held in Doha (Qatar). The meeting of landlocked developing countries, held recently in New York, had produced a decision to create a new mechanism — an office of the special coordinator for the least developed developing countries. The energetic efforts made by the developing countries to formulate national programmes of action demonstrated the importance which they attached to poverty eradication. In that context, his Government had embarked on a huge national programme of poverty relief, involving the participation of civil society, which was the cornerstone of development planning in his country and which focused on developing traditional production sectors, particularly

the agricultural sector, in order to ensure food security. It also gave women a more important role in the areas of education and production and encouraged the mobilization of domestic resources, by increasing loans and social funds, in order to broaden the coverage of the social security system and finance the most vulnerable sectors. The programme would also expand domestic and external marketing networks and develop human resources by enhancing information and communication technologies, thus promoting the country's economic and social development. In that context, the authorities were encouraging the creation of partnerships between the public sector, the private sector and civil society for the implementation of the programme. Positive results had already been obtained in that area, which augured well for the implementation of the Brussels Programme of Action.

60. The Secretary-General's proposal for the establishment of an Office of the High Representative to coordinate follow-up to the Programme of Action illustrated the importance which he attached to the least developed countries and therefore deserved to be supported. The Sudan, for its part, was determined to cooperate with the new Office and to contribute to its smooth functioning.

61. The Committee's discussion on the least developed countries would not be complete without a reference to UNCTAD, which was a loyal partner of those countries and, despite its limited resources, played a crucial role by actively supporting their efforts. In that connection, his delegation welcomed the Secretary-General's decision not to propose the transformation of the UNCTAD Office of the Special Coordinator into the Office of the High Representative for LDCs, Landlocked Developing Countries and Small Island Developing States. However, the proposal to transfer 10 posts from that Office to the new Office of the High Representative should be carefully considered, since it might hamper the ability of UNCTAD effectively to perform its mandate. The Office of the High Representative should therefore be created without weakening UNCTAD, which should continue to have the necessary resources. A balance could be found, particularly in the context of the political will displayed in Brussels.

62. **Mr. Fasehun** (World Intellectual Property Organization (WIPO)) emphasized that development was a continuous process, sustained by innovation and creativity, which were themselves linked to the

advancement and protection of intellectual property rights. The least developed countries had many resources that could be tapped for development, one of them being their intellectual property, including genetic resources, traditional knowledge and human resources, all of which had economic value. WIPO had programmes to help the least developed countries achieve sustainable development through the protection, promotion and full use of the intellectual property system.

63. WIPO provided technical assistance to the least developed countries through action plans focused on countries and subregions, including programmes for human resources development, modernization of intellectual property systems and encouragement of creativity and innovation, as well as programmes to facilitate access to technological information.

64. WIPO assistance in the area of human resources development was aimed at strengthening human capacity for the management of the intellectual property systems of LDCs. In recent years, numerous officials from those countries had been trained in that subject; in order to improve the management of intellectual property institutions, WIPO had provided advisory services to those countries and improved their infrastructure. It was helping the least developed countries to meet their obligations under the Trade-Related Aspects of Intellectual Property Rights Agreement. High-level national, regional and interregional meetings had been held for them on the implementation of that Agreement.

65. WIPO had taken an active interest in the Third United Nations conference on the Least Developed Countries and in that context had organized a high-level interregional round table in Lisbon, which had recognized, among other things, the vital need to improve the institutions and policy framework for the modernization of those countries' intellectual property systems. At the Conference, WIPO had announced several major deliverables, including the Global Information Network (WIPOnet) through which information technology services and equipment would be installed in all LDCs.

66. WIPO was also promoting the use of the intellectual property system by small and medium-sized businesses in all countries, which should spur innovation and creativity, especially in the least developed countries.

67. **Ms. Serwer** (United States of America) stressed that her country was deeply committed to the economic development of the least developed countries and actively supported their development efforts in a number of ways, including through trade programmes such as the Caribbean Basin Initiative. Some individual countries had shown remarkable increases in their trade with the United States and three LDCs had seen their exports grow by over 100 per cent.

68. President Bush had recently announced the launch of the Trade for African Development and Enterprise Program, which would encourage African businesses to develop their exports on global markets. The United States would also continue its strong support for responsible debt relief, so that countries could devote more resources to education and health. It would continue to press multilateral development banks to provide more assistance in the form of grants instead of loans. It was also ready to commit more resources to the new Global Fund to Combat HIV/AIDS and Other Infectious Diseases, once the Fund had demonstrated its effectiveness. Her Government was also helping LDCs through the provision of ODA and technical assistance, capacity-building and food programmes. It fully supported assistance to all LDCs which were trying to create strong democratic structures, promote peace and security and implement sound market-based and pro-poor economic policies. In that connection, her delegation was examining closely the recommendations made by the Secretary-General in the addendum to his report (A/56/645/Add.1) and hoped that it would be possible to agree on a follow-up mechanism that was both efficient and budget-neutral.

69. **Mr. Lewis** (Antigua and Barbuda), speaking on behalf of the Alliance of Small Island States, said that the members of the Alliance welcomed the Secretary-General's proposal for the establishment of an Office of the High Representative in accordance with the recommendations made at the Brussels Conference. The Office's functions, as defined in paragraph 17 of the Secretary-General's report (A/56/645), would provide the necessary institutional follow-up.

70. However, the member States of the Alliance were concerned about certain elements of the Secretary-General's proposals, particularly the fact that the new Office would provide support for coordinated follow-up of the implementation of the Programme of Action for the Sustainable Development of Small Island

Developing States. Since such States were a special case, with their fragile environments and vulnerable economies, their efforts to achieve sustainable development were often complicated by their particular constraints and, because of their specific physical circumstances, they were seldom able to benefit from global economic development. For those reasons, the approach proposed, while adequate for LDCs and landlocked countries, was not particularly suited to small island developing countries.

71. Against that background, it would be preferable to give the follow-up mechanism for the Barbados Programme of Action, which had been set up within the Department of Economic and Social Affairs, an opportunity to work before deciding to transfer coordinated follow-up to a new entity. The Alliance therefore proposed that the references to the Programme of Action for the Sustainable Development of Small Island Developing States should be deleted from the Secretary-General's proposals.

72. **The Chairman** announced that the Committee had concluded its general debate on item 106.

#### **Agenda item 12: Report of the Economic and Social Council** (*continued*)

*Draft resolution A/C.2/56/L.42*

73. **Mr. Mirafzal** (Islamic Republic of Iran), introducing the draft resolution on behalf of the Group of 77 and China, said that the text had not yet been circulated to delegations because of a delay in issuing the document. He hoped that it would be adopted by consensus.

#### **Agenda item 98: Environment and sustainable development** (*continued*)

##### **(f) Protection of global climate for present and future generations of mankind** (*continued*)

*Draft resolution A/C.2/56/L.41*

74. **Mr. Salmat** (Islamic Republic of Iran) introduced the draft resolution on behalf of the Group of 77 and China.

#### **Agenda item 102: Implementation of the Habitat Agenda and outcome of the special session of the General Assembly on this topic** (*continued*)

*Draft resolution A/C.2/56/L.39*

75. **Mr. Mirafzal** (Islamic Republic of Iran) introduced the draft resolution on behalf of the Group of 77 and China.

*Draft resolution A/C.2/56/L.40*

76. **Mr. Mirafzal** (Islamic Republic of Iran) introduced the draft resolution on behalf of the Group of 77 and China and expressed the hope that it would be adopted by consensus.

*The meeting rose at 1.05 p.m.*