



# Economic and Social Council

Distr.: General  
10 September 2014

Original: English

---

## Substantive session of 2014

Third coordination and management meeting

### Summary record of the 41st meeting

Held at Headquarters, New York, on Monday, 14 July 2014, at 10 a.m.

*President:* Mr. Oh Joon (Vice-President) . . . . . (Republic of Korea)

## Contents

Implementation of and follow-up to major United Nations conferences and summits

- (b) Review and coordination of the implementation of the Programme of Action for the Least Developed Countries for the Decade 2011-2020

---


This record is subject to correction.

Corrections should be submitted in one of the working languages. They should be set forth in a memorandum and also incorporated in a copy of the record. They should be sent as soon as possible to the Chief of the Documents Control Unit ([srcorrections@un.org](mailto:srcorrections@un.org)).

Corrected records will be reissued electronically on the Official Document System of the United Nations (<http://documents.un.org>).

14-57473 (E)



Please recycle 



*In the absence of Mr. Sajdik (Austria), Mr. Oh Joon (Republic of Korea), Vice-President, took the Chair.*

*The meeting was called to order at 10.10 a.m.*

## **Implementation of and follow-up to major United Nations conferences and summits**

### **(b) Review and coordination of the implementation of the Programme of Action for the Least Developed Countries for the Decade 2011-2020 (A/69/95-E/2014/81)**

1. **Mr. Rahman** (Office of the High Representative for the Least Developed Countries, Landlocked Developing Countries and Small Island Developing States) introduced the Secretary-General's report on the implementation of the Programme of Action for the Least Developed Countries for the Decade 2011-2020 (Istanbul Programme of Action) (A/69/95-E/2014/81).

2. **Ms. Piccioni** (Italy), speaking on behalf of the European Union, said that, since the fourth United Nations Conference on the Least Developed Countries, the European Union had strengthened its partnerships with the least developed countries through bilateral and regional programmes led by those countries. Future political and financial efforts would increasingly focus on the most vulnerable countries, particularly through the use of unilateral trade preferences under the Generalized System of Preferences and the Aid for Trade policy. The least developed countries would continue to benefit from duty-free, quota-free market access to the European Union market for all products except arms and ammunition.

3. The European Union focused its development policy and aid on structural reforms in the least developed countries in an effort to enhance productive capacity and unlock domestic potential for sustainable and inclusive growth and development. However, there needed to be broader development policy coherence and a jointly defined path that went beyond aid for trade. The European Union was determined to provide the least developed countries with transparent and predictable assistance to help them achieve the ambitious objectives set in the Programme of Action and meet the criteria for graduation from that category by 2020. Trading partners, including emerging economies and developing countries in a position to do so, should provide the least developed countries with duty-free, quota-free access to their markets and maintain market access benefits for a clearly defined

period of time after graduation, as the European Union did.

4. **Ms. Medvedeva** (Russian Federation) said that despite the progress made in implementing the Istanbul Programme of Action, the achievements were uneven and not always sustainable. Her country supported the report's conclusions and policy recommendations for the further implementation of the Programme of Action, including in relation to the establishment of the post-2015 development agenda. It was vital to continue constructive cooperation between the least developed countries and a broad range of sustainable development partners, including countries that had already graduated from the group of least developed countries. Partners should provide support for developing and implementing national development strategies and programmes, and maintaining least developed countries' trade preferences in the transitional stage.

5. Her delegation supported the work of various international organizations, including the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development, the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, and the United Nations Industrial Development Organization, to provide the least developed countries with technical assistance, analysis and policy development in the key areas of the Programme of Action. Those organizations should continue to cooperate closely with the Council in order to strengthen coordination and achieve results in the areas of finance and trade. The United Nations regional commissions also played an important role in the practical implementation of the Programme of Action.

6. Her Government remained firmly committed to international development cooperation with the least developed countries, and to strengthening their productive capacity and energy opportunities, easing their foreign debt burden, developing their trade potential, training medical staff, and reducing disaster risk.

7. **Mr. Djebou** (Benin), speaking on behalf of the least developed countries, said that one of the aims of the Istanbul Programme of Action was for half of the least developed countries to graduate to the middle-income group by 2020. The international community had provided support to the least developed countries as they undertook various reforms to achieve that goal. However, many least developed countries continued to face difficulties, particularly as a result of the decline

in official development assistance and the effects of climate change, prompting concerns that the 2020 goal would not be achieved. The midterm review that would take place in 2015 would provide an opportunity to evaluate the realistic prospects for achieving the goals of the Programme of Action. In that connection, the Ministerial Meeting on New Partnerships for Productive Capacity-Building in the Least Developed Countries would be held from 28 to 31 July 2014 in Benin.

8. Lastly, he commended the Secretary-General's decision to strengthen the staff of the Office of the High Representative for the Least Developed Countries, Landlocked Developing Countries and Small Island Developing States, given the magnitude of the task to be accomplished. The poorest and most marginalized countries would continue to need the support of the international community if they were to emerge from poverty and misery.

9. **Mr. Karaçay** (Observer for Turkey) said that the international community was at a crossroads in the drafting of the new development agenda. The new sustainable development goals should address the need for capacity-building, food security, human and social development, and good governance in the least developed countries. Although progress had been made in certain priority areas of the Istanbul Programme of Action, notably primary education enrolment rates, access to improved drinking water sources, foreign direct investment and child mortality rates, his delegation remained concerned about the likelihood of achieving all of the goals, given that levels of official development assistance were declining. The timely and effective implementation of the Programme of Action was crucial; development partners must therefore continue to help the least developed countries to achieve those targets. Since the fourth United Nations Conference on the Least Developed Countries, his country had been implementing its own comprehensive assistance package and had doubled its official development assistance in 2012 compared to 2011.

10. For the least developed countries to attain the Programme of Action targets, accelerated development efforts would be required to insulate them from global shocks and to transform their economies. Assistance should focus in particular on productive capacity-building and mechanisms to support the development of science, technology and innovation. His delegation therefore shared the Secretary-General's view that the

establishment of a technology bank dedicated to the least developed countries was crucial to facilitating rapid structural transformation in recipient countries. In that connection, his country had pledged \$200,000 for the establishment of a technology bank and science, technology and innovation supporting mechanism under the auspices of the United Nations.

11. The midterm review of the Istanbul Programme of Action would provide an important opportunity to assess its effective implementation, highlight progress made and address challenges. He concurred with the Secretary-General that preparations must start early and, in that connection, he reiterated that Turkey stood ready to host the review conference.

12. **Mr. Elias** (Bangladesh) said that, while the report highlighted moderate improvements in some of the economic indicators of the least developed countries, the average gross domestic product was well below that of the previous decade. 2015 would mark the halfway point in the targets set in the Istanbul Programme of Action, yet many countries were far from reaching those goals. The onus for reaching those targets was on all stakeholders.

13. There had been no significant progress in any of the eight areas of the Programme of Action. The vulnerability of the least developed countries to global shocks was well documented in the report and were known to be compounded by a lack of access to global trade, the global credit market and the global technology pool, yet there had been no immediate effort by partners to help the least developed countries to address the issue. It was therefore essential that a high-level panel of experts should be convened and provided with the necessary support to ensure that the technology bank was operational by the seventieth session of the General Assembly.

14. Official development assistance was vital for many least developed countries, but it was not predictable, which meant that national governments could not plan their national development strategies. Official development assistance to the least developed countries must be needs-based and demand-driven. Quality aid efforts must also be properly coordinated at the appropriate level if official development assistance was to have any meaningful impact. In addition, South-South cooperation was increasingly important, although it was no substitute for North-South cooperation. However, trade was the real engine of

development, yet there had been no significant progress in that area. Any future undertakings and meetings on the development of the least developed countries would be devoid of meaning until the commitments undertaken at the Ninth Ministerial Conference of the World Trade Organization were met.

15. **Mr. Gaspard** (Haiti) said that on the eve of the deadline for full implementation of the Millennium Development Goals and of the adoption of the post-2015 development agenda, the report revealed that there was still a long way to go before the least developed countries would be able to graduate from that group. While progress had been made in some areas, it was negligible and fragile, varying from one country to another.

16. His Government had adopted a strategic development plan that set out its long-term development objectives in line with the eight priority areas of the Istanbul Programme of Action. The plan sought to promote true social inclusion and was the result of coordination efforts among various ministries. In order to implement that plan, accelerate economic growth and reduce poverty, a 2014-2016 investment programme had been launched. It sought to preserve stabilization gains while strengthening the motors for economic growth, and provided a basis for competition and employment. The 2013-2016 triennial agricultural recovery programme had also helped to boost that sector of the economy through the development of rural infrastructure, watershed management and commercial agriculture. However, further efforts were needed to tackle agricultural productivity, which was still too low, thus hindering national attempts to achieve food self-sufficiency.

17. In May 2014, the National Observatory for Poverty and Social Exclusion and the United Nations Development Programme had organized a final workshop on the attainment of the Millennium Development Goals in Haiti, attended by representatives of the Haitian Government, United Nations agencies and civil society. The participants had found that the most significant progress had been made in the area of education, particularly with respect to parity between boys and girls, which had been achieved in both primary and secondary education. In addition, by 2012, Haiti had halved the number of underweight children aged under 5. Despite a number of difficulties, progress had been made in the areas of infant mortality, maternal mortality and combating

HIV/AIDS. There had also been progress in the fields of gender equality and women's empowerment, as demonstrated by the fact that the 30 per cent quota for women in the public sector, as set out in the Haitian Constitution, had almost been achieved.

18. South-South and triangular cooperation had played a vital role in all of those areas of development. Those new forms of cooperation had proved indispensable to the least developed countries in a short period of time, but could not replace North-South cooperation. In addition to preserving the gains made in priority areas, the least developed countries had to address other challenges, in particular those resulting from natural disasters that had devastating effects on their agriculture, road networks and health infrastructure. The international community must therefore consider establishing real environmental governance in those countries and addressing the issue of development financing. While his Government's financing strategy sought to broaden the tax base and to encourage foreign and domestic private investment in infrastructure and facilities, it had still not borne any fruit. Official development assistance therefore remained essential for the least developed countries, and the steady decline in such assistance was a matter of concern. While his delegation supported the search for new and innovative sources of financing, they should not replace existing official development assistance.

19. Lastly, while the recommendations contained in the Secretary-General's report with regard to integrating the least developed countries into international trade flows were a step in the right direction, countries needed help not only to increase their production capacity, but also to expand and improve their range of exports.

20. **Ms. Luna Camacho** (Observer for Mexico) said that her Government would continue to support and assist the least developed countries in their search for prosperity and sustainable development and the full implementation of the Programme of Action. Through South-South cooperation activities, her country had sought to contribute to the national efforts of the least developed countries, particularly Haiti, the only least developed country in the Latin American region. The assistance provided to low-income countries, particularly the least developed countries, small island developing countries and landlocked developing States, was essential for achieving the Millennium

Development Goals. Those countries must also be involved in the process of defining and implementing the post-2015 development agenda in order to ensure political commitment to meeting the new objectives and the effectiveness of measures adopted to meet them.

21. Rather than seeking to increase cooperation flows to middle-income countries at the expense of the least developed countries, the international community should focus on effectively integrating different stakeholders and cooperation methods, based on their comparative advantages, and on exploring synergies in order to maximize joint efforts and achieve the common goal of global sustainable development. As net receivers of development assistance, the least developed countries must take ownership of and play a leading role in cooperation activities with traditional donors and those from the South. All activities should focus on results and promoting mutual accountability, in order to maximize their impact. In that connection, her country had hosted the first High-level Meeting of the Global Partnership for Effective Development Cooperation in April 2014 to promote the participation of all development actors, including net recipient countries, in development cooperation activities.

*The meeting rose at 11 a.m.*