



# PRESS RELEASE



UN OFFICE OF THE HIGH REPRESENTATIVE FOR THE LEAST DEVELOPED COUNTRIES,  
LANDLOCKED DEVELOPING COUNTRIES AND SMALL ISLAND DEVELOPING STATES

## **Under-Secretary-General hails plane ticket initiative, urges more countries to join**

**United Nations, 1 March 2006:** The United Nations envoy for the world's most vulnerable countries has saluted an initiative agreed by 13 countries in Paris this week to put a levy on plane tickets to help poor countries fight AIDS and other killer diseases.

"This is a landmark agreement that at once demonstrates the power of both partnerships and innovation in responding to the critical development needs of the weak countries that lack the resources to improve the human condition of their people," the UN High Representative for the Least Developed Countries, Landlocked Developed Countries and Small Island Developing States, Anwarul K. Chowdhury, said in New York today.

"It is particularly significant that the new initiative brings together the developed, developing and least developed countries, as well as the private and public sectors in a joint effort to fight disease and poverty in the poor countries. This is the kind of solidarity needed if we are to make a dent on the rampant poverty and achieve the Millennium Development Goals, especially in the Least Developed Countries," Chowdhury said.

Thirteen countries agreed to adopt a levy on plane tickets to fund the purchase of generic drugs and other medicines to help the poor. The 13 countries are: Brazil, Britain, Chile, Cote d'Ivoire, Cyprus, Democratic Republic of Congo, France, Jordan, Luxembourg, Madagascar, Mauritius, Nicaragua and Norway. The Democratic Republic of Congo and Madagascar are among the world's 50 Least Developed Countries. Twenty-five other countries agreed to contribute to the fund through other means.

The High Representative urged the remaining countries to contribute to the fund, saying that the need for external support to address both emergency and development problems remains overwhelming in the Least Developed Countries.

"The Brussels Programme of Action for the Least Developed Countries calls upon development partners to be providing 0.15 – 0.2 percent of their Gross National Income to the LDCs in development assistance by 2010. As countries continue efforts to meet this

target, it is important to identify additional sources of development assistance that could make a difference in the lives of the poor,” Mr. Chowdhury said.

Highlighting the current food shortages in Eastern and West Africa; the large number of people living with HIV who lack access to life-saving drugs in Sub-Saharan African and widespread poverty in the LDCs, coupled with lack of resources and structural weaknesses, Mr. Chowdhury urged the countries contributing to the new fund to give special attention to the needs of the LDCs.

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