



# PRESS RELEASE



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

## **Participatory governance is key to political accountability in LDCs**

**NEW YORK, 29 May 2007:** The UN High Representative for the Least Developed Countries, Landlocked Developing Countries and Small Island Developing States, Mr. Anwarul K. Chowdhury, has said that government accountability should be at all levels, from the community level to the global level.

Speaking on “Government and Political Accountability” at the Civicus World Assembly in Glasgow on 26 May, Mr. Chowdhury said that accountability at the community level was especially important for the Least Developed Countries, since that is where action needs to be taken to improve people’s lives.

He said that government accountability should include positions taken at international organizations on development and other issues such as the Millennium Declaration. This, he said, was very important for vulnerable countries because of their heavy dependence on intergovernmental organizations.

Mr. Chowdhury said that given the voiceless countries’ limited capacities, dependence on others and vulnerability to external factors, ensuring the accountability of these countries was a major challenge. He suggested three approaches that could help vulnerable countries promote accountability:

- a) Participatory governance based on home-grown initiatives and with full attention to gender equality. Public hearings could be one such initiative.
- b) Government responsiveness to concerns raised by civil society, the media and other civic groups as well as by the general public.
- c) Committed and capable leadership at all levels.

Other personalities who spoke on the subject of government and political accountability were Irene Khan, Secretary-General of Amnesty International; Cobus de Swardt, Global Programme Director and Acting Chief Executive Officer, Transparency International; Mamounata Cisse: Deputy Secretary General, International Trade Union Confederation; and Olara Otunhu, former UN Special Representative for Children and Armed Conflict and President of LBL Foundation for Children. The discussions were moderated by Douglas Rutzen, President and Chief Executive Officer of the International Center for Not-for-Profit Law.

CIVICUS is a non-governmental international alliance established in 1993 to promote foundation, growth and protection of citizen action throughout the world.