



**Statement  
By  
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And  
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Landlocked Developing Countries and Small Island  
Developing States**

**At the**

**Ministerial Segment of the 61<sup>st</sup> Session of UN ESCAP**

**Bangkok  
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Distinguished Chairman Foreign Minister Tokaev  
Executive Secretary Kim Hak-su,  
Honorable Ministers,  
Distinguished delegates,

At the outset, allow me to express my immense pleasure in seeing you preside over the 61st session of the United Nations Economic and Social Commission for the Asia and the Pacific. Having the opportunity to observe from close quarters your diplomatic skills and wise leadership in building consensus, I have every confidence that your guidance will help this session of the Commission achieve its objectives, particularly when it is deliberating on key issues relating to managing globalization, achieving the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) and focusing on the special needs of the Least Developed Countries (LDCs), the Landlocked Developing Countries (LLDCs) and the Small Islands Developing States (SIDS).

My office – Office of the High Representative for these three most vulnerable groups – has special interest in the deliberations of this session as the Asia Pacific region hosts 14 LDCs, 11 LLDCs and 15 SIDS, the last one also includes non-UN members like Niue, Cook Islands and others that are associate members of this regional body. Let me take this opportunity to commend ESCAP's pro-active initiatives in respect of these three most disadvantaged groups of countries of the region, particularly by setting up appropriate intergovernmental decision-making mechanisms to promote the interests of these countries in need. I also convey my special appreciation to my dear colleague ESCAP Executive Secretary Kim Hak-su for the dynamic leadership that he is providing to the Commission.

These three most vulnerable groups, which have their respective Programmes of Action adopted by separate UN conferences, namely the Brussels, the Almaty and the Barbados Programmes, need the support of their development partners to implement these development frameworks in a tangible manner. The challenges and constraints facing these groups are enormous and therefore need equally determined international support. Slow economic growth, poor trade performance, continuing environmental degradation, debilitating HIV/AIDS pandemic, discouraging foreign direct investment and unmet ODA commitments compounded by host of new challenges in a globalizing world make the development tasks of these countries much more difficult. As I have asserted many times, the MDGs will not be achieved globally unless we are able to

support effectively these most vulnerable countries in achieving these goals. I am therefore delighted that this session of the Commission will take up under the agenda item 4 the issues concerning the least developed, the landlocked and the small islands countries. Your session has also been preceded by the seventh session of the Special Body on the least developed and the landlocked countries that deliberated on the very substantive document entitled “Achieving the MDGs in the least developed and the landlocked developing countries through trade, debt relief and aid.” The report of that Special Body which is before you should receive your engaged and supportive attention.

Globally, the LDCs would increase their present population of nearly 740 million by 200 million more by the year 2015 when the MDGs are targeted to be achieved. This large additional population would present obvious challenges for the 50 LDCs worldwide. When we look at the progress made by the 14 Asia Pacific LDCs, it is quite clear that they are doing better than most other LDCs. However, in the Asian context, when compared to the other developing countries of the region, the progress in various sectors of development has been quite mediocre in the LDCs.

The development partners of the LDCs, including international and multilateral organizations as well as the private sector and civil society, have shown enhanced interest in supporting these countries. I welcome particularly the increase of the total ODA flow to the LDCs that amounted to 23.5 billion US dollars in 2003, a 25% increase in real terms over the previous year. In terms of market access, LDCs have been provided almost full access by major trading partners but the benefits of this access to the industrialized markets are yet to contribute in a major way to the development prospects of these countries mainly because of their intractable supply-side constraints. In my statement at the Special Body session on 10 May, I proposed that in view of the positive policies of the United States to assist the LDCs overcome poverty, an Asia-Pacific counterpart scheme for the 14 LDCs similar to the support given to the African LDCs through the Africa Growth and Opportunity Act (AGOA) – a kind of Asian AGOA – be instituted. I hope the United States government would give due consideration to this proposal. I also believe that there is tremendous potential for the LDCs trade if the markets of the other developing countries are opened in the true spirit of South-South cooperation.

My Office, in close consultation with LDCs and our UN partners, has embarked on an elaborate preparation for the mid-term review of the implementation of the Brussels Programme of Action as convened by the UN General Assembly in 2006. The

regional reviews to be undertaken by the UN regional commissions by early next year would be very substantive in that context.

More than one-third of the world's 31 LLDCs are located in Asia and as such, their concerns are high on the regional agenda. UN ESCAP has provided effective leadership in pursuing this agenda by promoting establishment of efficient transit transport systems for this vast continent. The United Nations system has embarked on the implementation of the Almaty Programme of Action guided by the roadmap adopted at the interagency meeting in February 2004. The recent High Level Meeting on the role of the international, regional and sub-regional organizations in the implementation of this Programme highlighted the engagement of these organizations. The meeting was generously hosted in Almaty by the government of Kazakhstan and inaugurated by our distinguished chairman, Foreign Minister Tokaev.

The region's 15 small islands as well as the associate members have been enthusiastic participants at the Mauritius International Meeting convened by the United Nations that resulted in the adoption of the Mauritius Strategy for the implementation of the Barbados Programme. I am happy to note that the Pacific Islands Summit will take place next year during the ESCAP's 62nd session in Indonesia. The ESCAP Pacific Operations Center has a major role in the implementation of the Mauritius Strategy in the region working closely with the Pacific Islands Forum and other relevant regional organizations. I had been underlining consistently the importance of the role regional organizations can play in the implementation of the sustainable development agenda of the small islands. Of course, the UN system and international financial institutions need to provide the much needed support that these small islands deserve due to their acute vulnerability and remoteness.

The UN Millennium Declaration of 2000 devoted particular attention to the special needs of the least developed, the landlocked and the small islands countries. Goal 8 of the MDGs focusing on the global partnership for development has identified addressing the special needs of these most vulnerable groups as key targets of achievement. As the UN advocate for these weakest segments of the humanity, I urge again that the international community should come forward in supporting the development efforts of these countries in a meaningful way to make the objective of the global partnership a reality.

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