



STATEMENT

BY

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AND

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

AT THE

**FOURTEENTH SESSION OF THE HIGH-LEVEL COMMITTEE
ON SOUTH-SOUTH COOPERATION**

**New York
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Mr. President,

It gives me special pleasure to participate at the fourteenth session of the High-level Committee on South-South Cooperation, particularly as it meets for the first time under its new and more appropriate name and as it is so doing under your leadership and guidance. We are confident that your wisdom and well-known abilities will lead this important body's biennial session to achieve concrete outcome.

UNDP has been promoting South-South cooperation (SSC) through increasingly organized and vigorous efforts. Its Administrator my dear colleague Mark Malloch Brown and his team deserve our full appreciation for the determined support given to this significant area of international development cooperation. In this context, the UNDP Special Unit's new Director Yiping Zhou, in a short time, has brought in a much-needed activism that has the potential of giving a boost and a direction to the Unit's future work. As partners within the UN system, my colleagues and I wish him all the best in his new responsibility.

My Office - the UN Office of the High Representative with the particular mandate for advocacy in respect of the three most vulnerable groups of countries - is very grateful that at its last session in 2003, this Committee decided to give particular attention to "the special problems and needs" of the Least Developed Countries(LDCs), Landlocked Developing Countries(LLDCs) and Small Island Developing States(SIDS), with a view to helping to providing a platform for the international development community to address the special concerns of these countries. As majority of these countries are in Africa, the region should obviously get our attention, more so as NEPAD is emerging as a key framework for SSC. This 2003 decision has very substantive significance for the global development cooperation in the area of SSC, particularly for the work of the UNDP, its Special Unit and other relevant parts of the UN system.

The universally-recognised economic, social, environmental and institutional vulnerability of the least developed, landlocked and small islands make these the most-deserving in the context of renewed efforts for advancing South-South cooperation. At the Committee's last session, my Office presented a Conference Room Paper on the "Potentials of South-South cooperation in the implementation of the Brussels Programme of Action for the Least Developed Countries" that outlined various areas of ongoing and potential support to the LDCs by other developing countries as well as by the UN system. Such development cooperation will attain greater credibility when the international community will recognize that the developing countries in a position to do so are giving special attention to the neediest among them. An additional support from the traditional development partners as part of the triangular cooperation initiatives will make the existing forms of assistance to these disadvantaged countries substantive and would result in greater dividends.

Taking into account the last session's decision and also in giving the current Guidelines for the promotion of the South-South cooperation by the UN system a focused direction, it is necessary that the UN system targets the countries in special needs as the primary beneficiary groups of the SSC and that explicit practical application initiatives are

undertaken by all concerned. In addition to the Brussels Programme, the Almaty Programme and the Mauritius Strategy have put special emphasis on South-South cooperation in achieving their objectives. It is gratifying to note that number of UN entities, in particular the UN Regional Commissions, as recorded in the Report of the Administrator in document SSC/14/2, have been taking wide-ranging SSC activities and we believe that their activities are increasingly and appropriately focused on these countries. We also appreciate that the Third Cooperation Framework (2005-2007) covering the activities of the Special Unit includes a significant shift “in order to play a more active role in helping to meet the priority needs of the LDCs, SIDS and LLDCs.”(para.70, SSC/14/1)

The Brussels Programme of Action for the LDCs has called upon developing countries to promote South-South initiatives in favour of LDCs. The Programme identified some important areas of cooperation that include building human and productive capacity, technical assistance and exchange of best practices particularly in areas related to health, education, trade, investment, environment, training, transit transport cooperation and technology. The Programme also emphasized that South-South cooperation is not a substitute for North-South cooperation but a complement and encouraged the use of triangular mechanisms through financing by one or more donor countries.

In this context, it is worthwhile to note that in a recent survey, a high level of emphasis on South-South approaches to development was observed in 40 percent of total UNDP country programmes, most of which are countries in special needs. In achieving food security, FAO Special Programme for Food Security provides experts from developing countries to work with farmers in LDC rural communities. To strengthen investment cooperation among developing countries, especially in favor of LDCs, UNCTAD created a technical cooperation project called Bilateral Investment Treaty (BIT) negotiations. International Trade Centre (ITC) ‘matchmaking’ programmes are of major significance in building South-South partnerships through triangular mechanism that benefit LDCs.

The Almaty Programme of Action calls for the further promotion of South-South and triangular cooperation with the involvement of donors. In fact, the Almaty Programme is primarily based on cooperation between landlocked and transit developing countries in order to implement the Programme’s objectives relating to fundamental transit policy issues as well as the priorities relating to infrastructure development and maintenance.

The Mauritius Strategy in respect of the SIDS categorically states that South-South cooperation is critical at the bilateral, sub-regional and regional levels in investment, capacity-building, disaster management, environment, food, agriculture, oceans, water, energy, health and education. Within this framework, SIDS-SIDS cooperation has acquired considerable significance.

Based on their real developmental needs, South-South cooperation should be built as an integral part of the international community’s support to the countries in special needs. In recent years, there are an increasing number of countries in the South that have reached higher stages of development and that are effective players in the global economy. They have a growing number of institutions with excellent standards of education and outstanding capacities and expertise in areas of health, manufacturing, hi-tech industries and ICT, as well as research and development. These countries therefore have the means

and the resources to further promote South-South cooperation to support the disadvantaged countries. And I must underline here that in recent years, such cooperation is being promoted actively in areas ranging from health in particular HIV/AIDS, capacity building, trade and agriculture to economic infrastructure, debt cancellation, governance and democratic institutions.- building and sharing of technology. Increased regional cooperation and greater market opportunities among developing countries in general, and with the most vulnerable countries in particular, appear to be key factors for the expansion of South-South trade. This is also finding increasing reflection in the cooperation frameworks of the regional and sub-regional organizations of Africa, Asia-Pacific and Latin America-Caribbean.

This session of the High-level Committee is being held just prior to the Second South Summit in Qatar next month focussing in a major way on advancing increased cooperation among the countries of the South. A forward-looking outcome of this session would have a positive impact on the decisions of the Summit's implementation strategy for the Havana Programme of Action adopted at the First South Summit in 2000. Also important to bear in mind that before the Committee's next session, the General Assembly at its 2006 session would also undertake the five-year mid-term review of the LDCs Programme of Action.

We are gratified to note that the first of the SSC Special Unit's three policy and operational support platform records that " In the implementation mechanisms, particular attention will be paid to the needs of least developed countries, landlocked developing countries and small island developing States." Also, we particularly welcome that the Special Unit is being asked for responding "...more effectively to pressing needs of the LDCs and other countries in difficult development circumstances" in the recommendations contained in chapter VI of document SSC/14/1 and that the Unit is being asked for giving "...special emphasis to the LDCs and African countries..." ; to "...give priority to the documentation and dissemination of information on specific problems and needs facing the LDCs, LLDCs and SIDS" and to provide "... a platform for the international community to address special concerns of LDCs, LLDCs and SIDS" in the recommendations contained in chapter V of document SSC/14/2. These are very useful recommendations and we hope the Committee would be endorsing those. Following action here, it would be worthwhile if the Special Unit could create a database for the most vulnerable countries to benefit from the offers of cooperation and support from fellow developing countries.

Let me conclude by emphasizing that keeping in focus the special needs of the LDCs, LLDCs and SIDS and the implementation of their respective Programmes of Action, there is urgent need for the developing countries to give particular attention to the following six areas in order to:

1. Remove all existing tariff and non-tariff barriers to their markets for the products of LDCs and support LDCs to overcome their supply-side constraints.

2. Facilitate and improve transit transport by all modes of communications for LLDCs.
3. Increase foreign direct investment (FDI) flows to LDCs, LLDCs and SIDS, particularly to build infrastructure and expand export capacity.
4. Double the present technical assistance as well as training, research and educational facilities and scholarships provided to the LDCs, LLDCs and SIDS.
5. Provide greater support to the social sector development in the LDCs with special attention to health focussing on HIV/AIDS, education, population issues and women's empowerment.
6. Cooperate in establishing food security for the LDCs.

I thank you, Mr. President.
