



REPORT

**ON THE WORKSHOP FOR THE NATIONAL FOCAL POINTS
OF THE LEAST DEVELOPED COUNTRIES**

organized by

**the Office of the High Representative for the Least Developed Countries,
Landlocked Developing Countries, and Small Island Developing States**

in collaboration with

UNCTAD, UNDP, UNDESA and the World Bank

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United Nations

New York

1. The five day workshop for the National Focal Points of the Least Developed Countries on the implementation of the Brussels Programme of Action was organised from 17 to 21 May 2004 in New York by the United Nations Office of the High Representative for the Least Developed Countries, Landlocked Developing Countries and Small Island Developing States (OHRLLS), in collaboration with the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD), the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), the United Nations Department for Economic and Social Affairs (UN DESA) and the World Bank (WB) upon the request of the Coordination Bureau of the Group of the Least Developed Countries (LDCs).

2. Besides the National Focal Points, the Focal Points in the LDCs Permanent Missions to the United Nations as well as Focal Points in the UN system entities and donor countries were invited to participate in the workshop.

3. The overarching objective of the workshop was strengthening the national capacity of the LDCs for the follow-up and implementation of the Programme of Action (PoA) adopted at the Third United Nations Conference on the Least Developed Countries held in May 2001 in Brussels (LDC III). Other objectives included sharing of national experience, lessons learned and best practices, building the foundation for networking, defining the roles of the National Focal Points and National Forums, discussion of the monitoring methodology and reporting on the national follow-up and implementation of the PoA. The major outputs of the workshop were: generic Terms of Reference for National Focal Points and generic Terms of Reference for National Forums, the monitoring methodology and reporting guidelines.

4. The workshop applied the combination of joint and group breakout sessions. It drew on the expertise of resource persons from various parts of the UN as well as on the experiences of National Focal Points themselves, to transfer knowledge and stimulate discussions. Each session concluded with wrap-up summaries and evaluations.

5. In his opening remarks to the participants of the workshop **Mr. Anwarul K. Chowdhury, Under-Secretary-General and High Representative for the Least Developed Countries, Landlocked Developing Countries and Small Island Developing States** warmly

welcomed the participants, explained the rationale behind the workshop and its objectives and invited them to actively participate in discussions. He expressed hope that the workshop would provide the National Focal Points with knowledge and guidance that could be helpful in their future work.

6. **Mr. Zéphrine Diabre, Associate Administrator of UNDP** underscored the appropriate timing of the workshop. Noting that the workshop was taking place before the 2005 comprehensive review of the implementation of the outcomes of the major United Nations conferences and summits in the economic and social fields, he emphasised the linkages between the goals of the PoA for the LDCs and other international development goals, including the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). He stated that despite their efforts to carry out macroeconomic reforms and improve governance practices, the LDCs were still below the targets in many fields. In this regard he emphasised that country ownership was key to the effective implementation of the PoA. He also stressed importance of country level coordination of all development programmes for its effective implementation. While recognising that primary responsibility for the PoA implementation was with the LDCs, he reminded the donors of their commitments under the Monterey Consensus and urged them to address external constraints of the LDCs, notably trade barriers and other restrictive policies and high debt burden.

7. **Mr. Oussou Edouard Aho-Glele, Chairman of the LDC Group Coordination Bureau** stated in his address that the initiative to hold the workshop for the National Focal Points stemmed from the desire to ensure transparency and preserve the spirit of partnership of LDC III in the follow-up and implementation of the PoA. He expressed hope that the workshop would clarify the roles and responsibilities of all stakeholders in that process, create a network for interaction and provide with the tools for effective monitoring and reporting. He concluded his speech by thanking the OHRLLS for organising and UNDP, UNCTAD, UN DESA for providing support to the workshop.

8. **H.E. Mr Jean de Ruyt, Permanent Representative and Ambassador of Belgium, host country of LDC III,** in his address emphasised that the major contribution of LDC III was providing a framework for partnership between the LDCs and their development partners,

as well as outlining the objectives of development in the LDCs. He noted some progress in the follow-up and implementation of the PoA at the global level, notably the identification of ECOSOC as the main body for the global review of the implementation of the BPOA and the establishment of a highly visible post of the High Representative in New York. He reaffirmed strong commitment of his country to meeting the ODA target in respect to LDCs by 2006. He added that the upcoming high-level segment of ECOSOC substantive session next month would provide an opportunity for a comprehensive analysis of the situation in resources mobilization for poverty eradication in LDCs and emphasised the coherence of MDGs, Monterrey and PoA. He looked forward to the monitoring methodology and assured of his delegation's active participation in deliberations on it.

9. Mrs. Zamira Eshmambetova, Senior Programme Officer, OHRLLS made the presentation entitled **“Programme of Action for the Least Developed Countries: framework for partnership”**. Her presentation focused on objectives, mutual commitments of the LDCs and their development partners in seven inter-linked areas, goals and targets, guiding principles in the implementation, follow-up arrangements at the global, regional and national level and a three track approach to the implementation of the PoA. She also briefed on the criteria of the Committee for Development Policy (CDP) used for identification, inclusion and graduation from the list of LDCs. Mrs. Harriet Schmidt, Director, and OHRLLS briefed the participants on the mandate and activities of the OHRLLS.

10. In the discussion that followed their presentations the participants underscored the importance of establishing synergies between the PoA and MDGs, PRSPs and regional initiatives like NEPAD. The National Focal Point (NFP) of Senegal drew the attention to the need for a clearly articulated LDCs position vis-à-vis the positions of G-77, G-22 and G-8 in the multilateral fora. The NFP of Cape Verde emphasised the need for smooth transition for the graduating LDCs and urged the OHRLLS to provide support to these countries. The NFP of Mali requested to provide information about the Trust Fund of OHRLLS for the LDCs. Some NFPs expressed frustration that donors and the Bretton Woods Institutions (BWIs) seemed not focused on the special needs of the Group of the LDCs in their development assistance policies and programmes. According to them, the PoA for LDCs did not feature prominently in their

development assistance agenda of the donors and the BWIs. WMO, UNICEF, ESCAP, IFAD, and OSAA shared information about mainstreaming the PoA in their respective work programmes and special programmes and Trust Funds for the LDCs.

11. Wrapping up the discussions the High Representative explained that while the BWIs did not formally recognise the LDCs as a category, they recognise a category described as the Low Income Countries under Stress (LICUS) that to all intents and purposes include the LDCs. He informed the participants that BWIs were working on easing the conditional ties to the debt relief under the HIPC Initiative and on providing support to infrastructure and transport to countries that include 16 landlocked LDCs under the Almaty PoA. He assured the Focal Points that in the discussions with the BWIs he would further pursue debt cancellation to all LDCs and smooth transition for graduating LDCs.

12. The discussions of the PRSP started with the presentation on **“Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper as a tool for the national implementation of the BPOA”** by Mrs. Linda Van Gelder, Senior Economist from the World Bank. In her presentation she emphasised that PRSP was a process. *Key steps of this process include* comprehensive poverty diagnostics, setting targets and identifying indicators for monitoring and evaluation the progress, identification, prioritization and costing of policy and programmes aimed at achieving the targets and goals. *Core principles of this process are as follows:* country owned, result oriented, comprehensive and LT in perspective, participatory, partnership-oriented. *Policy implications for national governments include:* (i) domestic revenue mobilization; (ii) setting priority areas for national budget and spending, including the reflection of the role of the private and public sector; (iii) good governance; (iv) efforts to create an enabling environment for private investment; and (v) capacity building. *Achievements of the PRSP process:* (i) country ownership of the process; (ii) centrality of the poverty eradication; (iii) openness and transparency and (iv) donor support of PRSP principles. *Inherent tension* arises between participation and prioritization, comprehensiveness and selectiveness, international expectations and country ownership. *The challenges* are the following (i) institutionalization of broad based participation; (ii) prioritization based on analysis; (iii) strengthening monitoring systems; (iv) strengthening public expenditure and management systems; (v) aligning and increasing assistance.

13. She emphasised that in developing country development strategies it was important to work out medium-term national goals beyond the three-to-five-year time framework of PRSPs with good baseline data and systems to measure the progress. It is also essential to integrate infrastructure and service delivery in spending priorities as practice shows that PRSPs are relatively strong on growth link to poverty reduction but coverage of infrastructure and service delivery (beyond education) is weak in public expenditure programmes. In addition, it is important to balance fiscal constraints with appropriate levels and types of aid. Aid flows should not be taken as exogenous in determining the macroeconomic framework for PRSPs. There need to be an interactive process of balancing fiscal constraints with proactive responses from donor community to the improvements in country policies and governance.

14. During the discussions that followed the presentation the participants shared their national experiences in PRSP. They underscored the importance of the linkage of growth to poverty reduction in the PRSP and the need for the country level coordination for the follow-up and implementation the outcomes of major UN conferences in order to avoid proliferation of national mechanisms, duplication of work and to lessen the burden of reporting. The participants also emphasised the need for integration of the PRSPs in the national budget and development planning to ensure long term sustainable development. Many mentioned the importance of predictable and credible financial resources for the effective implementation of the PRSP and the PoA for the LDCs. Some stressed the importance of partnership, including with civil society and private sector. Other participants drew attention to the need for additional financial resources and the contingency plan for mitigation of the consequences caused by exogenous shocks, including the sharp drop of commodity prices, natural disasters, financial crisis, etc.

15. Summing up the discussions the moderator emphasized the importance of the participatory approach to ensure the country-led and country-owned PRSP process, integration of the PRSP into national budget and planning for its sustainability. She underscored the importance of growth with equity for poverty eradication, the need for the continued donors' support to PRSP and additional resources to mitigate external shocks. She concluded by

emphasising the importance of the PRSP as an effective tool for attaining long term objectives of the PoA and the MDGs.

16. Mr. Harmon C. Thomas, Chief, Commodity Policy and Protection Service, Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO) made a presentation on “**Role of agriculture in the LDCs development**”. In his presentation he emphasised the importance of agriculture in promoting growth, reducing poverty and enhancing food security in the LDCs. This importance was explained by the proportion of population dependent on agricultural activities, share of agriculture in GDP, share of agriculture in exports and agricultural potential of the LDCs. Despite this importance, agriculture in these countries remains largely underdeveloped due to internal and external factors. *Internal factors* include low investment and utilization of modern technology and effective domestic policy frameworks. *External factors* include distorted international markets and challenges arising from integrating into such markets. This results in displacement effect of import surges, continuing rise in food imports and financing the increase food import bills by the LDCs. The following measures have been recommended to reverse current situation and beneficially integrate the LDCs into global economy: reform international agricultural markets by eliminating distortions, improve policy incentives in LDCs for productivity raising investments in agriculture, provide financial and technical assistance to LDCs in order to help them to diversify from excessive economic dependence on one or a few agricultural commodities. FAO provides technical assistance to LDCs focusing on strengthening supply-side capacity and production and responding to emergencies. It has carried out a number of activities in support of the implementation of commitments 1, 3, 4, 5, 6 of the BPOA by the LDCs. It has mobilised US\$ 1, 428.9 million for various agricultural and rural development projects in 45 LDCs in 2001-2003. BPOA has been fully mainstreamed into the FOA mandate. FAO reports annually on the BPOA progress to its Council.

17. In their discussion the participants emphasised a pivotal role of agriculture for poverty eradication and economic growth in the LDCs. They underscored the importance of technology to the increase of agricultural production, of infrastructure for agricultural trade and delivery of services to rural population, of market access for agricultural products from LDCs for export earnings, of capacity building for rural poverty alleviation, of traditional knowledge

for agricultural production and preservation of natural resources and environment, of the role of women in rural development, the need for information and communication in bridging the gap between the poor and the rich. WMO emphasised the dependence of agriculture on rainfall and its susceptibility to weather and climate change. IFAD informed that it allocated 57% of its resources, or 2.6 bln US dollars, to the LDCs. WFP informed about its assistance to LDCs facing food crises and its programmes for rural development, capacity building and HIV/AIDS.

18. Mr. Thomas provided answers to the questions and summed up the discussion as follows: the role of agriculture in poverty eradication and sustainable development of the LDCs is crucial. Agricultural development requires raising agricultural productivity, improvement of infrastructure, enhancing human capacity with an emphasis on gender equality, preservation of natural resources and environment.

19. Mr. Habib Ouane, Head, Special Programme for Least Developed, Landlocked and Island Developing Countries, UNCTAD spoke on **“Mainstreaming trade in the LDCs development”**. He mentioned that despite the fact that trade had increasingly been integrated into the poverty reduction strategies the impact on poverty alleviation in LDCs was insufficient for two reasons: *first*, because increased exports do not automatically lead to economic growth and *second*, growth may not necessarily be associated with poverty reduction. This often happens due to the economic growth in enclaves that have little or no connection with the rest of the economy. The danger of economic growth to be concentrated in enclaves is particularly strong in those LDCs that have strong export specialization in basic manufactures, tourism, and oil. Mainstreaming trade into development strategies of the LDCs requires integration of trade as a central component in the national poverty reduction strategies, development of a global enabling trade regime for the LDCs and financial and technical assistance of their development partners, in particular to their productive sectors. Private sector development should become part and parcel of post-liberal development strategies in the LDCs.

20. Mr. Gunter Fischer, Economist, Special Programme for Least Developed, Landlocked and Island Developing Countries, UNCTAD focused in his presentation on

Commitment 5 of the BPOA “Enhancing the role of trade in development”. He highlighted the responsibilities of the LDCs Governments and their development partners in the area of trade, provided a brief analysis of the current situation and on-going trends in the external trade performance of LDCs and emphasized the vital importance of trade as part of a broader development strategy for poverty reduction in the LDCs. As a result of both their marginalization in international markets and the structure of their exports, the LDCs continue to be price-takers and not price-makers in international trade transactions. He recommended that there should be a development driven approach to trade rather than trade driven approach to development. Development driven approach to trade requires not simply export expansion but strengthening the investment-export nexus, enhancing import capacity and expansion of income earning opportunities. Furthermore, he also briefed about UNCTAD’s assistance to LDCs in trade related issues and on the 2004 LDC report. The National Focal Points of Zambia, Bangladesh and Burkina Faso made also presentations on trade of their respective countries.

21. In the discussions, participants expressed their concern about the current trend for enclave development and stressed the need for backward linkages of growth to LDCs economies. They also emphasized the need for both vertical and horizontal diversification of trade, liberalization of trade, trade related capacity building, public-private partnerships, and special needs of landlocked and small island LDCs in trade and the role of South-South cooperation. Summing up their observations Mr. Habib Ouane emphasized the importance of the inclusive trade, diversification, regional cooperation and backward linkages of trade within the LDCs economies.

22. Mr. Onyejekwe, Senior Governance Adviser, Economic Commission for Africa (ECA) highlighted the centrality of the state in development in addressing the participants on **“Role of good governance in the national implementation of the BPOA”**. He stated that a capable state creates an enabling political and legal environment for economic growth and promotes the equitable distribution of the fruits of growth. The *political aspect of governance* ensures that representation is not merely symbolic, but substantive and sustainable. It is related to democracy and ensures fundamental freedoms and human rights, empowerment and participation. *The administrative aspect* of governance focuses on institutional capacities, effectiveness and accountability. The

capacity of the state to become responsive to the demands of citizens will depend, to a large degree, on the effectiveness of its institutions. The economic management and corporate indicator of governance, in contrast, are about creating an enabling environment for economic growth. Mr. Onyejekwe also touched on other issues such as globalization, mutual accountability of the LDCs and development partners that includes (i) the harmonization of aid among donors and within countries and (ii) the effectiveness of monitoring mechanisms. He identified the following *key challenges* to good governance: ownership of the process, diversion of financial resources from development to war against terrorism, and peace and stability.

23. During the discussion the participants highlighted the role of national governance mechanisms, and noted that indicators were in place for monitoring good governance. They observed that the seven commitments had turned into “seven contradictions” of the PoA, the major being good governance. Thus, the electoral process that was supposed to guarantee fair elections frequently yielded opposite results. The participants were unanimous about the important role of good governance in poverty alleviation. Some were, however, of the view that the quest for good governance transcended economic growth considerations, and included ends such as human dignity, equality, and equity. Good governance thus encompasses other attributes such as popular participation, interest aggregation, accountability, transparency, responsiveness, justice, and respect for the rule of law. The participants recognised that most LDCs are truly committed to democracy but there is no magic formula or automatic technique that could be universally applied within and across cultures. The main challenge the LDCs are facing in good governance is how to strengthen the capacity of civic as well as state institutions.

24. **Sharing national experience in the national implementation of the POA** was focused on implementation of paras 99-104 of the Programme that contain recommendations on the follow-up arrangements and various implementation measures, including mainstreaming, national arrangements, country level coordination, cooperation the UN RC system and UN CTs, country review mechanisms, resources mobilisation.

25. Many National Focal Points emphasised the importance of country ownership and country-led development processes, mentioned the existence in their countries of pro-poor national development plans, interim or full PRSPs focused on poverty reduction, economic growth and job creation. They reported on the adoption of macroeconomic and democratic reforms, concrete policies and measures to strengthen rule of law, promote human rights, and fight corruption. Many emphasised the importance they attach in their national development plans to strengthening institutions, capacity building, gender equality, agriculture and rural development, entrepreneurship, promoting SME and micro-finance systems, privatisation, liberalisation of trade, infrastructure, transport and ICT development, creating a favourable environment for attracting foreign trade and investments. They stressed the importance of trade for lessening dependence on aid and promotion of investments in their countries. In regard, they mentioned their continued marginalisation in external trade due to a lack of access to world markets and agricultural subsidies of developed countries. They underscored the importance of partnership, including civil society and the private sector, the crucial role of South-South and triangular cooperation for poverty eradication. They emphasised the importance of participatory, inclusive and equitable development. Many reported about progress of their countries on the HIPC initiative but felt that debt cancellation was the only viable option for the LDCs. As for ODA, the participants emphasised the need for harmonisation of donors' procedures, aid efficiency and aid coordination, incorporating aid into national budgets. They also identified the following areas for donors' assistance: productive sector, capacity and institutional building, national statistics. Some NFPs mentioned the importance of a clearly articulated LDCs position and better utilisation of LDCs opportunities at the regional and global levels. NFPs from countries recovering from conflicts informed about their efforts in reconciliation, restoration of law and order, reconstruction and development.

26. The NFPs had an extensive discussion of their respective **Terms of Reference of National Focal Points and the Terms of Reference of their National Forums**. In order to stimulate the discussion OHRLLS has prepared the draft proposal for the generic

TORs. Most of the NFPs informed that given their limited human and financial resources they use the existing national mechanisms for PRSPs, MDGs, and former Prepcoms for the LDC III, as well as national development mechanisms for the follow-up, implementation, monitoring and reporting on the BPOA. This also enables them to ensure better coordination of and coherence between various development programmes at the country level as well as avoid duplication and lessen the burden of reporting. Others informed about the existence of a Standing Committee or a Task Force, comprising key ministries, representatives of civil society and donors for the follow-up, monitoring and reporting on all UN major conferences and summits. Experience of National Focal Points showed that formal recognition of the National Forum through a decree or other official action or legislation was essential to ensure its success. Many of them found that making the National Focal Point a member and, preferably the secretary of the National Forum, greatly contributed to the effectiveness of both mechanisms. Most of the participants emphasized the importance of monitoring the progress on the BPOA by using a set of commonly agreed indicators. These indicators should be suggested by OHRLLS and allow certain flexibility, taking into account statistical constraints in most of LDCs. The importance of synergizing of various national development plans, policies and programmes in order to strengthen their implementation and avoid duplication was also emphasized. The participants also expected National Forums to solicit external and domestic support for the mobilisation of resources for the BPOA.

27. As for the National Focal Points it was mentioned that such responsibilities should be synergised with the functions of the National Forum. It was underscored that an incumbent should have long and varied government experience at a senior level, strong inter-personal skills, capacities of persuasion, consensus-building, outreach and good oral and writing skills. The NFPs must ensure that BPOA is incorporated into national development plans, PRSPs and other country development agenda. NFPs must be centre-stage persons at the country level for policy making and external resource mobilisation for the BPOA. He/she must liaise with all stakeholders at the country level, including the donors. He/she should serve as a channel for sharing national experiences with other NFs. Sustainable funding for the function of the national focal point, including

adequate administrative support, is essential to ensure the incumbent's effectiveness in carrying out his or her duties. The effectiveness of the NPF is also greatly enhanced by his formal recognition through an administrative action or decree. Countries may also wish to consider designating the NFP simultaneously a member and/or the Secretary of the National Forum. This will enable him/her to coordinate other reporting efforts under the PRSP, MDGs and other instruments and help alleviate and rationalize the reporting of LDCs to intergovernmental bodies and donors. The National Focal Point should establish regular networking with the United Nations Resident Coordinator.

28. Mrs. Zamira Eshmambetova, Senior Programme Officer, OHRLLS made a presentation on **“Monitoring and reporting on the implementation of the BPOA”** and Mr. Robert Johnston, Chief, Statistical Services Branch, DESA complemented her presentation by addressing the participants on the mainstreaming the BPOA into the MDG framework and providing information on assistance to national statistics services by the UN.

29. The suggested methodology took into account two major factors: international support for the MDGs and efforts of the United Nations to ensure the integrated and coordinated implementation of, and follow-up to the outcomes of the major UN conferences and summits in the economic and social fields. It was based on the existing research work in that area and was guided by the following considerations a) harmonisation of indicators for measuring the progress on the BPOA goals and targets that are MDGs or similar to the MDGs with the MDGs indicators, b) selection of a minimum set of indicators for those BPOA goals and targets that are different from the MDGs and b) ‘localisation’ of harmonised and selected indicators by adjusting them to the national priorities of the LDCs.

30. Selection of a minimum set of indicators was carried out in consultations with the UN Statistics Division and other relevant UN entities, including the WB and was guided by the following criteria established by the Statistical Commission of the United Nations: a) ability of the indicators to measure the main conference goals and to respond quickly to changes; b) cost-effectiveness, including the infrastructure

needed for regular compilation; c) availability of data for sufficient number of countries; and finally, d) degree of independence of the indicators in the limited set.

31. As for the reporting guidelines, they were based on the existing guidelines for national reporting on the MDGs that provide a flexible approach to national reporting on progress on internationally agreed goals and targets.

32. In the discussions the participants drew the attention to the lack of statistics, poor statistical infrastructure and weak statistical capacity in their countries. They requested the UN system and bilateral donors to provide them assistance in the statistics area. Some participants mentioned that given the annual periodicity of reporting, it would be difficult to provide regular inputs to the global progress report. Other insisted on annual reporting by using the matrix of achievement mentioned in the Cotonou Declaration of the LDCs. It was also suggested to regularly review the suggested indicators in order to improve and sharpen the monitoring tool. The participants also requested OHRLLS to assist in statistical capacity building in the LDCs. They requested donors' assistance to National Focal Points and National Forums to enable them to effectively perform their functions, including monitoring and reporting.

33. The moderator summarised the discussion as follows: the participants recognised the need to build upon what exists and to use the existing tools and mechanisms for monitoring the progress of the PoA at the national level. They took note of the suggested indicators for monitoring the progress on the PoA goals and targets. They recommended regular review and update of the monitoring methodology and reporting guidelines. They appealed to the UN to intensify its efforts in strengthening statistical capacity of the LDCs. They appealed to the donors to provide financial and technical support to the LDCs National Forums and National Focal Points in order to facilitate monitoring and reporting on national implementation of the PoA.

34. Mr. Richard Olver, Associate Director, UNDG made a presentation on **“Mainstreaming of the BPOA in UN development operations at the country level: CCA/UNDAFs, PRSPs, and MDGs”**. In his presentation he emphasised that the task of

the UNDG was to convert the UN system from its old paradigm of trying to do a little bit of everything into a new powerful paradigm aimed at making a difference at the country level. This, in turn, required identification of clear national priorities, alignment of development assistance to those priorities by supporting national strategy building and budgeting process, shaping accordingly the UN development assistance framework and synchronising the CCA and UNDAFs with national planning cycle. Harmonisation of the UN programmes with national development programmes enabled UNDG to work more easily with the clients and support common goals. In other words, the goal of the UNDG was to ensure the country specific UN response to national strategy. UNDG also assisted in nationalisation of MDGs by scaling up too ambitious goals and scaling up those goals that were not ambitious enough.

35. The speaker emphasized that identification of strategic areas and punctual interventions in key areas was very important as opposed to spreading thinly across all mandated areas. Ideally there should be not more than 3 to 5 results areas. Limited areas and concentrated efforts and resources are key to making a difference. On linkages between CCA-UNDAF-PRSP he noted that CCA were used to provide inputs to the formulation of PRSP which served as a basis for preparation of UNDAF, and vice versa where the PRSP preceded the CCA, or in tandem if CCA was developed at the same time as PRSP. Usually UNDAF is prepared after PRSP because PRSP is a strategy while UNDAF is a business plan that deals with the implementation of all aspects of PRSP. His presentation was followed by country presentations of Benin and Niger, both from the West Africa region on their cooperation with the UN CT in implementation of country level development programmes, particularly of UNDAF and PRSPs.

36. In the discussions that followed these presentations the participants made a number of observations and recommendations. They emphasized that MDGs were not the UN but a national development agenda. The BPOA should be also nationalised. LDCs must use their national comparative advantage and reach consensus on their national development priorities. They emphasised the gap between resources and capacity between the national and UN programmes. This gap must be bridged. A number of NFPs

underscored the importance of setting priorities and targeting objectives in results-oriented planning and implementation. In this regard, they appreciated the coherency provided by UNDAF. However, their experience showed that there was still a problem at the implementation level when it came to resource mobilisation. This needs to be addressed.

37. Mr. Ravi Rajan, Director, Operations Support Group and Officer-in-Charge of the South-South Unit, UNDP made a presentation entitled, **“The Role of South-South cooperation in the implementation of the BPOA”**. In his presentation he spoke of the dramatic transformation of South - South cooperation. It began, in part, because of an aspiration in “The Third World” for political solidarity and has grown into mutually beneficial cooperation of developing countries in trade, finance, investment, knowledge-sharing in a vast range of areas, and technologies transfer. He drew attention to the fact that the South is not a monolithic group of countries, much as the North cannot be considered as a single category. He suggested identifying three groups of countries that are part of the new cooperation landscape: “developed”, “emerging” and “least developed”. “Developed” countries have established capacities and experience, although they continue to have needs. “Emerging” countries have rapidly improving capacities and experience, and some needs. “Least developed” countries have limited capacities, some experience and significant needs. While most of the development needs lie with the “least developed” countries, these countries also possess experience and practices that can be of value to the “developed” and the “emerging” countries.

38. South-South cooperation creates win-win situations for all countries. It does not substitute but rather complements North-South cooperation and can offer new avenues to address the Millennium Development Goals. . In this regard, he mentioned the gradual shift from the notion of “pivotal countries”, established in the mid-1990s, to the notion of “prime movers” observed at the latest South-South meetings in Hangzhou and Marrakech. At these meetings, a number of “pivotal countries” possessing the requisite capacities and experience expressed their willingness to partner with the “least developed” countries, especially in Africa, to address their most pressing development

needs. UNDP's Special Unit for South-South Cooperation is positioning itself to facilitate these exchanges and to formulate scaled up programmes. Mr. Rajan concluded his presentation by sharing with the participants some of potential initiatives for South-South cooperation in the areas of governance, trade and investment, education, food security, public health and peace building.

39. In the discussion that followed his presentations the participants underscored the great potential of South-South cooperation for sharing knowledge, technology and expertise. South-South cooperation in trade facilitated through free trade areas (FTA) enables LDCs to take advantage from non-reciprocity in terms of treatment. Importance of all forms of South-South cooperation, including bilateral, triangular, regional and multilateral cooperation was also highlighted. UNCDF stated that least-developed countries can offer positive experiences on microfinance as part of their own contribution to South-South cooperation. It informed that under its "Microstart" programme was assisting 20 countries, mostly LDCs, in making their microfinance institutions sustainable. The participants identified the following obstacles to South-South cooperation: insufficient spirit of partnerships, built on a shared understanding of reciprocal benefits, and the lack of the flow of investment from developed and emerging countries to the least developed. They arrived at the conclusion that even though the number of success stories was modest, South-South could have a very bright future if the right conditions were created and development values were respected. A positive sign that these conditions are emerging is evident in national leaders in Africa, South America and Asia increasingly committing themselves to South-South cooperation.

40. Mr. Aynul Hassan, Chief, LDC Coordination Unit, UN ESCAP made presentation on **"Role of regional organisations and regional commissions in the implementation of the BPOA"**. Mr. Nazem Abdalla, Senior Economic Affairs Officer, ESCWA served as the moderator. Mr. Hassan briefed about the ESCAP support the PoA in three thematic areas: poverty reduction, managing globalization and emerging social issues. He added that the ESCAP framework of implementation of BPOA includes (i) needs assessment, (ii) regional review and monitoring, (iii) capacity building and, (iv)

exchange of views and knowledge. Mr. Abdalla complemented his presentation by his briefing about ESCWA assistance to Yemen, the only LDC in that region.

41. In the discussion that followed the participants commended ESCAP for its assistance to LDCs and raised three issues, namely (i) the timing of the regional review; (ii) provision of financial resources by regional commissions and (iii) linkages between regional commissions.

42. On issue of timing for the regional review Mr. Hassan explained that the regional commissions are guided by the General Assembly and ECOSOC resolutions and decisions. In terms of resources, he said that the regional commissions were not donor agencies. Rather they act as catalyst and provide various supports to the countries of the region to make their voice heard. This makes a difference for donor agencies. He also emphasized that the regional commissions should build strong linkages for the benefits of their constituencies.

43. Mr. Bruno Houngan, Regional Coordinator for Social Alert West Africa (Benin) and a Member of the LDCs Watch Steering Committee spoke on the “**Role of civil society in raising awareness, advocacy and mobilization of international support for the LDCs**”. In his presentation he mentioned the importance of financial resources for poverty eradication by saying: “The bigger the help, the smaller the poverty”. He underscored that in the age of globalisation poverty was no longer the problem of the poor but of the whole world. In this regard, he emphasized the crucial role of civil society in poverty eradication in the LDCs. Civil society could perform watchdog functions by monitoring the implementation of the PoA. It could create awareness and advocate for the poorest. It could facilitate raising funds for projects and programmes assist in capacity building and contribute to resource mobilisation. It could serve as a pressure group on ensuring good governance, transparency and democracy in the LDCs and play a constructive role in conflict resolution and national reconciliation. Thus, for instance, in Benin the civil society is involved in decentralization and macroeconomic reforms, fighting corruption through participation in the anti-corruption bureau, and many

other activities. He concluded by calling for more active involvement of the civil society in the pro-poor policy making and poverty reduction strategies implementation.

44. All participants were unanimous on the crucial role of civil society in the effective follow-up and implementation of the PoA and shared their national experiences in working with the NGOs. They commended the LDC Watch for its role in the preparation for the LDC III but observed that this linkage at the global level seemed disconnected after the Conference and, as a result, key partners went in different directions. This disconnection weakens the implementation of the BPOA. There is a need to restore these links. Accreditation of the NGOs with the ECOSOC could provide them with the opportunity to be actively involved in the inter-governmental process for the review of the implementation of the PoA at the global level.

45. **Mr. Aho-Glele in his capacity of the Chairman of the Coordination Bureau of the LDC Group** in his concluding statement thanked OHRLLS for the organising the workshop and the UN system entities (UNDP, UNCTAD, DESA, WB) for their financial and substantive support to the project. He also thanked all Focal Points for their active participation in the discussions and called upon them to vigorously pursue the implementation of the Brussels Programme.

46. In his closing remarks, **High Representative Anwarul Chowdhury** thanked all Focal Points for their active participation in the discussions on various aspects of the implementation of the PoA. He mentioned the importance of those deliberations for the upcoming 2004 substantive session of ECOSOC in which three (high-level segment, coordination segment and general segment) of five segments deal with LDCs issues. He informed about his efforts to fund the participation of the LDCs in the ECOSOC session for the global review of implementation of the PoA. He assured them of his support to the data collecting systems and statistical capacity in the LDCs in order to assist them in monitoring and reporting at the national level. He expressed hope that the Focal Points will maintain and develop their networking. He promised to reach out to the RCs requesting them to assist the NFPs and NFs in the national implementation of the PoA in

the LDCs. He concluded the workshop by wishing all Focal Points success in their endeavours and a safe trip.

CONCLUSIONS

47. The workshop has provided a unique opportunity to take stock of the country level arrangements for the follow-up and implementation of the PoA and to identify the bottlenecks as well as to discuss concrete measures that would enhance its implementation by the LDCs and their development partners. It has also given an important impetus to the participation of LDC delegations in the 2004 substantive session of ECOSOC that focuses on LDCs and the Brussels Programme in three of its five segments.

48. The workshop has clarified the roles and responsibilities of the National Focal Points and the roles and functions of the National Forums in the follow-up and implementation of the Programme of Action of the LDCs for the period 2001-2010 at the country level.

49. The workshop has provided the National Focal Points with the opportunity to deliberate on the tools for monitoring and reporting on the national implementation of the Programme of Action of LDCs for the period 2001-2010.

50. The workshop has provided an opportunity for sharing national experience, lessons learned and best practices in the implementation of the Programme of Action of LDCs since its adoption in May 2001.

51. It has also built the foundation for future networking of National Focal Points between themselves and with Focal points in the UN system organisations and donor agencies.

52. The workshop served the purpose of strengthening the coordination and collaboration among UN system entities in pursuit of effective implementation of the Brussels Programme and addressing the special needs of LDCs.

53. The National Focal Points held the meeting of their own to adopt recommendations, emphasizing that LDCs governments need to fulfil their commitments in implementing the Brussels Programme and encouraged them to facilitate networking of the National Focal Points with the new of sharing national practices in the effective implementation of the POA. They recommended to bilateral and multilateral donors to provide resources and technical assistance to LDCs in sectors where they have comparative advantage or expertise. They also requested them to provide the National Focal Points with financial and logistical support. The participants recommended regional economic commissions to organise regular meetings with a view of evaluation of the implementation of the PoA at the regional level. It was recommended that the UN system should continue awareness raising and advocacy for the LDCs and mainstreaming of the BPOA in its work programmes and respective intergovernmental processes. It was further recommended bilateral and multilateral donors to identify ‘key persons’ for the LDCs on mobilisation of resources for the implementation of the POA, promote collaboration and networking among all stakeholders and regularly disseminate information on financial contributions of the development partners for the implementation of the POA. Other recommendations included keeping the LDC Group abreast of the work of the OHRLLS and submitting the matrix of achievement in the implementation of the POA by the LDCS and their development partners for consideration at the ECOSOC substantive session.

54. In a Vote of Thanks the National Focal Points expressed appreciation and satisfaction with the efficient organisation of the workshop. They thanked the OHRLLS for its efforts to mobilize necessary resources and for the quality of the material and substantive preparation of the workshop. They also expressed deep appreciation to UNDP, UNCTAD and UN DESA for their substantial contribution to the organisation of the workshop.
