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Statement

by

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in the

**Second Committee of the
Sixty-first Session of the UN General Assembly**

on

Agenda item 58:

Operational Activities for Development of the United Nations system

New York, 2 November 2006

Madame Chair,

It is a particular pleasure for me to speak on agenda item 58 relating to the operational activities for development of the United Nations system as these serve as the most prominent bulwark of support to the national efforts of the countries with special needs – the Least Developed Countries (LDCs), Landlocked Developing Countries (LLDCs) and the Small Island Developing States (SIDS). Activities of the UN system on the ground through its field presence play a critical role in the full and effective implementation of the UN-adopted Programmes of Action in respect of these three most vulnerable groups of countries – the oft-referred to Brussels and Almaty Programmes and Mauritius Strategy.

As we all know, the motor of the operational activities is the UN Resident Coordinator system that continues to undertake newer and complex responsibilities to make the UN's support to developing countries more effective and meaningful. The special involvement and contribution of the UN Resident Coordinators responsible for the fifty LDCs was reiterated throughout the process of the five-year review of the Brussels Programme that culminated

with a High-Level Meeting of the UN General Assembly in September this year. The General Assembly called on the United Nations system and its agencies to continue to assist in the implementation of the Programme of Action, taking into account the conclusions of the midterm comprehensive global review. This call, of course, is based on the expectation of intensified field-level coordination and participation of all relevant parts of the UN system, including those entities that do not have country-level representation. We believe that in the remaining five years, the greater engagement of the UN RCs at the country level in the LDCs is essential. The support of the UN RCs in expanding their national capacities to ensure sound programming and prioritization will be important. This support is also very relevant in the case of the two other most vulnerable groups – the LLDCs and the SIDS.

Last year, I said in this Committee that the Resident Coordinator system's full support for the mid-term review is absolutely critical for the 50 LDCs. Now that the review has taken place successfully, I would like to commend the supportive and substantive role played by the UN RCs in these countries and express the sincere thanks of the UN-OHRLLS for that. My Office and the Coordinators have developed wonderful collegial working relationship and we believe this relationship would enhance the

country-level implementation of the Brussels Programme during the remainder of the decade. Our special thanks also go to the UNDGO for its strong support to our work in this regard.

The need for increased financing for operational activities of the United Nations system, as well as the importance of enhancing the predictability, long-term stability and adequacy of funding for the United Nations system's development cooperation activities can not be over-emphasized. In this context, the paucity of core resources is a matter of serious concern, particularly to the Least Developed Countries as they are minimally equipped in the context of the requirements to attract non-core supplementary development funding. The inherent economic and social conditions as well as lack of needed capacity make their reliance on core funding by agencies, funds and programmes absolutely crucial. I would like to, therefore, stress, as I did last year and the year before, that the constraints due to stagnant core resources adversely affect LDCs disproportionately and to draw the Committee's attention to this point.

Against this backdrop, I would like to call on all United Nations systems development partners, and especially those whose governing bodies have taken decisions, some as early as 2002, to

mainstream in their work programmes the implementation of the Brussels Programme to make every effort to increase steadily their resource allocations to the LDCs. The Secretary-General's report (A/61/77 – E/2006/59) mentions that during the last five years, the LDCs have been receiving around 40 percent of total annual expenditure on operational activities for development in the UN system. The report asserts that this is considerably higher than was observed in the previous decade. This trend towards increase in allocation should be sustained.

As called for in the Brussels Programme, we are also looking forward to regular reporting by these entities to their governing bodies on the implementation of the Programme. We are encouraged by the engagement of and the sectoral reports by the entities of the UN system and other multilateral organizations for the mid-term review of the Brussels Programme. We hope that the implementation of the Programme will be included in the agenda of the upcoming sessions of their governing bodies as part of the contribution of these entities to its implementation.

The UN-OHRLLS, in close collaboration with LDC delegations in New York, encouraged the establishment of national mechanisms and National Focal Points in LDCs in order to enhance their

ownership and capacity for the country level implementation of the Brussels Programme. We have been organizing annual Workshops of the National Focal Points since 2004 on the sidelines of the substantive sessions of the ECOSOC. Other UN agencies also collaborate in this endeavour. The workshops provide an opportunity to get information on the country level activities, and to identify concrete measures for implementing the Brussels Programme by the LDCs and their development partners. But again, in any of the efforts made at the national level in implementing the Brussels Programme, there is a need for close coordination with local and other concerned UN system organizations.

While the need to promote and move ahead with the specific Millennium Development Goals are critical to say the least, the Brussels, Barbados (including the Mauritius Strategy) and Almaty Programmes not only complement the MDGs but add to and qualify the specific measures necessary to overcome the handicaps of these most vulnerable groups of countries.

It is because of this that the mainstreaming of the Barbados, Brussels and Almaty Programmes has to be done not only at the international level but at the country and regional levels as well. This is very much in keeping with the mandates of the UN Resident

Coordinator system and the recommendations of the last Triennial Comprehensive Policy Review.

The UNRC system must also have the inbuilt mechanism to monitor and include reports to headquarters on the progress or lack thereof on the specific agreed-upon international commitments. It is in this way, when a true picture emerges through the UNRC system as to what is transpiring at the country and regional levels, that the UN headquarters offices to understand better the direction the Programme is taking --- and the speed at which objectives are being achieved. Without such a national level perspective, the work of the headquarters in advocacy and coordination, the efforts to mobilize international and resources for the Least Developed Countries will be seriously handicapped.

Madame Chair,

Before concluding, allow me to briefly turn to the second report before the Committee just introduced by my dear colleague UNIFEM Executive Director Noeleen Heyzer on the activities of the United Nations Development Fund for Women. We commend the substantive work being done by UNIFEM, particularly its tireless efforts to empower women so as to make their contributions more effective in the national development efforts in the LDCs. We are

pleased that UN-OHRLLS has very close collaboration with UNIFEM. In this context I would like to inform the Committee that the my Office recently issued a publication entitled “Breaking Barriers – Gender Perspectives and Empowerment of Women in Least Developed Counties”, which contains a wealth of information and poignant analysis on the situation of women in the 50 Least Developed Countries. Subjects covered in the report are on feminization of poverty; globalization, trade and women; women and HIV/AIDS; violence against women; and governance to create equal opportunities.
