

ECOSOC 2004 High-Level Segment Preparatory Meetings
“Resources mobilization and enabling environment for poverty eradication in the context of the implementation of the Programme of Action for the Least Developed Countries for the decade 2001-2010”

Opening statement by
H.E. Ambassador Marjatta Rasi
President of the Economic and Social Council

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Excellencies,
Distinguished Colleagues,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

I am very pleased to welcome you to the first meeting held in preparation for this year’s high-level segment of the Economic and Social Council, on the critical theme of: “Resources mobilization and enabling environment for poverty eradication in the context of the implementation of the Programme of Action for the Least Developed Countries for the decade 2001-2010”. We need to address the broad issues of poverty, which are the core of the work of the UN and ECOSOC: resources that are critical for development, the policy environment that can be enhanced with the national and international partners.

ECOSOC once more provides an opportunity for policy-makers, representatives from Governments, international organizations and regional institutions, as well as from civil society and the business sector, to assess progress made in the implementation of the Programme of Action, identify existing obstacles and constraints, and actions required to overcome them. The UN agencies and the UN system have here a special role to play which we should highlight.

At Brussels, we agreed on a set of key commitments for implementing the MDGs in the Least Developed Countries. It is a comprehensive programme, indeed, and we need to keep all partners mobilized to attain the goals set forth. We may keep in mind what the Secretary-General's first progress report on the implementation of the

Programme of Action concluded: that the three major challenges facing LDCs are development of sufficient national capacities to implement the Programme, the cost associated with it, and ensuring its full ownership by all.

Poverty eradication in LDCs will ultimately depend on renewed efforts at the national, regional and global levels, based on the spirit of shared responsibility and global partnership forged at Brussels and in other international conferences. Are policies becoming more pro-poor and more focused towards achieving the MDGs? How can existing tools and frameworks, such as the Programme of Action, PRSPs, HIPC, NEPAD, be better used to mobilize more resources for development and improving the institutions and the policy environment. How can ODA be better utilized - and harmonized - to enhance pro-poor policies and accelerate progress towards poverty eradication and sustainable development? And how can other development resources be more geared towards achieving the Millennium Development Goals? What are the development results?

Our meeting will begin with opening remarks by Mr. José Antonio Ocampo, Under-Secretary-General for Economic and Social Affairs and introductory remarks by H.E. Mr. Donald Kaberuka, Minister of Finance of Rwanda. Keynote addresses by Mr. Carlos Magariños, Director-General, UNIDO; Mr. Raghuram G. Rajan, Chief Economist, IMF; Mr. Jean-Louis Sarbib, Senior Vice-President for Human Development, the World Bank; Mr. Zéphrin Diabre, Associate Administrator, UNDP; and Mr. Carlos Fortin, Deputy-Secretary-General, UNCTAD, will follow. I welcome most warmly all our distinguished guests who have kindly agreed to join us on this occasion to provide their views and inputs for the preparation of the ECOSOC high-level segment 2004.

The panel will be followed by two simultaneous roundtables this morning, focused on the domestic and external aspects, respectively, of the overall theme. This afternoon, a dialogue with the regional commissions and regional financial institutions will provide that important dimension to our deliberations.

I am now pleased to give the floor to Mr. Jose Antonio Ocampo, Under-Secretary-General for Economic and Social Affairs, for some opening remarks.