



# THE REPUBLIC OF KOREA

PERMANENT MISSION TO THE UNITED NATIONS

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**Statement by H.E. Mr. Ban Ki-moon**  
**Minister of Foreign Affairs and Trade of the Republic of Korea**  
**At the General Assembly High-level Meeting on the Midterm Review of the**  
**Implementation of the Programme of Action for the Least Developed Countries**  
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Madam President,

Let me begin by extending my heartfelt congratulations to you as you assume your responsibilities as President of the 61st session of the General Assembly. I wish you every success in this High-Level Meeting on Least Developed Countries, as well as in all the noble work that awaits you in the year ahead.

Madam President,

This mid-term review is a valuable opportunity to assess our achievements in implementing the Brussels Program of Action, to recommit ourselves to its goals, to exchange best practices, and to seek effective ways to accomplish the work that lies ahead.

The average rate of economic growth of LDCs reached 6.5 percent over the past five years, the highest rate in the last two decades. However, their economic performance has been insufficient in reducing poverty and hunger by any significant measure. The group as a whole is still lagging far behind the goals set in Brussels. As the Secretary-General noted in his report, on present trends, very few LDCs will meet the targets set in the Brussels Program of Action. The promises of Brussels call for a redoubling of our resolve, a solid commitment of our resources, and closer cooperation between the LCDs and their development partners.

Madam President,

In my view, the priorities for the efforts of the LDCs and their development partners should converge along the following priorities.

First, greater efforts need to be made to adopt and implement national development strategies. Many international agreements and programs related to least developed countries, including strategies to achieve the Millennium Development Goals, are already in place, but the recommendations have yet to be fully incorporated into national plans and policies. The efforts of LDCs to adopt and implement development strategies should be reinforced with strong international support.

Second, capacity building should be the central focus of development efforts of LDCs and their partners. The improvements made in the field of education and health, as noted in the SG's report, must lead to greater investments in the area. The nurturing of human resources is vital for sustained development. Furthermore, the economic fundamentals of LDCs should be strengthened through increased investments in infrastructure, energy and agriculture, and in rural development.

Third, the role of women in development in LDCs should be fully recognized. The empowerment of women and mainstreaming of gender perspectives into policy making and implementation is central to social progress. Women's equal participation and input are instrumental to development. The proof from the ground in development projects large and small is clear: women and girls can be the most effective agents for change and social progress. In particular, in the urgent tasks facing LDCs such as eliminating poverty and fighting HIV/AIDS, gender mainstreaming must be made a central pillar of policy strategy. Korea's experience, too, shows that lasting social change cannot be realized until women are fully incorporated into the process.

Fourth, least developed countries should strive continuously to strengthen good governance. It is disheartening to see many LDCs continue to struggle in the face of conflict and civil unrest. It is nonetheless encouraging to see the strides being made in many others toward political stability and democratic reform. While it is true that no single model of democratic governance exists, governance can be improved by sharing best practices. In this regard, South-South cooperation can have its own benefits and advantages.

Finally, the development partners must deliver on their commitments, especially in the areas of official development assistance, debt relief, market access, and technical assistance. Even though positive progress has been made in these areas, more support is called for. My government recognizes its responsibilities in this regard and has been faithfully honoring its pledges. As announced at the World Summit last year, we will double our ODA by 2009 and further triple it to around 3 billion USD by 2015. We are now taking the necessary steps to introduce an air-ticket solidarity levy, which should strengthen our ODA. In particular, through our Initiative for Africa's Development, we will triple our assistance to Africa by 2008, which is home to almost two thirds of the LDCs.

But aid alone is not enough. The history of development in many countries, including my own, has shown that promoting trade is the most effective means of achieving sustained growth. That is why my government supports "Aid for Trade", particularly for least developed countries and why we will also expand duty-free and quota-free access for least developed countries.

Madam President,

This mid-term review is a moment to strengthen the global partnerships for the development of LDCs. Let us rededicate ourselves to a world that nurtures today's least developed countries into tomorrow's engines for freedom and prosperity. The first step, of course, is to make sure that we use the next five years to keep the promises we made in Brussels.

Thank you very much.