



PERMANENT MISSION OF PORTUGAL TO THE UNITED NATIONS

Statement by

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High-Level Meeting on the Midterm Comprehensive
Review of the Implementation of the Programme of
Action for the Least Developed Countries for the
Decade 2001-2010

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Madam President
Distinguished Ministers
Excellencies
Ladies and Gentlemen

It is an honour for me to address, on behalf of the Portuguese Government, this distinguished Assembly to speak on such an important issue as the Midterm Comprehensive Global Review of the implementation of the Programme of Action for the Least Developed Countries, for the period from 2001 to 2010.

We align ourselves with the statement made by Finland on behalf of the European Union.

We thank the Secretary-General for his report on the implementation of the Programme of Action, which provides a valuable input for this Midterm Comprehensive Global Review.

Since the adoption of the Programme of Action many changes have occurred at national, regional and global level. Many of them have called our attention to new realities, new or unexpected threats to global peace, prosperity and development, like conflicts, civil unrest, natural disasters, massive illegal migration and terrorism. Others, more encouraging, showed us positive developments, thus renewing our hope that through coordinated efforts towards achieving concrete goals and objectives, poverty, deprivation, vulnerability, fragility and instability can be reduced and even overcome.

To answer the challenges posed by the realities I have mentioned, various important summits and conferences have taken place since the adoption of the Brussels Action Programme in 2001, namely the 2005 World Summit Outcome that provides us a broad and comprehensive approach on these issues, including through the integration of peace, security, development and human rights.

Madam President

Portugal reaffirms its commitment to the implementation of the Brussels Programme of Action.

The Brussels Programme of Action, despite having been adopted in 2001, continues to provide the framework to converge efforts in properly addressing the special needs of LDCs.

We welcome the encouraging developments in LDCs and the fact that economic growth in LDCs, as a group, has almost reached the target of 7%, as a result of the implementation of macroeconomic reforms as well as improved management and governance. We do, however, recognize that results achieved until now are uneven, both between countries and within countries, and that much more has to be done for further progress in the implementation of the Brussels Programme of Action, ensuring also an equitable social development

in which the most vulnerable parts of the populations have access to these gains.

Further efforts should thus be pursued envisaging more coordinated and coherent partnerships, while underlining that the main responsibility relies with the country itself. But it is important to note that differences between countries' results reflect differences between the LDCs, thus requiring different and contextualized approaches.

In this regard, we would also like to make a particular reference to fragile States. Bearing in mind that even though the end of cycles of poverty and insecurity in these kinds of countries should be driven primarily by national governments, international actors can affect outcomes in fragile States in both positive and negative ways. Therefore, shared principles for good international engagement in fragile countries can help maximize the positive impact of engagement.

The donor community should enhance its reply to meet the needs of those countries, especially by improving flexibility and providing adequate responses, taking into consideration the three D's – the diplomatic, defense and development dimensions. This is a challenge to be addressed by the international community, which means it should be prepared to take higher risks and also to tackle the problem of "aid orphans".

The New Strategy for Portuguese Cooperation has as its main goals the reduction of poverty, sustainable development and the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals, in particular in Africa.

Institutional and human capacity building, the rule of law, respect for human rights, good governance and promotion of democracy are at the heart of the Portuguese Cooperation, which make the Programme of Action a crucial framework for our strategy with our development partners - a limited number of countries and all of them being LDCs.

Allow me here to congratulate Cape Verde, one of our main partners, and also Maldives, both going to be graduated from the list of LDCs, after a smooth transition period. We fully agree with the reference in the Secretary-General's Report on the possibility that these countries might need to continue to receive international support in order to sustain and further their achievements.

It is a privilege to say that Portugal is in the top list of bilateral donors, by share of aid to LDCs, during the period under review. Portugal is also a full supporter of multilateral initiatives geared to assist the poorest countries such as the Enhanced Heavily Indebted Poor Countries Initiative and the Multilateral Debt Relief Initiative.

In this sense, we reiterate our commitment to the Least Developed Countries and are confident that better results will be achieved during the next five-year period of the Programme of Action.

Thank you.