



Statement by the Foreign Minister of the Republic of South Africa, Dr Nkosazana Dlamini Zuma, Chair of the Group of 77 China, to the High-level Plenary Meeting on the Mid-term Comprehensive Review of the Implementation of the Programme of Action for the Least Developed Countries for the Decade 2001-2010, New York, 18 September 2006

Madame President,

Allow me to congratulate you on your election as the 61st President of the General Assembly. We are delighted to see you presiding over this important High Level Meeting.

The Group of 77 and China welcomes the High-Level Plenary Meeting to assess the progress of the first five years of implementation of the Brussels Programme of Action for the least Developed Countries for the Decade 2001-2010.

The Group of 77 and China further welcomes the Cotonou Strategy as it is a comprehensive analytical midterm review of the status of the implementation of the Brussels Programme of Action for the first five years which clearly and succinctly outlines the achievements thus far, the challenges ahead and the actions to be undertaken by the Least Developed Countries and development partners.

As a result of this midterm review the Group of 77 and China notes with concern that insufficient progress has been achieved in the implementation of the Brussels Programme of Action, and as indicated very few Least Developed Countries are expected to be able to meet the Brussels Programme of Actions objectives, goals and targets if current trends continue. It is therefore, essential that for us to achieve the internationally agreed development goals, including the Millennium Development Goals, especially amongst the Least Developed Countries, the timely fulfilment and full implementation of the seven commitments must be adhered to.

In spite of appropriate measures taken and tremendous efforts made by the Least Developed Countries themselves to build enabling national environments for the implementation of the Brussels Programme of Action in their efforts to pursue much-needed development, the support received from development partners is still insufficient, or sometimes, even completely lacking.

The Group of 77 and China calls on the development partners of the Least Developed Countries to expeditiously fulfil their commitments as outlined in the Brussels programme of Action so that the objectives, goals and targets of the Brussels Programme of Action may be achieved in a timely and expeditious manner.

Madame President

The Brussels Programme of Action is a partnership framework between the Least Developed Countries and development partners. It contains time-bound and measurable objectives, goals and targets and is based on the international agreed development targets and actions by the Least Developed Countries with commensurate support measures by development partners.

While the Least Developed Countries who constitute the most vulnerable segment of the international community have accepted that they have the primary responsibility for their own development, the international community has a clear responsibility to support their efforts. At the Millennium Summit in 2000 the Heads of State and Government resolved to address the special needs of the Least Developed Countries, a commitment which was reaffirmed at the 2005 World Summit.

The 2005 World Summit Outcome reaffirmed the commitments made to address the special needs of the Least Developed Countries and urged all countries and all relevant organizations of the United Nations system and other relevant international organizations, including the Bretton Woods Institutions to make concerted efforts and adopt speedy measures for meeting in a timely manner the goals and targets of the Brussels Programme of Action.

The 60th Session of the General Assembly also stressed that the midterm comprehensive global review was of particular significance as the objective of this high level meeting was to assess the progress and constraints encountered during the first five years of implementation, formulate recommendations with a view to ensuring the further implementation of the seven commitments of the Programme of Action on a sector-by-sector basis, focusing on the progress made, and critically evaluating the results achieved with regard to the attainment of the objectives, goals and the targets. Develop results-based measures designed to speed up progress in the implementation of the Programme of Action, and take appropriate measures to ensure the full implementation of the programme of Action for the least Developed Countries for the Decade 2001-2010.

Madame President

Achieving the goals and targets as contained in the Programme of Action calls for continued and a renewed commitment from both the Least Developed Countries and development partners. It is vital that this partnership be re-invigorated and enhanced by promoting mutual and shared responsibilities between Least Developed Countries and development partners, in the interests of promoting economic growth and sustainable development in Least Developed Countries thereby further promoting their integration into the global economy.

In conclusion, I would like to reaffirm and agree with the midterm review that special attention should be given to gender equality, agriculture infrastructure and HIV/AIDS, TB and Malaria. That development partners including other developing countries should continue to increase support including the removal of obstacles to exports from least developed countries.

It is important that co-ordinated action from the UN and its agencies, funds and programmes be enhanced to support least developed countries. We should all encourage the private sector to invest in the LDC's.

It is our collective responsibility to speed up the implementation of the programme of action for LDC's for the decade 2001-2010 for sustainable development.

I thank you.