



**Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela
Ministry of Foreign Affairs**

**Statement by the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela at the High-Level
Meeting of Least Developed Countries**

(Please check against room document)

**New York
September 2006**

Mr. Chairman:

In the last decades, the debate on development has become an ever problematic issue for international economic relations.

In the first years of the XXI century, the State Members of the United Nations and the WTO agreed, as stated in the Millennium Declaration, the Monterrey Conference and the Doha Ministerial Declaration, international strategies primarily aimed at addressing the needs of the developing countries. Such agreements were achieved through complex negotiation processes, frequently marked by pressures and impositions from the developed countries.

Today, when assessing the results of such a long process, we realize that many of the outlined goals won't be achieved by most of the developing countries, in particular the least developed countries. While there has been some progress in the fight against poverty, such a progress has been uneven and there exist still shameful levels of human deprivation.

If we look at the history of the countries known as Least Developed Countries, we will find out the history of the most colonised, exploited, intervened and dominated countries by the action of the capitalism at its imperialist stage. Certainly, we will also discover the other side of the development model that has been historically imposed in the distribution of the colonial and capitalist world. Finally, we will find out geo-political relations of uneven exchange and international plunder in vast regions of the world, for the exclusive benefit of a minority of the world population.

The Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela endorses the demands by the Least Developed Countries aimed at the achievement of the development goals. In this regard, the development strategy to be considered should be in line and harmonize with these countries' needs, particularities, resources and capabilities. We call for the fulfilment of the commitment of transferring 0.7 % of the developed countries GDP to Official Development Assistance, without establishing conditionalities. Nevertheless, it is necessary to create a policy space which allows the States for the implementation of their national development strategies in a sovereign manner.

In the trade arena, the world has witnessed how global commercial exchange levels, on one side, and poverty and exclusion levels, on the other side, increase in an almost proportional way, showing that trade and economic growth and the mobilisation of national and international resources resulting from such

exchange, not necessarily lead to enhanced development levels, and does not contribute to poverty alleviation.

While developed countries demand developing countries an increased openness and liberalization of their economies, they maintain a system of domestic protections over great part of their economic production, a fact that reveals the double standard in the free trade speech that some have tried to impose as the only way to achieve development.

The Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela supports those initiatives aimed at reducing the burden of debt in national budgets, and at the same time, it considers that the outlined formulae for alleviating such debt burden should not impinge on the support for other development activities. In this regard, for the assessment of debt sustainability, there should be a consultation process with debtor countries, which takes into consideration the national development strategies. It would be positive to increase the presence of developing countries in the International Financial Institutions. Likewise, we consider that debt sustainability should not be measured in terms of export volumes in the developing countries.

Mr. Chairman and dear colleagues:

The Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela has established close ties with African countries, in terms of cooperation and strengthening of South-South relationships. For this reason, we have increased our diplomatic relations with more than 11 countries in the last 2 years, as well as the number of diplomatic representations in that continent.

During this year, Venezuela has prompted new cooperation agreements in the political, economic, social, scientific and cultural and energy fields, and at the same time, it has actively promoted multilateralism. As cooperation and solidarity among peoples are the guiding principles of our foreign policy, we have enhanced our cooperation with Least Developed Countries in Africa, Latin America and Asia, in the fields of institutional strengthening, the fight against desertification and humanitarian assistance for food and relief during natural disasters. In 2005, the Bolivarian Government answered the call made for the UN Secretary General aimed at addressing the food crisis in the Niger Basin, and contributed with Burkina Faso, Mali and Mauritania transferring, through the Global Food Programme, three million dollars, a figure which in 2006 has already increased in more than one hundred percent.

All these actions have been deployed without demanding the usual and depraved conditionalities which threaten sovereignty of countries and impede the paving of authentic ways for poverty elimination. Such contributions to the

development goals show that, with political will and humanistic orientation, it is possible to build up a world totally different from the one some try to impose on us from the economic centres of the global power and the international financial bodies, marked by the devastating trace of the neo liberal thought.

The Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela wants to reiterate its engagement with the developing countries, with the purpose of advancing the construction of a world based on justice, equality and equity.

Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman, dear colleagues.

New York, September 2006