



**STATEMENT ON BEHALF OF THE GROUP OF 77 AND CHINA BY MR. SULTAN AL-MAHMOUD  
PERMANENT MISSION OF THE STATE OF QATAR TO THE UNITED NATIONS, ON AGENDA  
ITEM 88: GROUPS OF COUNTRIES IN SPECIAL SITUATIONS, AT THE SECOND COMMITTEE,  
FIFTY-NINTH SESSION OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY (New York, 9 November 2004)**

Mr. Chairman,

Thank you for give me the floor on behalf of G77 and China to address agenda item 88 entitled “ Groups of countries in special situations”

On item 88 (a) entitled" United Nations Conference on the Least Developed Countries" The group would like to highlight some issue:

The Least Developed Countries (LDCs) constitute the weakest segment of the International Community. Although they have the primary responsibility for their own development, the international community has the responsibility to support their efforts.

2- Such responsibility has been expressed at the Millennium Summit in September 2000 where the Heads of State resolved to address the special needs of the LDCs.

In adopting the Programme of Action for the Least developed countries for the decade 2001-2010, it has been recognized that an average of 7 per cent growth per year in the LDCs was required to halve the rate of extreme poverty in those countries by 2015.

Three years later, there is a need to acknowledge that the results achieved are not encouraging. The overall implementation of the Brussels Programme of Action still remains very weak.

The agreed target of 0.15 per cent to 0.20 per cent of GNP of development partners as ODA to LDCs is far to be met.

In the case of trade preferences already given to the LDCs, those preferences remain underutilized due to obstacles such as non tariff barriers. Moreover, export subsidies as provided by some developed countries have negative impact on the Least Developed countries and prevent them from participating beneficially in international trade.

The LDCs continue to bend under a crushing debt burden leading to a weakened social protection, greater vulnerability of their populations, an exacerbation of conflicts and the spread of the HIV/AIDS pandemic.

Therefore, there is a need to adequately implement the conclusions of the High level segment of the substantive session of ECOSOC 2004 which called for an enabling environment and resources mobilization for the implementation of the Programme of Action .

In this regard, the G 77 will submit a draft resolution which will explore ways and means for boosting the implementation of the Brussels Programme of Action in order to meet the agreed targets in a timely manner.

On item 88 (b) entitled" Specific actions relating to the particular needs and problems of landlocked developing countries: outcome of the International Ministerial Conference of Landlocked and Transit Developing Countries and Donor Countries and International Financial and Development Institutions on Transit Transport Cooperation":

In spite of technological improvements in transport, landlocked developing countries continue to face structural challenges to accessing world markets. As a result, landlocked developing countries often lag behind their maritime neighbours in overall development and external trade. Their sea borne trade unavoidably depends on transit through other countries. Additional border crossings and long distance from the market substantially increase the total expenses for the transport services.

The economic performance of landlocked developing countries reflects the direct and indirect impact of geographical situation on key economic variables. Landlocked developing countries are generally among the developing countries with the poorest growth rates, and are heavily dependent on a very limited number of commodities for their exports. As a matter of fact, of 31 LLDCs 16 are classified as least developed.

The remoteness and isolation from major world markets are the principal reason why many LLDCs have not been very successful in mitigating consequences stemming from their geographical disadvantage. The distances involved in most cases of landlocked developing countries are excessive. Kazakhstan has the longest distance from the sea (3,750 km), followed by Afghanistan, Chad, Niger, Zambia and Zimbabwe with distances from the nearest seacoasts in excess of 2,000 km. Transit time for goods of LLDCs is extremely long because of their long distance, difficult terrain, road and railway conditions and inefficiency of transit transport.

High transport costs resulting from the geographical impediments erode the competitive edge of LLDCs and trade volume. According to UNCTAD statistics, on average LLDCs spend almost two times more of their export earnings for the payment of transport and insurance services than average for other developing countries and three times more than the average of developed countries.

To address the challenges facing LLDCs, we stress the need for the full and effective implementation of APoA. Specifically it is important for the international community to assist both landlocked and transit developing countries in establishing efficient transit transport and trade facilitation systems and promoting export diversification. These measures, however, should be combined with increased technical assistance aimed at enhancing the communication, institutional and human infrastructure of these countries. Infrastructure development would undoubtedly improve LLDCs' competitiveness and attract more FDI and other forms of investment.

Given the constraints incurred by high transport costs and complex transit requirements LLDCs deserve to gain most from measures to be elaborated by the recently established Negotiating Group on Trade Facilitation. In this regard, the Group of LLDCs also reiterates its call for the WTO to expedite its Work Programme on Small Economies which include LLDCs. The WTO negotiations on market access should give particular attention to products of special interests of LLDCs as called for in the APoA and the São Paulo Consensus.

Thank you.

