

STATEMENT BY MR. A. KRISHNASWAMY, MEMBER OF PARLIAMENT AND MEMBER OF THE INDIAN DELEGATION, ON AGENDA ITEM 57: GROUPS OF COUNTRIES IN SPECIAL SITUATIONS: [A] THIRD UNITED NATIONS CONFERENCE ON THE LEAST DEVELOPED COUNTRIES [B] SPECIFIC ACTIONS RELATED 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 AT THE SECOND COMMITTEE OF THE 62ND SESSION OF THE UNITED NATIONS GENERAL ASSEMBLY ON NOVEMBER 05, 2007

Madam Chairperson,

We would like to thank the Secretary-General for the reports on the agenda item "Groups of countries in special situations" under consideration today. We associate ourselves with the statement made by the Chair of the Group of 77.

Madam Chairperson,

The international community took note of the special needs of landlocked developing countries to effectively integrate into the global economy, through the formulation of the Almaty Programme of Action in 2003. This Programme lays emphasis on Transit Transport cooperation, and recognises that the constraints and challenges faced by transit developing countries must be effectively addressed in order to assist landlocked developing countries. It also underlines the inextricable linkages between trade and transit in improving the access of products from landlocked countries. Most importantly, the Programme provides a global framework for its implementation, involving partnerships between landlocked developing countries, transit developing countries and developed country partners.

We look forward to the results of the Five Year Mid-term Review of the Almaty Programme of Action, to be held in 2008. The two thematic preparatory meetings held earlier this year in Burkina Faso and Mongolia respectively have highlighted the limited progress made towards achievement of the goals of the Almaty Programme of Action, and have underlined the importance of further assistance from the international community. We call for greater financial and technical support for transport infrastructure development, both physical and systemic, and capacity building in landlocked and transit developing countries in order to ensure the seamless integration of transport infrastructure of landlocked

developing countries with their transit developing countries, and with any special transit corridor.

We concur with the importance of greater participation of landlocked developing countries in the multilateral trading system and for enhancing trade facilitation. Developed countries should provide enhanced market access to products of special interest to landlocked developing countries. We attach great importance to the ongoing negotiations on trade facilitation at the World Trade Organisation.

As a transit developing country with two landlocked developing country neighbours, India has taken special steps to enhance its friendly and historical links with its landlocked neighbours, including through cooperation on transit trade and transport issues. Special bilateral cooperation agreements are in force for easy transport of their goods through India. We have also extended economic and technical support for infrastructure development and capacity building, apart from promoting regional transport and trade connectivity.

Madam Chairperson,

The Brussels Programme of Action provides the framework for addressing the multifarious challenges confronting Least Developed Countries [LDCs]. The report of the Secretary-General has correctly highlighted that the focus of donor assistance must be on enhancing the productive capacity of LDCs in order to achieve sustained economic growth. This has been a recurring finding of various studies and reports. We must move away from a paradigm of offering palliatives to that of tackling the root causes of under-development, so that LDCs can truly achieve their development goals. This requires a proactive approach, involving support to national development strategies through new and additional financing, enhanced market access for products from LDCs, technology transfer at affordable rates, as well as institutional and capacity building.

We are heartened to note that some LDCs have graduated, or are in the process of graduating, from the list of LDCs. This is a tribute to their success in formulating and developing national development strategies. However, we urge the international community to assist these countries in the post-graduation phase so that their achievements can be sustained. We also support the request by many LDCs for a re-examination of the graduation criteria.

Many LDCs are on track to meet their commitments regarding investment as well as in adopting and implementing national development strategies. Unfortunately, the international community has been tardy in fulfilling its part of the bargain. We note with concern that many donor countries have not met their target of Official Development Assistance to LDCs, and that there has been a drop in such assistance in the case of some donors. We reiterate the importance of Official Development Assistance for LDCs – not all countries have attracted enhanced private capital flows, nor are such flows channeled effectively to social sectors. We urge early fulfillment of their Official Development Assistance commitments by developed countries.

Regarding trade, it is important to sustain development in LDCs through enhanced market access for their products. Further, capacity building measures to diversify their trade needs to be supported by the international community through technical and financial resources. We also call upon developed countries to provide

enhanced markets access to products from LDCs. We would like to reiterate that imports into India from LDCs will face a zero tariff regime by end of this year. We attach importance to the ongoing negotiations for the Global System of Trade Preferences.

Despite some improvement, debt problems of LDCs still present impediments in their progress. Channeling aid to write-off debt arrears does not generate additional financial resources. We call for greater collective efforts to address the problem of debt, including through innovative mechanisms like an international debt commission overseen by the United Nations. India has demonstrated its commitment to assist LDCs by writing off the debt owed by seven Highly Indebted Poor Countries [HIPC]. Further, our programme of Technical and Economic Cooperation, under South-South solidarity, has a special focus on assistance to LDCs in general, and with those in our extended neighbourhood, in particular.

Thank You.

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