



**STATEMENT BY MS. JANIL GREENAWAY, MINISTER COUNSELLOR,
DELEGATION OF ANTIGUA AND BARBUDA, ON BEHALF OF THE GROUP
OF 77 AND CHINA IN THE SECOND COMMITTEE ON AGENDA ITEM 52:
GROUPS OF COUNTRIES IN SPECIAL SITUATIONS, SUB-ITEM (A)
IMPLEMENTATION OF THE THIRD UNITED NATIONS CONFERENCE ON
LEAST DEVELOPED COUNTRIES; AND SUB-ITEM (B) SPECIFIC ACTIONS
RELATED TO THE SPECIAL NEEDS AND PROBLEMS OF LANDLOCKED
DEVELOPING COUNTRIES (New York, 3 November 2008)**

Madam Chair,

1. The Group of 77 and China thanks the Secretariat for the preparation and presentations of the documents for our consideration under Agenda Item 52 (a) and (b). The reports (A/63/77-E/2008/61 and A/63/165) on both Least Developed Countries and Landlocked Developing Countries provide very good analyses of the status of implementation of the Brussels Programme of Action and the Almaty Programme of action, and a sound basis for our deliberations and action in this Committee regarding these two groups of countries in special situations.

Agenda Item 52(a): Third United Nations Conference on the Least Developed Countries

2. The Group of 77 and China welcomes the progress that has been achieved by the LDCs during the current decade, and notes that, during this time these countries achieved a 6 per cent per year average growth rate. But we are very conscious that this single economic indicator does not provide the full picture of development. This growth has not been accompanied by a significant decrease in poverty. Rather, this growth has been accompanied by even greater social disparities in many cases, especially between rural and urban areas. This is why the Group of 77 and China has repeatedly emphasized the need for an inclusive and holistic approach to development, with a clear focus on poverty reduction. Without interventions that target the poor and marginalized groups, economic growth will remain a mere statistic while human development indicators worsen.

3. Much remains to be done to address the decline in agricultural production and productivity; the increase in malnutrition; the lack of progress in achieving sustainable development targets on water and sanitation; growing income inequality; slow progress on gender equality; and little to no progress on maternal mortality.

Madam Chair,

4. Most analyses suggest that one of the most constraining factor in achieving and sustaining progress in implementing the Brussels Programme of Action has been the failure of the donor community to provide the agreed 0.15-0.20 per cent of GNI as ODA to LDCs. If that level of donor community committed assistance were met then least developed countries would be in a much better position to weather the current storm of challenges to their development.

5. Undoubtedly, the global food crisis will significantly constrain both national and international efforts to achieve the objective of halving the proportion of people living in extreme poverty and hunger in the least developed countries by 2010.

6. In this regard we welcome the immediate, medium and long term responses recommended in

Madam Chair,

7. The Group notes that duty-free and quota-free market access has not resulted in an increase of the share of least developed countries exports in world trade, which remains marginal at less than 1 per cent. There has not been sufficient focus on raising productive capacities or on economic and export diversification.

8. There are clearly identifiable areas in which greater progress is urgently needed on the PBOA and where future action should be targetted. In this regard, we welcome the Secretary-General's note on the outline of modalities for the Fourth UN Conference on LDCs, which includes recommendations for its preparatory process at the national, regional and global levels.

9. The Group of 77 and China expects that the Fourth United Nations Conference on the Least Developed Countries will assess, in a detailed and comprehensive manner, the implementation of the Programme of Action during the first decade.

10. We especially look to the conference for a comprehensive review of the implementation of international support measures, particularly in the areas of official development assistance, investment and trade, and calls for the conference to agree on additional international support measures to assist the least developed countries. In addition, we look forward to the identification of new and emerging challenges and opportunities for the least developed countries and the means to address them.

Item 52 (b): Specific actions related to the particular needs and problems of landlocked developing countries

11. The General Assembly held a fruitful high-level event in October to review lessons learnt and challenges encountered in the implementation of the Almaty Programme of Action. During that meeting the Group of 77 and China emphasized the need for greater support for the efforts of LLDCs and transit developing countries in their efforts to address the major constraints to their development.

12. Among the things we highlighted were firstly, that current multi-dimensional global crises - food, energy, climate and finance - will compound the challenges to the development objectives of LLDCs and transit developing countries, and will constrain national efforts to advance implementation of the Programme.

13. Secondly, greater progress in implementation is being impeded by the persistence of long-standing barriers to development such as international trade barriers, lack of resources for investing in infrastructure, and weak international support measures.

Madam Chair,

14. The Declaration of the high-level meeting resulting in a welcome agreement on future actions to accelerate the implementation of the Almaty Programme of Action. These actions we hope will result in a more supportive international environment that will enhance national efforts to meet the emerging and long-standing challenges.

15. Critical areas for future action include: greater access to advanced technologies in transport systems services and technologies that can improve product quality; adequate and predictable

levels of ODA; technical assistance, including the facilitation of South-South Cooperation in the construction, maintenance and operations of transport, storage and other transit-related facilities.

16. In conclusion, the Group of 77 and China believes that the overall internationally-agreed development goals and targets can only be realized through continued focus on the special needs of the most vulnerable countries and countries in special situations, and will continue to advocate for greater progress in implementing the Almaty Programme of Action for landlocked developing countries and the Brussels Programme of Action for least developing countries, including a comprehensive global programme of support for the LDCs beyond 2010.

Thank you Madam Chair.