



**STATEMENT BY MS. JANIL GREENAWAY, MINISTER COUNSELOR,
DELEGATION OF ANTIGUA AND BARBUDA, ON BEHALF OF THE GROUP
OF 77 AND CHINA, ON AGENDA ITEM 6(B): REVIEW AND COORDINATION
OF THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE PROGRAMME OF ACTION FOR THE
LEAST DEVELOPED COUNTRIES FOR THE DECADE 2001-2010, TO THE
SUBSTANTIVE SESSION OF THE ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL COUNCIL (New
York, 18 July 2008)**

Mr. President,

1. I have the honour to deliver this statement on behalf of the Group of 77 and China on Agenda Item 6(b): Review and Implementation of the Programme of Action for the Least Developed Countries for the Decade 2001-2010.

2. The Group would like to thank the Secretary-General for the annual report on this item (contained in document A/63/77-E/2008/61). We find the information contained in the report useful, particularly in terms of identifying where some progress has been made and where major challenges remain. It paints a mixed picture, but one that should give renewed impetus and invigoration to full implementation of the Brussels Programme of Action, taking into consideration the precarious nature of the modest gains that have been achieved.

Mr. President;

3. The Group of 77 and China continues to view the Brussels Programme of Action as a strong global partnership framework between the Least Developed Countries (LDCs) and all development partners. We also view the framework as one that is significant and vital for the achievement of national development goals set by the LDCs, and indeed for the achievement of all the Internationally Agreed Development Goals (IADGs), including the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs).

4. Given the little time remaining before the end of the decade, we remain deeply concerned at the uneven and insufficient progress in achieving the targets of the framework. There are obvious areas of weaknesses in implementation, such as access to water and sanitation, education, maternal mortality. Even more disconcerting, is the fact that there has been lack of progress on enhancing the role of trade in development in the LDCs, given the stalled Doha "Development" Round of negotiations. We therefore welcome the report's conclusion that it is absolutely crucial that the Doha Round of Trade Negotiations be concluded urgently, and that trade be allowed to work for poverty reduction and sustainable development in the LDCs.

5. The Group remains convinced that the internationally agreed development goals (IADGs), including the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), can be effectively achieved in the LDCs through the timely fulfillment of the commitments of the Brussels Programme of Action. The LDCs have made significant effort to create an enabling national environment for the implementation of the Programme of Action, progress and success now requires greater support from development partners.

Mr. President;

6. The Group remains deeply concerned that the number of people living in extreme poverty continues to remain alarmingly high in the LDCs, while malnutrition is worsening, particularly among the most vulnerable groups. This critical lack of progress underscores the importance of full implementation of all targets under this framework as well as the targets under MDGs 1 and 8. The Group of 77 and China urges that greater and more decisive action be taken by the international community and all implementing partners of the Programme of Action for LDCs to fully implement the commitments contained in the programme so as to make greater progress in eradicating poverty and hunger.

7. The Secretary-General's report also highlights the impact that current and emerging crises will have on the implementation of the framework, and on the ability of the LDCs and all developing countries to make significant advancements on the development agenda. The combined negative impact of the food crisis, financial crisis, slowing global economic growth, rising fuel prices and climate change will be quite significant, further compounded by declining levels of Official Development Assistance (ODA). Now more than ever a concerted effort is required by development partners and the UN System, including the Bretton Woods Institutions, to implement existing commitments and to take additional action to combat these new challenges.

8. The Secretary-General's report further highlights the importance of increased agricultural productivity as a required medium-term response to the rising cost of food. The Group is of the view that increasing agriculture productivity should be a short-, medium- and long-term response. We therefore repeat our call for enhanced productive capacity of LDCs, particularly in the agriculture sector, and for greater investment in physical infrastructure and technological development.

9. In conclusion, the Group of 77 and China recalls that the Brussels Programme of Action invited the General Assembly to consider holding a fourth UN Conference on LDCs towards the end of the decade, in order to comprehensively appraise the implementation of the Programme and decide on the way forward. The Group therefore looks forward to a timely response in this regard, in particular to the commencement of preparations of such a review conference on the LDCs.

Thank you Mr. President.