

**Statement by Ambassador Bagher Asadi, Chairman of the Group of 77 (Islamic Republic of Iran),  
before the Second Committee of the General Assembly on Agenda Item 106: Third United Nations  
Conference on the Least developed Countries**

**New York, 29 November 2001**

---

Mr. Chairman,

Today, we are dealing with a very important subject, and as everybody knows, or might speculate, of an equally sensitive nature. Given the beautiful diversity of the developing community, which I am proud to be representing - despite its inevitable perils- the preparation and presentation of this statement for the Group has been a challenge. And I have undertaken to rise to the challenge, notwithstanding counsels from within our ranks to forego the attempt lest it might invite open criticism from within the house. Even if alluded to in the most general manner, this is nevertheless the actual context and ambiance in which we have addressed the agenda item and the report of the Secretary-General before us.

Mr. Chairman,

With these introductory words in perspective, allow me, at the very outset, to reiterate, once again and in the clearest and the strongest possible terms, the solidarity of the Group of 77, the sole universal umbrella representing the developing South, with the Least Developed Countries – indeed an indivisible part and parcel of our extended family. We are very happy that the Third United Nations Conference on the Least Developed Countries (LDC-III) took place earlier this year in Brussels. The Group in its totality was fully engaged in the preparatory process as well as in the Conference itself. I am sure all colleagues here remember my sort of tongue-in-cheek assessment of the achievements of the Brussels Conference in the statement I made during the closing session of the Conference. It was my less-than fully objective appraisal that “the actual outcome, when put in the context of the tragic and dehumanizing dimensions of the reality out there in the real world, and more so, when compared with expectations and requirements of the situation, leaves much more to be achieved in the future.” The Brussels Conference should have achieved more. But, then and there, I hastened to counsel pragmatism. I said : “let us be practical and see what lies beyond Brussels; that is, the all important question of follow-up and implementation of the Brussels Programme of Action”.

The Programme of Action contains a wide range of measures and actions in various areas, which are modest and achievable. It should be emphasized that the commitments under the Programme of Action need new resources, over and above what is already available and on the table. That should as well apply to the follow-up mechanism. The overriding issue, above any other question, is the need for urgent action to fill the gap between the commitments and implementation. It is within this framework that we call again on the developed countries as well as the United Nations system and other multilateral organizations to undertake what is needed to live up to their commitments in the agreed decisions and measures.

The political will and commitment generated at the global level require to be sustained for providing the basis for a supportive external environment and the consequent successful implementation of economic development programmes in LDCs. In the post-Brussels atmosphere, the entire international community should resolve to assist the LDCs, inter alia, in the following priority areas, i.e., building up productive, human and institutional capacities; enhanced market access; increased ODA flows of appropriate quality and FDI flows; and effective relief from the crushing debt burden. Special policies and measures also need to be developed and executed, on a priority basis, so that these extremely vulnerable members of the developing community would not be further marginalized in the digital age.

Mr. Chairman,

There is no question whatsoever within the Group of 77 on the overriding imperative of the effective, meaningful follow-up and implementation of the provisions of the Programme of Action. This very point was recognized in the Ministerial Declaration of the 25th Annual Meeting of the Foreign Ministers of the Group of 77 less than two weeks ago. And as is clear from the provisions of the Programme of Action, not to mention the active role and participation of the organs and organizations of the United Nations system in the LDC-III Conference, a very heavy responsibility has been entrusted to the entire UN system with respect to the development of the LDCs. Hence, the scope and indeed the need for system-wide cooperation and coordination, in the context and within the framework of the implementation of the Programme of Action, is undeniable. However, it is essential to pursue the implementation of the Programme of Action in its totality, in a holistic, coherent manner and commensurate with the commitments undertaken.

Addressing the question of follow-up and implementation of the Brussels Programme of Action brings me to the report of the Secretary-General. It is a rich document, addresses important aspects of the problematique, and presents a number of substantive recommendations. The report's recommendations are of significant, practical and long-term implications and import in a number of areas, and hence, deserve full consideration. We in the Group of 77 are fully aware that the preparation of the report has entailed extensive consultations. We are indeed grateful to the Secretary-General, Deputy Secretary-General and their colleagues for the valuable document they have produced. The essence of the report revolves around the central idea of the establishment of the Office of the High Representative for the Least developed Countries, Landlocked Developing Countries and Small Island Developing States. We welcome and support the recommendation to establish this Office.

With an eye in retrospect to the discussions prior to and during the Brussels Conference, the question of United Nations system-wide coordination with regard to the development of the LDCs should be considered central to the follow-up and implementation of the Programme of Action. The report deals with this aspect in detail. That is exactly how the report arrives at its practical recommendations, with respect, inter alia, to the level of the Office as well as its mandate and proposed human resources. We welcome the report's assertion that "The Office of the High Representative would be responsible only for coordination, advocacy and reporting". The key functions of the new Office, as laid out in paragraph 17, particularly the central objective of the full mobilization of the United Nations system as well as mobilizing international support and resources for the implementation of the Programme of Action, are clear, straightforward and reassuring. They merit to be supported. The report goes on to add that "Analytical and technical cooperation functions would continue to be carried out by other organizations in the United Nations system, including UNCTAD, in accordance with their mandates and comparative advantages." This is also an important assertion on the part of the report.

On this particular aspect I would like to say a brief word. It is a fact that among all the organs and organizations of the United Nations system, UNCTAD has to its credit a long record of experience and service to the LDCs and continues to have a major responsibility towards them in its areas of competence, even under the provisions of the report and the establishment of the new Office. The report's reflection on this aspect is also positive and affirmative. We would certainly like to emphasize the importance of UNCTAD's practical capacity to pursue its mandated activities. While drawing attention to the very clear provisions of paragraph 13 of the report within the context of the provisions of paragraph 113 of the Brussels Programme of Action, it should also be of interest to note that current demands on UNCTAD for providing technical support, especially in the field of trade, inter alia, to Landlocked Developing Countries, is increasing as a result of the recent Doha Meeting.

Mr. Chairman,

