

**General Assembly**

Fifty-ninth session

Official RecordsDistr.: General
20 January 2004

Original: English

Second Committee**Summary record of the 30th meeting**

Held at Headquarters, New York, on Tuesday, 9 November 2004, at 2.30 p.m.

Chairman: Mr. Ramadan (Vice-Chairman) (Lebanon)
later: Mr. Balarezo (Chairman) (Peru)
later: Ms. Anzorge (Vice-Chairman) (Poland)

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In the absence of Mr. Balarezo (Peru), Mr. Ramadan (Lebanon), Vice-Chairman, took the Chair.

The meeting was called to order at 2.40 p.m.

Agenda item 88: Groups of countries in special situations (*continued*) (A/59/115 and A/59/158)

(a) Third United Nations Conference on the Least Developed Countries (*continued*) (A/59/94-E/2004/77)

(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 (*continued*) (A/59/208)

1. **Mr. Subedi** (Nepal) said that the report of the Secretary-General on implementation of the Programme of Action for the Least Developed Countries for the Decade 2001-2010 (A/59/94-E/2004/77) pointed to the weak implementation of that Programme, and appealed to all partners and stakeholders to fulfil their commitments in respect of its successful and fruitful implementation. His delegation endorsed the Secretary-General's call for the effective and comprehensive monitoring of the Programme and for follow-up mechanisms. Implementation of the Programme had been difficult for many least developed countries (LDCs), and little progress had been made because of a lack of sufficient national capacities, a lack of financial and technological support and a lack of sincere global partnership. Effective implementation and follow-up and monitoring of both the Brussels Programme of Action and the Almaty Programme of Action were primarily the responsibilities of Governments, but development partners, United Nations agencies, multilateral and global organizations and the international financial and development institutions also had significant roles to play.

2. The roles played by regional and subregional organizations and the United Nations regional commissions were of paramount importance. He commended the United Nations entities and international organizations which had incorporated and

supported implementation of the Brussels Programme of Action in their respective plans and programmes. Nepal also expressed its sincere appreciation for the special role played by the Office of the High Representative for the Least Developed Countries, Landlocked Developing Countries and Small Island Developing States, and requested the Secretary-General to provide it with adequate additional resources to carry out its mandate effectively and efficiently. The Office had to initiate and increase cooperation, collaboration and coordination with other United Nations agencies and relevant regional and subregional organizations and regional commissions.

3. LDCs still had to cope with insufficient flows of financial resources and technological support. Only 0.5 per cent of total foreign direct investment (FDI) allocated to the developing countries went to the least developed countries, and the level of official development assistance (ODA), although increasing slightly, was not encouraging. Commitments made by development partners were not being met. The countries which were not only least developed but also landlocked were the weakest, most poverty-stricken and unfortunate segment of the world community. The Almaty Programme of Action recognized their particular problems and special needs, and put them on the priority agenda of international cooperation. Nepal believed that the Almaty Programme of Action was both implementable and manageable. The emphasis now had to be on implementation.

4. *Mr. Balarezo (Peru) took the Chair.*

5. **Mr. Baatar** (Mongolia) welcomed the road map for the implementation of the Almaty Programme of Action and called on United Nations agencies to continue to undertake activities to that end. The major achievement since the Almaty Conference had been the Intergovernmental Agreement on the Asian Highway Network, of which Mongolia was a signatory. It was of the utmost importance to Mongolia that the agreement should enter into force and be implemented soon. Mongolia believed that national ownership and leadership were critical for effective implementation of the Almaty Programme of Action. One of the immediate actions and recommendations set out in the road map had been the establishment of national trade facilitation boards, and Mongolia had established a facilitation committee on transit transportation which comprised representatives of ministries, government agencies, transport organizations and the private sector.

The Government of Mongolia encouraged activities aimed at strengthening partnerships with all stakeholders, including effective engagements with transit neighbours. Mongolia attached importance to the conclusion of current negotiations on a tripartite agreement on transit transportation with the Russian Federation and China, and hoped that the next round of negotiations, to be held in Geneva in December 2004, would bring the agreement to a successful conclusion. Mongolia was grateful to UNCTAD for its continued support and assistance in that regard.

6. Mongolia's economy remained small and vulnerable, being dependent on agriculture and a few export commodities. Strengthening cooperation and negotiations with trading partners within the World Trade Organization (WTO) was one of Mongolia's priorities in trade development. Mongolia, therefore, attached importance to the early consideration of the Doha Work Programme for small and vulnerable economies, including landlocked developing countries. Mongolia remained committed to and actively involved in the full and effective implementation of the Almaty Programme of Action, and called on all relevant stakeholders to do likewise.

7. **Mr. Mushy** (United Republic of Tanzania) said it was regrettable and disappointing that progress in implementation of the Brussels Programme of Action had been so very slow owing to the lack of adequate financial resources at domestic and international levels. Among the critical commitments which needed to be implemented were the total cancellation of external debt of LDCs, the fulfilment of the internationally agreed targets for ODA including the additional ODA required to meet the Millennium Development Goals, the creation of a fair process for decision-making in the international financial and trade institutions, the conclusion of negotiations in the Doha Development Round, assistance in human and institutional capacity-building, the development of sectors in which LDCs had comparative advantages, such as agriculture, including adding value to products, the stabilization of commodity prices, and the fight against HIV/AIDS and other communicable diseases.

8. His Government had implemented a number of reform programmes as a result of which the mobilization of domestic resources had increased substantially. Those efforts had been duly complemented by the donor community, with an increase in FDI. Even though the trend of resource

mobilization was positive, the magnitude of resources available was still far from the levels required to generate growth rates commensurate with the challenges of poverty eradication as set out in the Millennium Declaration. While appreciating the support of the international community, his delegation wished to reiterate that the increased flow of resources to his and other LDCs remained critical to the successful implementation of the Brussels Programme of Action.

9. His Government had carried out a range of economic and political reform programmes since the 1980s, and had implemented its first poverty reduction strategy between 2000 and 2003. It had set in place a national framework for governance involving reform in public service, financial management, the legal sector and local government, as well as an anti-corruption strategy and action plan. It had established an independent Commission for Human Rights and Good Governance and a National Anti-Corruption Strategy and Action Plan. In the past three years, there had been achievements in terms of growth in GDP and in addressing non-income poverty. There had also been substantial achievements in primary education enrolment. However, despite those modest achievements, the country still faced serious poverty challenges, including how to sustain and improve the overall growth rate of the economy, increasing productive capacities for exports and curbing rates of unemployment. His Government appealed to the international community to assist it in the second phase of its poverty reduction strategy (2005-2010), which would be mainstreaming implementation and monitoring of the Brussels Programme of Action, together with the Millennium Declaration.

10. The United Republic of Tanzania was a least developing transit country with a range of transport corridors serving six landlocked developing countries. With the participation of external partners, it had taken measures to improve infrastructure connections with landlocked countries. However, it required more investments in the transport sector in order to minimize transit costs and time, increase access reliability and safety for the landlocked countries, while meeting its own development needs. The problems associated with the transit transport system needed to be addressed in a coordinated manner from the point of entry all the way to the destination point. The Almaty Programme of Action provided the key to unlocking the problems for

both transit and landlocked developing countries, and his delegation therefore reiterated the pressing need for its effective implementation.

11. **Mr. Naeemi** (Afghanistan) said that if the Brussels Programme of Action for the Least Developed Countries was not implemented, the number of people living in extreme poverty in LDCs could increase from 334 million to 471 million by 2015. On the national level, efforts must be made to reinforce democracy and good governance in LDCs. Priorities for economic, political and social development should be defined, and the production and trading capacity of LDCs should be reinforced. In the case of Afghanistan, its infrastructure had collapsed as a result of the Soviet invasion and subsequent civil wars. Anarchy replaced the rule of law, the education system had almost collapsed, human rights and women's rights had been trampled on, and the economy had fallen in ruin.

12. Appropriate measures should be taken by the developed countries and partners to expedite accession of landlocked developing countries to WTO. The establishment of efficient trade facilities was crucial for many landlocked developing countries, inasmuch as they were dependent on their neighbours' transit policies. His delegation urged the international organizations, including the World Bank and the United Nations regional commissions, to provide technical assistance to all landlocked developing countries, including Afghanistan, whose application for membership of WTO had been pending for two years.

13. In 2002, Afghanistan had opened a new chapter in its history which had brought hope for peace, stability and reconstruction. The country had seen a massive return of refugees. The *Loya Jirga* (Grand Council) had met for the first time in decades. On 4 January 2004, the new Constitution had been signed into law. Afghans were determined to rebuild their country and had just recently elected their new President, Hamid Karzai.

14. The challenges that Afghanistan was facing were tremendous. The priority of the Government was to establish security and good governance and to combat poverty. Afghanistan remained one of the poorest countries, with one of the highest infant and adult mortality rates in the world. Nevertheless, although it had been devastated by over two decades of war, his country had come a long way in the past three years. For example, the currency exchange rate, which used

to be 5,300 Afghanis per United States dollar was now 49 Afghanis per United States dollar. Inflation had been checked and, for the first time, foreign banks had opened branches in Afghanistan. Road construction had started, with links between the major cities as a top priority. Most of the bigger cities had some access to telephone communication systems. A major social achievement had been the steady reintegration of women into schools and universities and jobs. More than five million children had returned to school and were looking forward to a better future. A stable and prosperous Afghanistan would surely have a positive impact on the region as a whole.

15. **Mr. Kang** (Republic of Korea) said that developing countries needed to enhance their production capacities in order to reap the full benefits of international trade. The international community must increase its efforts to create a more multilateral trading system that was friendly to LDCs and strengthen its support for capacity-building in those countries, thus ensuring improved access for their products to global markets. In that regard, since January 2000, the Republic of Korea had provided duty-free market access for 87 items originating in LDCs. Furthermore, it had actively participated in global efforts for trade-related capacity-building in LDCs by hosting training courses for 46 trainees from 12 LDCs since 1997.

16. His delegation welcomed the modest increase in flows of ODA to LDCs since 2000 and hoped to see a further increase in the volume of global ODA in accordance with the commitments made at the major United Nations Conferences and summits. The Republic of Korea had increased ODA to LDCs from 19 million dollars in 2001 to 55 million dollars in 2002, and as a new emerging donor, his country planned to continue that increase. Good governance contributed to more effective use of ODA. In that regard, in order to exchange views and lessons on enhancing participation and transparency in governance, the Republic of Korea would host the sixth Global Forum on Reinventing Government in Seoul in May 2005. The Forum would be held in close cooperation with the United Nations, and his Government looked forward to the active participation of Member States.

17. The international community had adopted the Almaty Programme of Action in 2003 in order to tackle the unique development challenges faced by the

landlocked developing countries. His delegation applauded the agreement of the United Nations agencies on the road map towards the implementation of the Almaty Programme of Action and hoped that it would contribute to well-coordinated and effective implementation of the Programme. Closer regional cooperation was essential to building efficient transit systems in the landlocked developing countries, and he noted with satisfaction the contribution of the regional commissions towards that end. The Republic of Korea had actively participated in the development of the Trans-Asian Railway Network and had also made a substantial financial and personnel contribution to the Tumen River project, which the report of the Secretary-General cited as one of the most successful projects carried out by the United Nations Development Programme in north-east Asia.

18. **Mr. Sahakov** (Armenia), speaking in exercise of the right of reply to the statement made by Azerbaijan at the preceding meeting, said that the accusation against Armenia by the delegation of Azerbaijan was false. Armenia was under a blockade imposed by Azerbaijan which had lasted more than a decade. Azerbaijan had expressed its commitment to the Almaty Programme of Action, yet at the same time it was violating one of the principles of that document, namely, that of freedom of transit through the territory of neighbouring countries by all means of transport in accordance with applicable rules of international law. The blockade had resulted in the standstill of many industrial facilities, thus creating unemployment and affecting the economy of Armenia and the living standards of the people. The districts referred to by the representative of Azerbaijan were the territories surrounding Nagorny Karabakh, which had come under the control of the Armenian population of Nagorny Karabakh as a result of the war unleashed by Azerbaijan in an attempt to stifle the peaceful exercise by the people of Nagorny Karabakh of their right to self-determination. Azerbaijan had first used tanks, rockets and missiles against the civilian population of Nagorny Karabakh to suppress the legitimate quest of the people of Nagorny Karabakh to peacefully exercise their right to self-determination.

19. **Ms. Mammadova** (Azerbaijan), speaking in exercise of the right of reply, said that Armenia was trying to camouflage its annexationist policy by invoking the principle of the right of peoples to self-determination. According to international law,

however, that principle could only be realized in a peaceful way and in accordance with the principle of territorial integrity. The right of self-determination did not imply a unilateral right of secession and should not lead to the disintegration of a sovereign and independent State. Armenians residing in the Nagorny Karabakh region of the Republic of Azerbaijan could not be regarded as independent subjects of the right to self-determination. The right to self-determination could not be used to justify the forcible separation of part of the territory of a State or the violation of the principle of the territorial integrity of States.

20. There was no economic blockade by any neighbouring State against Armenia. Armenia was bordered not only by Azerbaijan but by three other countries. Armenia could and had used their communication lines to receive the goods it needed. As a result of Armenian occupation and aggression against Azerbaijan, the entire region of Nakhichevan (the non-contiguous part of Azerbaijan) was now totally cut off from the mainland of Azerbaijan.

21. Had it not been for the destructive position taken by Armenia during negotiations on the settlement of the conflict between Armenia and Azerbaijan within the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE), the problem would have been resolved, and the restoration of peace and stability in the region would probably be a reality. Unfortunately, Armenia had opted for the policy of deluding the international community and using any opportunity to misinform the public. Armenia had rejected the well-known proposal by Azerbaijan to open up communication links between the two countries as part of the package of confidence-building measures that included evacuation of Armenian occupation forces from four regions along the railroad linking Armenia, through the Nakhichevan region of Azerbaijan, to mainland Azerbaijan. Armenia had rejected that proposal, which was supported by the European Union, by saying that it did not need the road. One wondered what blockade was being referred to. It was obviously in the interest of Armenia to stall negotiations and continue to complain that it was under a blockade.

22. Azerbaijan was committed to cooperation under the Almaty Programme of Action. However, that cooperation should be based on the principle of respect and friendly relations among nations and the principle of territorial integrity.

23. **Mr. Sahakov** (Armenia), speaking in exercise of the right of reply, said that the blockade of Armenia had been well documented. The Government of Armenia had on many occasions expressed its willingness to open the borders to Nakhichevan without any pre-conditions. However, the Government of Azerbaijan had always linked the opening of borders with a political solution of the Nagorny Karabakh conflict, thus impeding the process of opening borders for Nakhichevan. The reference to “the annexationist policy and aggression” against Azerbaijan was misleading. The fighting in the region was not the result of armed aggression but rather the exercise of the right to self-defence of the population of Nagorny Karabakh. That was the only choice it had in order to avoid mass deportation and massacre following its peaceful quest for self-determination.

24. **Ms. Mammadova** (Azerbaijan), speaking in exercise of the right of reply, said Armenia wanted to open up issues that had not been touched upon, such as the security of corridors and the security of passengers who were supposed to use those corridors. The only counterproposal from Azerbaijan had been the liberation of its own legitimate territory. She had already referred to the principles of international law governing how people could exercise their right to self-determination. In the case of Armenia, they had already exercised it. How many times could one nation exercise the right to self-determination? The very definition of the conflict in and around the Nagorny Karabakh region of the Republic of Azerbaijan concerned the territorial integrity of Azerbaijan and the Nagorny Karabakh region as an integral part of Azerbaijan. That definition was included in the relevant resolution of the Security Council which had subsequently been adopted by consensus by the General Assembly; that meant that Armenia had accepted the language in General Assembly resolution 49/13.

25. The OSCE Ministerial Decision of March 1992 had established Armenia and Azerbaijan as the main parties to the conflict, whereas the Armenian and Azerbaijani communities of Nagorny Karabakh had been established as interested parties.

The meeting rose at 3.35 p.m.