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LINKAGES OF SUMMARY OF INFORMAL INTERACTIVE GENERAL ASSEMBLY HEARINGS ON THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE BRUSSELS PROGRAMME OF ACTION FOR THE LEAST DEVELOPED COUNTRIES FOR THE DECADE 2001-2010 TO THE RECOMMENDATIONS MADE BY FORMIT SERVIZI S.P.A

REDUCING THE COST OF ELECTRONIC GOVERNANCE AND PROMOTING LOCAL ICT INDUSTRY IN LDCS

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LINKAGES BETWEEN MR. AQUAROS'S RECOMMENDATIONS AND THE OUTCOME DOCUMENT FOR THE INFORMAL INTERACTIVE GENERAL ASSEMBLY HEARINGS ON THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE BRUSSELS PROGRAMME OF ACTION FOR THE LEAST DEVELOPED COUNTRIES FOR THE DECADE 2001-2010

On 22 June 2006 Mr. Aquaro spoke before an Informal Interactive Hearing of the General Assembly. The Hearings, a review of the implementation of the Brussels Programme of Action, were intended to serve as a forum for NGOs, civil society, and the private sector to express their respective views on sustainable development and on best practices in the efforts to achieve the Millennium Development Goals. Mr. Aquaro drew attention to the substantial prospective value ICTs can have in improving governance and reducing poverty in the LDCs. Specifically, he highlighted the initiative One Dollar for Development, which seeks donations from developed countries of e-government technologies already in use, and whose implementation would obviate the need for LDCs to invest the significant funds that would be required to develop and deploy their own e-government applications. He exhorted the LDCs to create an enabling environment for such applications, and the United Nations to play an active role in facilitating the technology transfer.

Below are two paragraphs from the Outcome Document of the Informal Interactive General Assembly Hearings, which summarize Mr. Aquaro's recommendations and speak to their importance.

Paragraph 34:   The importance of information and communication technology (ICT) to the achievement of the goals and targets of the Brussels Programme was underlined by various participants. It was stressed that ICT can be used to promote democratic governance and poverty reduction.

Paragraph 35:   To benefit fully from ICT, the least developed countries need software applications, particularly in the area of e-governance. Donors, both public and private, were called upon to assist the least developed countries in making this software available, as financial resources remain inadequate. Recommendations were made for:

(a) donor countries to offer free e-governance software investments in the least developed countries and encourage software-reuse at the national level, as well as open source technologies and multi-language software interfaces in their ICT development;
(b) the least developed countries to create an enabling environment to facilitate transfer of knowledge and ensure compatibility and sustainability with regard to infrastructure, local industries and human capital; and
(c) the United Nations to play a central role in the creation of an ICT framework.

MR. AQUARO'S SPEECH AT THE INFORMAL INTERACTIVE GENERAL ASSEMBLY HEARINGS ON THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE BRUSSELS PROGRAMME OF ACTION FOR THE LEAST DEVELOPED COUNTRIES FOR THE DECADE 2001-2010

REDUCING THE COST OF ELECTRONIC GOVERNANCE AND PROMOTING LOCAL IT INDUSTRY IN LDCS

Mr. President, Excellencies, distinguished Guests, Ladies and Gentlemen:

The recently released UNDP Report on Governance as well as Commitment Two of the Brussels Programme of Action underline the necessity for good governance at both the national and international levels, specifically through "transparent, accountable, and efficient institutions and practices within the Government, the private sector, and civil society."

Information and Communications Technologies today is seen not only as a tool but probably the most important tool if this commitment has to be realized.

I would like to quote the Prime Minister of Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia His Excellency Meles Zenawi that better explains the potential of ICT for poor countries.

I quote:
"We were convinced that we should invest every penny we have on securing the next meal for our people. We did not believe serious investment in ICT had anything to do with facing the challenges of poverty that kills. Now I think we know better. We recognize that while ICT may be a luxury for the rich, for us the poor countries, it is a vital and essential tool for fighting poverty – for beating poverty that kills – and ensuring our survival."
Unquote

While we agree that ICT applications play an important role in the implementation of sustainable MDG-based strategies, we also know that inadequacy of financial support - especially as significant public investments are required to spur local scientific innovation and technological development - is a key impediment to strengthening governance.

Is there a way to overcome this impediment?

Most developed countries have successfully developed eGovernment applications in key areas, such as Justice, Security, Healthcare, Welfare, Transport and Education.

These applications are used as powerful tools to create public administration that embodies the core values of democratic governance, including transparency, accountability, responsiveness and participation.

Most of these applications already in use in developed countries could be easily duplicated, re-deployed and put in use in poor countries without having to reinvest and using only at a fraction of the initial development costs - to support their local innovation and technological development.

If executed, such a program would have far reaching impacts on the national economies of the LDCs in general and in the field of governance in particular.

In the spirit of encouraging North South cooperation, I would urge the developed countries owning such e-governance

applications to make available their in-use software to the poor countries for free.

Without enabling access to ICTs, these member-states will have difficulty improving their governance universally recognized as critical to economic, social and political development and towards achieving the MDGs.

I must emphasize here, that sharing best practices and ICT knowledge transfer needs a permanent exchange framework amongst all the stakeholders and I present my recommendations in this regard.

- **Firstly**, at the international level, the donor countries have to offer for free their best e-governance software investments to the LDCs; at the national level the donors have to encourage software-reuse, open source technologies and multi-languages software interfaces in their ICT development.

- **Secondly**, poor countries have to create an enabling environment to facilitate the knowledge transfer, ensure compatibility and sustainability with regard to infrastructures, local industries and human capital

- **Thirdly,** as we focus here on the review of the BPOA, my next set of recommendations focus on the vital role that the United Nations can play in facilitating the creation of this framework.

    - The United Nations must support and facilitate effective partnerships for ICT knowledge transfer amongst member-states, public administrations, Civil Society and all stakeholders; encouraging North-South and South-South cooperation towards e-governance software reuse initiatives;

    - The UN must support the creation and the upgrading of an inventory of such e-government applications that can be shared;

    - The UN must provide legal and technical support for the local deployment of such applications;

    - The UN must support negotiations towards significant reduction of the cost of software licences and copyright issues for the poor countries that wish to implement e-government applications;

    - The UN must oversee the legal and bilateral terms of the technology transfer;

To conclude, I would like to refer once again to the UNDP report on governance which recognizes that increase in ODA in an effort to boost development may be hamstrung by lack of transparent and inclusive governance. It is here that the UN must urge donor countries to consider the application reuse initiative as an alternative way of looking at building capacity of the state towards effective utilization of ODA.

With this I would like to thank the Chair and thank you all for your attention.

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ON THE

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General Assembly

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Item 55 (a) of the provisional agenda*
Groups of countries in special situations: Third United Nations
Conference on the Least Developed Countries

Summary of informal interactive hearings of the General Assembly with representatives of non-governmental organizations, civil society organizations and the private sector

Note by the President of the General Assembly

I.   Introduction

1.   In its resolution 60/228, the General Assembly requested the President of the General Assembly to organize one-day informal interactive hearings with representatives of non-governmental organizations (NGOs), civil society organizations and the private sector, in preparation for the high-level meeting on the midterm comprehensive global review of the implementation of the Programme of Action for the Least Developed Countries for the Decade 2001-2010. The President of the sixtieth session of the General Assembly has the honour to transmit the summary of those interactive hearings, held in New York on 22 June 2006.

2.   The objective of the one-day hearings was to give an opportunity for NGOs, civil society and the private sector to interact with Member States and offer input on the midterm comprehensive global review of the implementation of the Brussels Programme. The midterm review aims at assessing progress made in the implementation of the Programme of Action, sharing best practices and lessons learned and identifying obstacles and constraints to the further implementation of the Brussels Programme.

3.   Adopted at the Third United Nations Conference on the Least Developed Countries in Brussels in 2001, the Brussels Programme provides a framework for a global partnership between the least developed countries and their development partners to "accelerate sustained economic growth and sustainable development in the least developed countries, to end marginalization by eradicating poverty, inequality and deprivation in these countries and to enable them to integrate

* A/61/50.

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The title of the documents is available on ODS. Click here.

4. MR. AQUARO'S RESUMEE AND SOME INFORMATION ON ONE DOLLAR FOR DEVELOPMENT

4.1 MR. VINCENZO AQUARO

Mr. Vincenzo Aquaro is President and CEO of Formit Servizi S.p.A, a leading company in Italy in the independent monitoring and evaluation of markets and procurement of ICT contracts for Public Administration. As the first CEO of Formit Servizi since its startup over 5 years ago, Formit Servizi today supports Italian Public Administration to manage and monitor ICT contracts valued over one Billion EU Euro. Formit Servizi is a subsidiary company under full control of the Italian FORMIT Foundation Non Governmental Organization (NGO) in Consultative Status with the Economic and Social Council of the United Nations.

Mr. Aquaro's technical cooperation activities with the United Nations include support to a United Nations Project titled, "One Dollar for Development" on capacity building and reuse of technology for the non G-8 member states. He is also the Vice President of "Give Them a Hand Foundation" (GTAH) - a not for profit organization based at UN-Headquarters in New York, which exists to serve others in need, independently and without discrimination. GTAH through its programmes, initiatives and partnerships works towards furthering the goals of the United Nations including the Internationally Agreed Development Goals (MDGs). The work of the organization is building public private partnerships and executing humanitarian and medical missions including other projects that focus on strengthening of human capital through capacity building programmes, especially in rural areas.

He also serves as ICT advisor of the Italian Chamber of Deputies and member of the Steering Committee for the re-organization of the ICT Division of the National Institute of Social Insurance (DCSIT- INAIL).

Mr. Aquaro, holds a Degree in Electronic Engineering from the Polytechnic Institute of Bari. His 17 years of work experience in progressive senior management includes his career stints at European Space Agency ESTEC in Netherlands, at EIS S.p.A., an ICT subsidiary company of Telecom/Finsiel S.p.A. and of EIS ICT advisor for a multi-regional NATO C3I Army program in charge of the Italian Ministry of Defense. In 1998 he founded Aquaro & Co. Consulting which supported industries and Public Administrations Operations in ICT projects

4.2 ONE DOLLAR FOR DEVELOPMENT

The underlying rationale behind this initiative is that sustainable MDG-based strategies of developing countries require significant public investments to spur local scientific innovation and technological development The G-8 countries have successfully developed and deployed several e-Government applications to improve governance and boost their socio-economic development. Such applications are already in use in many key areas such as justice, security, healthcare, welfare, transport, and education. Without having to reinvest and at a fraction of the initial development costs, many of these applications could be easily duplicated, redeployed and put in use in developing countries to support local innovation and technological development, especially in the field of governance. The initiative aims at making available at no cost eGovernment applications owned by developed countries to developing countries by encouraging North-South cooperation, including triangular cooperation, which complements North-South cooperation, as an effective contribution to development and as a means to share and transfer good practices and technologies. The initiative urges donor countries and international organizations, including all those within the United Nations system, to strengthen their technical support to such activities.