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UNIDO Chief Carlos Magariños says only way to fight poverty in very poor countries is to link UN political agenda and development agenda

A developing countries' version of the OECD should be created in the framework of the reform of the United Nations system, said Carlos Magariños, Director General of UNIDO in the first day of the 10th General Conference of the UN agency for industrial development. With their own mechanism for analysis and methodology, developing countries could better articulate their views of the development agenda.

In his opening statement at the Conference at the Austria Centre, Magariños said that the only way to fight poverty in the Least Developed Countries (LDCs) is to link the UN political agenda and its development agenda. It could thus be possible to achieve the Millennium Development Goals, which aim, among other things, at reducing extreme poverty by half by the Year 2015.

While he declined to say there was a direct link between poverty and terrorism, the Director General of UNIDO said: "It is undeniable that the presence of abject poverty reduces the capacity of governments to control internal and cross-border trafficking of weapons and illegal substances".

Addressing a gathering that included heads of state and more than 50 ministers from all over the world, Magariños suggested that in future national security policies should include, from the start, a strong development component if we wish to succeed in addressing the challenges posed by terrorism.

Speaking on the global fight against poverty, the Director General of UNIDO stressed the need for the development community to link economic and political agenda. "Macroeconomic programmes, including market-oriented reforms, have been somewhat oversold" said Magariños, adding that they do not usually include, for instance, the private sector.

Joining Magariños in the call for more focus on the poorest countries were Prof. Jeffrey Sachs, Director of the Earth Institute, Columbia University, and the Special Advisor to the UN Secretary General Kofi Annan and Rubens Ricupero, Secretary General of UNCTAD. Professor Sachs called for the leaders of poor countries to put their real needs on the table and not design their poverty reduction programmes according to they are told the donors will accept. He expressed regret that the rich countries did not cooperate with the poor ones. Secretary-General Ricupero drew attention to the "de-industrialization" of Africa and said the least developed countries were caught in a 'poverty trap'.

Seated on the podium were the President of Madagascar Marc Ravalomanana, the President of Timor-Leste, Xanana Gusmao, the Prime Minister of Tanzania, Frederic Sumaye, the Vice-President of Sierra Leone, Solomon Berewa, the Vice-President of Panama, Arturo Vallarino. All of the high-level participants spoke at the event.

More information on the 10th session of UNIDO's General Conference is at <http://www.unido.org/gc>.