

**Informal Meeting of ILO Donors
on the Regular Budget Supplementary Account (RBSA)**

**Monday, 8 June 2009
(Room XXIV, UNOG, Palais des Nations)**

Final Report

1. The first annual Informal Meeting of ILO Donors on the RBSA was held on 8 June 2009, chaired by Ms Mariangela Zappia (Government, Italy).
2. The meeting had the following agenda:
 - I. Opening
 - II. RBSA - past, present and future
 - III. Strategic use of RBSA in the regions – highlights followed by interactive panel discussion with the Regional Directors
 - IV. Panel discussion with the Donors: Trends in international development cooperation and the RBSA – some key questions:
 - Key trends in aid effectiveness and how RBSA was seen in light of these trends
 - ODA-ability of the RBSA
 - Donor financing of the RBSA, particularly in light of the financial crisis
 - V. Closing

I. Opening

3. The Chair recalled the UN General Assembly resolution on the Triennial Comprehensive Policy Review of operational activities for development of the United Nations system (A/RES/62/208). In the chapter on funding, the resolution noted with concern the ‘stagnating regular budgets of the specialized agencies’ and urged donors to substantially increase their voluntary contributions to the regular budgets of UN agencies’. The Chair welcomed the establishment of the RBSA, which was designed precisely for this purpose and made it possible to go one major step further in delivering on the promise of Decent Work for All while keeping in line with the principles of aid effectiveness and UN reform.
4. She noted the contributions, totalling approximately US\$ 41 million, made by Brazil, Germany, Ireland, Italy, Netherlands, Norway, Poland, Spain, and the United Kingdom towards this new and innovative funding modality which allowed expanded delivery of decent work through country programmes. Further firm commitments had been made to the RBSA by Belgium and Sweden.

5. The Chair underlined the ILO's continued contributions towards efforts to recover from the current financial and economic crisis. The ILO had a vital role to play, working with organizations such as the OECD, to analyse what action countries were taking to support employment policies and provide social protection, identify what worked best in different situations and disseminate those findings so that countries were able to learn from each other. Flexible sources of funding, such as the RBSA, were critical in ensuring continuity in these efforts, and would be particularly important during the implementation of the recently adopted Declaration on Social Justice for a Fair Globalization.
6. She remarked that the United Nations reform agenda coincided with ILO's own internal reform agenda, and congratulated the Office on having fully embraced results-based management and strengthened its oversight and accountability systems in a number of ways. She highlighted that the ILO's resource mobilization strategy was now an integral part of the Strategic Policy Framework (2010-15) and Programme and Budget for 2010-11, and the RBSA was a core element of them.

II. RBSA past, present and future

7. Ms van Leur, Director of the Department of Partnerships and Development Cooperation and Mr Joe Thurman, Director of the Bureau of Programming and Management, delivered a joint presentation covering the mechanisms that the ILO had developed to manage the RBSA. They also shared achievements, challenges and lessons learned since the introduction of the RBSA.
8. Ms van Leur recalled that the RBSA was introduced in the Programme and Budget for 2008-09, which was adopted in June 2007 during the 96th Session of the International Labour Conference, following a recommendation by the Governing Body.
9. In addition to the regular budget and extra-budgetary resources, the RBSA was a third source of funding that expanded and deepened the capacity to deliver on decent work priorities and outcomes at the regional, sub regional and country level. This was achieved through dialogue with constituents in Member States within the framework of United Nations reform and inter-agency cooperation.
10. She thanked the ILO donor community for their generous support which led to 75 percent of the target being achieved, with 88 activities being implemented worldwide.
11. Ms van Leur recalled the five key principles of effective aid as laid out in the Paris Declaration on Aid Effectiveness adopted in 2005: RBSA was fully aligned with the principles and the Triennial Comprehensive Policy Review. This was the foundation of ILO's resource mobilization strategy – predictable and flexible resources to implement the Decent Work Agenda.

12. She highlighted some core elements of the RBSA: it was based on voluntary contributions from Member States over and above assessed contributions; it aimed to have no earmarking; it provided flexible resources to fill resource gaps in decent work outcomes; its priorities flowed from the Strategic Policy Framework and Programme and Budget; it enhanced the capacity to deliver on decent work outcomes; it was fully integrated with extra budgetary resources and explicitly reflected in the Programme and Budget proposals for 2010-2011. RBSA was exclusively allocated to ODA-eligible countries, and discussions were under way with OECD DAC to formally render the RBSA as 100 percent ODA-able. The RBSA was subject to all the means of oversight and governance of the regular budget in terms of implementation and reporting.
13. The RBSA allocation process addressed results-based Decent Work Country Programmes and regional priorities, and demonstrated links with existing frameworks such as decent work outcomes, Programme and Budget immediate outcomes and common principles of action, and UNDAFs and other development frameworks. She pointed to features of the RBSA allocation process that followed results-based management - including the inclusion of resource gap analysis; inclusion of a credible strategy to achieve expected outcomes; clear identification of outputs; availability of Decent Work Country Programme monitoring and implementation plans; and indication of how progress would be measured.
14. Ms van Leur underscored that like any new modality of its kind, the RBSA too had presented teething problems. Some challenges the Office had experienced since its roll out included: lower delivery caused by delays in funding decisions and disbursements; loss in realisation of pledges due to exchange rate fluctuations, causing problems in determining amounts available to programme; more earmarking by donors than should have been permitted; challenges in implementing Office procedures as this was the first time to decentralise a funding modality; lack of provision to utilise RBSA resources for working on global decent work outcomes and issues arising out of the ILO supervisory mechanism. The Office has taken these lessons into account and has put mechanisms in place to more efficiently handle the next round of RBSA.
15. Mr Thurman focused his presentation around two areas. Firstly, on the value of RBSA to the Office and to the recipients of its work, and secondly on the kinds of programming, monitoring, management procedures the Office applied to ensure that RBSA was used efficiently.
16. With support costs two-thirds lower than traditional technical cooperation, RBSA was a more efficient use of public money.
17. He pointed to the flexibility of the modality which facilitated rapid responses to emerging priorities and opportunities, and enabled resources to be adapted to fill gaps and to innovate, thereby increasing the ILO's effectiveness on the ground.

18. The RBSA enabled the ILO to collaborate better within the UN system as a whole. Its flexibility made it possible for the ILO to pool resources from RBSA with other sources of funds, and agencies, thereby making overall services to countries more effective, and enabling ILO constituents to be more involved in key UN programmes.
19. He highlighted the progress made by the Office in terms of results-based management in recent years and added that these important advances were reflected in the Strategic Policy Framework and Programme and Budget proposals currently being considered. Clear outcomes, measurement criteria, indicators, targets, outcomes strategies in the new Strategic Policy Framework allowed enhanced measurement of impact through all resources used by the ILO.
20. He noted that the improved Decent Work Country Programmes with quality assurance in place and results-based management training underway, increase effectiveness in countries.
21. He announced the introduction of outcome based work planning around each of the 19 outcomes within the Programme and Budget before the start of the next biennium. For 2010-11 and beyond, the RBSA would be allocated within the framework of the outcome based work plans. These work plans would not be limited to the RBSA, but would cover the entire work of the ILO, and would be built on and executed through Decent Work Country Programmes.
22. He pointed to the improvements in terms of quality of detailed, analytic reporting on results in a consolidated manner to the Governing Body and the International Labour Conference.
23. Monitoring and reporting was founded on outcome based work plans. The Programme Implementation Report submitted to the Governing Body and the International Labour Conference at the end of each biennium gave a comprehensive indication of results, which in addition to indicating what outcomes had been achieved in countries, also identified the ILO's contribution to those outcome achievements. Analysis of those results showed the value added of RBSA. Financial reporting was also included as part of biennial implementation reporting. RBSA contributions from each donor were reported on, in addition to expenditure for each of the 19 outcomes and for each of the regions.
24. He confirmed that an evaluation component had been built into the RBSA from the start, with a minimum 5 percent of all RBSA resources being reserved for monitoring, evaluation and audit activities. Those resources were used on the basis of regional evaluation plans which were established for coherent, efficient use of evaluation funds. The ILO Evaluation Unit oversaw the evaluation plans to ensure independence of evaluation and adherence to UN and OECD DAC standards. The evaluations helped to demonstrate effectiveness and efficiency of RBSA use in achieving ILO results. All ILO evaluations under RBSA were publically available, and were submitted directly or in summary form to the Governing Body.

25. He drew attention to the introduction of new methods of work to follow up the implementation of the recently adopted Declaration on Social Justice for a Fair Globalization, where the Office not only pooled financial resources from different sources, but also encouraged increased collaboration between headquarters, the regions and technical units.
26. He highlighted the improved internal management mechanisms for the RBSA.
27. One problem was the requirement for all work to be country-based, with the consequence of insufficient provision for knowledge sharing activities. To address this, he announced that starting in 2010-11, up to 20 percent of the RBSA resources would be used to fund global products that could be used in a variety of countries.
28. Mr Thurman recognised that participants might have additional questions related to the RBSA and extended the Office's availability to organise briefing sessions for individuals or groups on matters concerning the RBSA.
29. The representative of the Government of Spain welcomed the introduction of RBSA as an intelligent solution to compensate gaps in the regular budget. He pointed to possible challenges caused by the fact that the Spanish Parliament made funding decisions on an annual basis while the RBSA followed a biannual cycle.
30. Although Spain's contribution to the RBSA was initially un-earmarked, subsequent discussions lead to earmarking the resources to a region and theme. He expressed understanding that such decisions could pose complications in the management and programming of resources. He reiterated the Government of Spain's full support to the underlying principles of the RBSA.
31. Mr Thurman replied that the Office would be available to discuss any challenges posed by Spain's annual basis with a view to working out practical solutions.
32. Excessive earmarking was a real disadvantage. In addition to posing management challenges, detailed earmarking prevented the use of RBSA with full flexibility, thereby reducing its effectiveness.
33. The representative of the Government of Italy requested clarification on how RBSA was used to strengthen cooperation with other UN agencies.
34. Mr Thurman replied that UN Resident Coordinators and UN Country Teams often requested the ILO to be part of new initiatives which required joint collaboration towards an integrated goal. In most of the cases, the ILO had been able to dedicate some staff time, but often lacked the financial resources required to contribute towards the operational activities associated with such initiatives. RBSA provided the necessary flexibility to effectively contribute to these activities in collaboration with the rest of the UN system. In particular the availability of flexible resources had enabled the ILO to participate in and contribute to UNDAFs, in line with its commitment towards UN reform at the country level.

35. The representative of the Government of France inquired about the decision making process for the distribution of RBSA resources. She noted the similarities between the RBSA and the regular budget, and inquired whether the allocation of RBSA was submitted for decision to the Committee on Technical Cooperation of the Governing Body.
36. Although France was not yet a contributor to the RBSA, it contributed towards ILO's technical cooperation programme through its multi-annual partnership agreement. The multi-annual partnership accorded donor involvement in monitoring the use of donor resources through regular review meetings. She questioned whether the RBSA would provide any additional mechanisms to ensure greater donor involvement.
37. Mr Thurman replied that RBSA had been developed in response to the need for flexible resources with reduced administrative costs. The submission of detailed work-plans or reports would not be compatible with these advantages. Results achieved through RBSA would be integrated in the biennial Programme Implementation Report together with the other sources of funds and would be examined by the Governing Body in March 2010 and the International Labour Conference in June 2010.
38. Ms van Leur reiterated the importance of un-earmarked flexible resources in addressing the resource gaps within decent work outcomes. RBSA was unique as it enabled support to be provided for the achievement of those decent work outcomes which otherwise lacked traditional technical cooperation funding from donors.
39. The representative of the Government of the Netherlands sought clarification on the amount of resources designated for evaluation, monitoring and oversight of the RBSA
40. He stressed the importance of raising awareness of results achieved through cooperation such as the RBSA, particularly for decision makers in donor capitals. While recognising that visibility was easily achieved through financing earmarked projects, he affirmed his Government's support for greater un-earmarked funding as a means of increasing efficiency and effectiveness of organisations such as the ILO. He inquired how the Office envisaged accommodating the visibility requirements of donors, particularly those making un-earmarked contributions.
41. He requested further information on the resource gap analysis, and inquired whether such information had been submitted to the Governing Body following the request from the Governments of Netherlands and the United Kingdom during their consultations for the Strategic Policy Framework (2010-15) and Programme and Budget for 2010-11.
42. Mr Thurman replied that a minimum of 5 percent of total RBSA resources were reserved for oversight, monitoring and evaluation activities.

43. He added that measures to increase visibility for contributors to the RBSA would be addressed within the forthcoming Programme Implementation Report. He shared plans to hold consultations with constituents and donors on the content and format of the revised report. He informed participants that a communication on the consultation process, which could include a separate meeting if desired, would be sent out by the ILO's Bureau of Programming and Management shortly.
44. Mr Thurman confirmed that a resource gap analysis had not been submitted to the Governing Body because the information gathered thus far was not systematic in its coverage and was of variable quality. The Office was currently carrying out resource gap analysis, country-by country to ensure that RBSA was allocated in the most effective way.
45. The representative of the Government of Belgium voiced a perceived contradiction in the need for predictability of resources on the one hand and flexibility in their use on the other. He pointed to the Programme and Budget proposals for 2010-11 which made reference to mechanisms for responding to the financial and economic crisis, and financing of ILO's participation within the UNCTs, in line with its commitments towards UN reform and delivering as one. He expressed concern that the RBSA risked being used more for "gap filling activities" and would therefore not be sufficiently aligned with the objectives set forth in the Programme and Budget.
46. Mr Thurman replied that both characteristics were important and distinct. Stable availability of resources for proper planning permitted efficient and effective support to the Programme and Budget as well as key innovations. Flexibility permitted part of the resources to be used to respond to urgent and immediate needs. He pointed to traditional technical cooperation contributions being restricted in nature to the scope of individual projects, and remarked that they therefore did not permit the reprogramming of resources to address emerging needs such as the financial and economic crisis.
47. The representative of the Government of Norway expressed her Government's mutual regard for the principles on which the RBSA was based, particularly the flexibility of resources and alignment with national priorities. She remarked that flexible funding made reporting more challenging, and inquired how the Office would organise the Programme Implementation Report.
48. She noted the lower overhead costs associated with RBSA when compared to traditional technical cooperation programmes, and inquired how this would affect the ILO's resource requirements.
49. Ms van Leur responded by mentioning the forthcoming consultation process on the revised Programme Implementation Report with constituents and donors. The purpose of this dialogue would be to better understand constituents' and donors' expectations of the revised Programme Implementation Report.

50. Mr Thurman highlighted that detailed and multiple donor requirements for TC projects were currently costing the Office considerably more than the programme support costs which were received, usually 13 percent. This required the redirecting of regular budget resources that were intended for other purposes. Given the nature of the RBSA modality, the reduced provision for administrative costs of 7 percent, fully covered the Office's real costs pertaining to programme support, and thereby contributed to more efficient use of RB resources.

III. Strategic use of RBSA in the regions – highlights followed by interactive panel discussion with the Regional Directors

51. The Session started with a short video presentation on how the RBSA was making a difference to Decent Work Country Programme results in the regions. The video showed footage of RBSA funded activities being implemented in the five regions. Several donor representatives expressed their appreciation for the video which reminded them of the ultimate purpose for the deliberations.
52. Ms. Zohreh Tabatabai, Director of the Department of Communications and Public Information, moderated an interactive panel discussion with the Regional Directors where she asked them to share their experiences with the RBSA. The moderator focused the discussion around how the RBSA was used to: (i) scale up activities, overcome bottlenecks, achieve critical results, and build capacity and sustainability; (ii) jump start high priority initiatives which lacked funding; (iii) respond to urgent needs, including the financial and economic crisis.
53. Ms Nada Al-Nashif, Regional Director of Field Programmes in Arab States (participated through telephone link), underlined that the RBSA had enhanced ILO's credibility as it had equipped the organization with a tool to respond rapidly to challenges presented by the financial and economic crisis. It supported the wider resource mobilization strategies and facilitated several strategic interventions, which would not have taken place without this flexible source of funding.
54. She cited three country examples of successful RBSA funded projects. With strong local stakeholder involvement during the design phase, the local economic recovery project in Lebanon attracted additional funds for a second phase of 15 months. The RBSA funded preparatory phase for a social protection reform initiative in Syria leveraged a 3 year long partnership with the European Commission and the United Nations Development Programme. In Yemen and Jordan, RBSA enabled the ILO to quickly enhance the labour market information systems necessary to provide an immediate response to the growing demand for precise information, and to improve assistance on the action plans for the national employment agenda during the crisis.
55. Ms Sachiko Yamamoto, Regional Director of Field Programmes in Asia and the Pacific, highlighted the full alignment of RBSA with the regular budget and expressed its strategic importance in jump starting new initiatives, gap filling within Decent Work Country Programmes, bridging between project phases and up scaling of successful interventions. RBSA resources enabled flexible and rapid response to crisis situations thereby improving the confidence of constituents in the ILO's capacity to support them during times of need.

56. She explained that in Asia and the Pacific region, RBSA resources were being utilised mainly in four areas: (i) green jobs; (ii) labour based infrastructure building; (iii) promotion of gender equality and prevention of trafficking; and (iv) microfinance. The resources supported the development of policy recommendations, training materials, tools and good practices, in the four areas covered by the projects.
57. RBSA activities contributed to the development of systems and capacities. Efforts were made to replicate and institutionalise them. In China, the implementation of national employment policies was strengthened through improved knowledge of employability, employment and enterprise development. In Bangladesh, improved skills training and entrepreneurship for enhanced employability and livelihoods was provided. In India, decent and productive employment was integrated into socio-economic policies. In Nepal, Philippines, Timor Leste, Indonesia and Cambodia, infrastructure and local economic development projects were developed. Ability to quickly reprogramme RBSA resources allowed the ILO to develop crisis response activities at country level, particularly in the field of labour based infrastructure and public works. In the Great Mekong sub region, RBSA resources helped sustain the earlier developed measures for preventing trafficking of women and children.
58. Mr Jean Maninat, Regional Director of Field Programmes in the Americas, emphasised the importance of the RBSA's flexibility in providing quick and timely responses to emerging needs. In Mexico, the unveiling global crisis severely affected the sugar mills and created tension between the industry's workers and employers. The ILO was able to respond swiftly by strengthening a new management system based on dialogue. The RBSA funded pilot Decent Work Country Programme for the State of Bahia was a model for other states within Brazil. In small countries like Honduras, where the Decent Work Country Programmes were not yet finalized, the RBSA helped form a team of specialists who focused on defining pilot Decent Work models for Central America.
59. Mr Charles Dan, Regional Director of Field Programmes in Africa, highlighted that RBSA enhanced the Offices' quickness and effectiveness. In October 2008, RBSA proposals were reviewed in light of the impact of the financial and economic crisis, taking into consideration issues such as exports, remittances, foreign direct investments, tourism, and ODA. In February 2009 a tripartite meeting of experts was convened to develop the Decent Work crisis portfolio, which includes a catalogue of policy and practical measures to review or develop Decent Work Country Programmes. The ILO areas of intervention included: social security, migration, microfinance, labour market information, child labour, women entrepreneurship, youth employment, and employment intensive programmes.

60. Ms Petra Ulshöfer, Regional Director of Field Programmes in Europe and Central Asia, stated that the European region was in its second round of Decent Work Country Programme implementation. Decent Work Country Programmes resulted from extensive consultations among constituents and reflected their priorities. The RBSA was instrumental in filling funding gaps for the agreed outcomes in the Decent Work Country Programmes. Examples included assistance to persons with disabilities in Serbia, following the signature of its Decent Work Country Programme in December 2008, and promotion of employment of women in Turkey, following the signature of its Decent Work Country Programme in February 2009.
61. The representative of the Government of Spain expressed his satisfaction on the different applications of RBSA. Although recognizing that examples given could not be exhaustive, he requested to hear more about two important areas of work: labour administration, which was a central element for the cooperation between the ILO as a public institution and the line ministries within the countries; and training, which was essential in times of crisis. He also encouraged greater use of the Turin Centre.
62. Ms Ulshöfer provided two examples of the use of RBSA. She indicated that in Caucasus and Central Asia, the ILO Moscow Office delivered capacity building and training of trainers' activities for the application of ILO tools for employment, to social partners and governments. Ms Ulshöfer stressed that these workshops and the joint development of an e-learning platform, were supported by the Turin Centre and by vocational training institutes. In Turkey, RBSA resources were used for Ankara and three regions, mainly through public institutions, to deliver training for access to employment and enterprise creation for young women.
63. Mr Maninat indicated that SIMAPRO (System for the Measurement and Improvement of Productivity), the example given in the video, was a methodology for vocational training that was applied in the sugar industry in Mexico as well as in 4 other countries within the region, and that it could be applied for other sectors. As for labour administration, he recalled that all Decent Work Country Programmes included a component related to the capacity building of ministries of labour. He proceeded to give two examples of the use of RBSA to that effect: strengthening the capacity of labour administration in Honduras, and building the capacity of workers' organizations to disseminate Convention No. 87 in Peru.
64. The representative of the Government of Belgium stressed the need for RBSA funded activities to be selected strategically to avoid ad-hoc use of the resources.
65. Mr Dan explained that the RBSA-funded activities addressed the priorities and expected outcomes identified in the Decent Work Country Programmes. He also indicated that the Africa Region had established a specific Decent Work crisis portfolio in response to the crisis.
66. The representative of the Government of Brazil noted that had Brazil started contributing to the RBSA in March 2009 with particular emphasis on strengthening South-South cooperation. He noted the success of the Bahia Agenda for Decent Work in a large country as Brazil and the interest triggered amongst other states, and asked whether this initiative could be replicated in the region.

67. Mr Maninat agreed on the importance of the programme in the State of Bahia. He noted that the initiative had been replicated at the municipality level within Brazil and in Argentina, highlighting that the relevance of the programme was actually in its potential to create a network of cities and states twinned through Decent Work.

IV. Panel discussion with the Donors: Trends in international development cooperation and the RBSA – some key questions:

- **Key trends in aid effectiveness and how RBSA was seen in light of these trends**
 - **ODA-ability of the RBSA**
 - **Donor financing of the RBSA, particularly in light of the financial crisis**
68. Ms Tabatabai moderated the panel discussion with donor representatives from Belgium, Italy, Netherlands and the United Kingdom. She inquired their respective Governments' positions on the recent trends in international development cooperation, particularly on how RBSA was viewed in light of these developments, and solicited their suggestions on areas where the Office could improve upon further.
69. The representative of the Government of United Kingdom recalled the origins of the aid effectiveness agenda: it related to time, money, social, human, and political capital both of governments involved, and of civil society and social partners. He stressed the importance of maintaining sight of these origins, and voiced the need for refraining from focusing solely on the processes of aid effectiveness i.e. harmonisation and alignment.
70. He emphasised the importance of mutual accountability which was highlighted during the Third High Level Forum on Aid Effectiveness held in Accra during September 2008. Mutual accountability between governments, and also civil society and social partners was particularly important for the ILO.
71. The financial and economic crisis had presented challenges in terms of requiring quicker decisions to be made on prudent use of limited resources amongst the competing and increasing priority areas, making the aid effectiveness agenda even more difficult to implement.
72. He pointed out that pooled funds, such as the RBSA, were very effective at helping strategic priorities, provided they had strong leadership and a clear set of criteria on decision making. Sharing the United Kingdom Department for International Development's experience on pooled funds, particularly on the humanitarian side, he noted that they often took a long time to get right, as there were a lot of teething problems - particularly related to choices of whether to allocate funds to existing predictable commitments or emerging priorities. He remarked that it was normal for the ILO to face similar choices with the RBSA. He stressed the importance of building trust as the only way in which those choices could be undertaken while actively engaging donors. He recognised that building trust took time and depended on listening to priorities of the different partners involved, and commended the ILO for its efforts in this regard.

73. He welcomed Brazil's contribution to the RBSA, and highlighted the important perspective to South-South learning which this brought. He was confident that the incorporation of such perspectives into the RBSA would further reduce the need for earmarking.
74. He noted a challenge often experienced during the establishment of such funds: while some donors contribute to the new fund right from its inception, some others may be committed to previous mechanisms existing before its introduction. He suggested avoiding criticisms of the previous mechanism in order to avoid losing support of donors that were still committed to the old system. He encouraged conveying a balanced message which outlined that what was being done earlier wasn't really working and that the new modality was much better, thereby focusing on the improvements that had been made and the efficiency of what was already being done.
75. He highlighted the public scrutiny which development agencies such as the United Kingdom's Department for International Development were facing on the domestic front. This was increasingly in the current context of the financial and economic crisis and had implications on reduced budgets. Stating the principle of public accountability, he called the need for increased visibility not only on what contributions are used for, but more importantly on their impact in terms of results achieved.
76. The representative of the Government of Belgium iterated that predictable resources were necessary for an organisation to work effectively.
77. He shared the decision taken by the Government of Belgium earlier in the year, for moving towards making their contributions to UN agencies exclusively un-earmarked, with the exception of humanitarian aid. This would entail contribution to the RBSA, which Belgium considered an important tool for the ILO to overcome the funding gaps in attaining its four strategic objectives.
78. He noted the importance for bearing in mind that donor agencies had to report to their parliaments on concrete results when it came to development aid. He welcomed the ILO efforts in implementing the results-based approach. He added that the ILO should report on the criteria used to allocate resources in a strategic manner. He also proposed that the Office consider conducting field visits to RBSA funded activities with the donors.
79. The representative of the Government of Netherlands expressed his Government's full support to the Paris Declaration on Aid Effectiveness. He noted with appreciation the alignment of the RBSA to the Triennial Comprehensive Policy Review and welcomed the RBSA as a good instrument in this respect.
80. He echoed the importance of accountability and reporting back to parliament, and congratulated the Office on the significant progress in terms of results-based management. He pointed to the improved Strategic Policy Framework and Programme and Budget, and the improvements being undertaken for the revised Programme Implementation Report.

81. He expressed the need for more discussion in the Governing Body around areas such as evaluation, particularly on the overall lessons learnt, and the field structure review. He also reiterated his earlier request for further information on the resource gap analysis being undertaken by the Office.
82. The representative of the Government of Italy underlined the impact the financial and economic crisis had on development assistance. She expressed her concern that this would reinforce the gap between the north and south, and also push back progress in achieving the 2015 Millennium Development Goals.
83. She affirmed Italy's commitment to stable and fair cooperation, particularly support to the Millennium Development Goals. However she stated that some obligations may need to be rescheduled in light of the crisis. She stressed that more targeted interventions on a reduced number of priorities were needed, such as dealing with the impacts affecting Africa.
84. She remarked that RBSA was a useful instrument which allowed country priorities to be addressed while at the same time giving flexibility to the ILO. She pointed out that there were still some 'grey areas' including the need to clarify further how exactly the RBSA would be used. She also stressed that RBSA should not be used for funding needs of small left-over projects, but should maintain its focus on contributing to the Decent Work Agenda.

V. Closing

85. Ms van Leur thanked the Governments of Brazil, Germany, Ireland, Italy, Netherlands, Norway, Poland, Spain and the United Kingdom for their contributions towards the RBSA. She acknowledged the pipeline contributions from the Governments of Belgium and Sweden, and encouraged more donors to contribute to the modality
86. Ms van Leur reiterated that flexible resources allowed the ILO to fill critical resource gaps in achieving the decent work outcomes. She stated that RBSA in this regard was the way forward, and was a cornerstone of the ILO's Technical Cooperation Programme.
87. She acknowledged that severe time constraints combined with an ambitious agenda regrettably led to overruns, thereby limiting time available for the second panel discussion. She suggested that donor meetings were held more often.
88. She noted that equal importance was attached to all elements of the Decent Work Agenda as a development strategy, and underlined that the necessary mechanisms were now in place for implementation of the RBSA. She concluded the meeting by thanking donors for the confidence, trust and crucial support of the RBSA as a modality to further the Decent Work Agenda, and announced the launch of the RBSA resource mobilization campaign for the following biennium and beyond.

Geneva, 8 June 2009