Statement

by

H.E. Mr. Gyan Chandra Acharya

Under-Secretary-General
and High Representative
for the Least Developed Countries, Landlocked Developing Countries
and Small Island Developing States

at the closing of the Brainstorming Meeting on the Priorities of a New Development Agenda for the Landlocked Developing Countries

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We have come to the end of this brainstorming Meeting. I would like to congratulate you all for your engagement in the discussions and especially to those who made very informative presentations. Indeed the Meeting was vibrant, intellectually rich and very lively. You have addressed all the objectives that we had for this meeting. You have shared your insights and experiences on the implementation of the Almaty Programme of Action. What resonated clearly is that the Almaty Programme had made a major breakthrough in sensitizing the international community on the challenges faced by the LLDCs. The awareness of the challenges faced by the LLDCs has increased globally. Today, the special needs of LLDCs are prominent on the international development agenda such as the MDGs.

Discussions in this room highlighted what worked well to support the development of LLDCs and the major challenges that were experienced in the implementation of the Almaty programme some which include lack of implementation of the good legal framework that has been developed, lack of harmonization of policies and regulations, limited capacity building, inadequate resources for implementation and unsystematic monitoring.

You have provided suggestions for the next development agenda. In my view your suggestions on the different priority areas for the next development agenda of LLDCs are very relevant. I am very confident that we have come up with solid inputs to support Member States in their substantive preparations for the global review of the Almaty Programme of Action in 2014. I also hope that the output from this meeting would be of good use in the ongoing discussion on the post-2015 development agenda on the special development needs of the LLDCs.

Excellencies, Distinguished Participants, Ladies and Gentlemen,

This meeting has indicated that the new development agenda for LLDCs should be comprehensive to deal with the development problems of
LLDCs but should also address how to improve transit trade and increase the potential of LLDCs to harness trade as a tool for development.

Let me highlight some of your suggestions:

- There is still need to improve infrastructure development (Hard infrastructure – transport, energy and communication) to improve the connectivity of the LLDCs and establish development corridors

- Development of the soft infrastructure. In order to give life to the hard infrastructure, you need to provide the soft infrastructure. In particular harmonization of legal and administrative regulation of road/rail transport, border crossing and customs procedures on the basis of international agreements and conventions; Increased ratification or accession and effective implementation of international conventions and agreements and regional and sub-regional agreements on transport and trade facilitation. Mainstreaming of the conventions and regional agreements at the national level;

- Trade facilitation is critical to reducing the cost of doing business across borders. Importance of concluding the WTO agreement on trade facilitation was highlighted which has the potential to stimulate the world economy by about $1 trillion. The development of logistics is very important.

- Capacity building, need to be enhanced eg. training of international road transport operators, customs and border clearance staff, trade negotiations, on how to effectively implement the conventions and also for policy formulation and implementation and institutional building.

- Enhancing the productive capacity, industrialization, agricultural productivity - Building productive capacities is the key in LLDCs, whether for dealing with non-tariff barriers, transformation of their economies, creating regional centres of excellence, or being able to take advantage of international assistance; linking up with the global value chains; and enhancing competitiveness.

- Enhancing Trade by reducing commodity dependence through the diversification of the export base; value addition; and market diversification.
• Services have been recognized as having a great importance to LLDCs and a potential to circumvent their landlockedness challenges since they are less sensitive to distance. There is a need for more research to identify the sectors where LLDCs have a competitive edge as well as provide support for the development of the services sector in LLDCs.

• Addressing vulnerability to climate change, desertification and land degradation and improving environmental sustainability – LLDCs need to mainstream these into their national development plans. In order to fully address and mitigate ensuing problems, there is a need to scale up adaptation and mitigation actions on the ground, secure global participation and scale up climate financing in order to build resilience in LLDCs.

• Enhancing the role of the private sector; You strongly highlighted the importance of the private sector at the international as well as national level, in the form of international investment, its role in regional projects, in regulatory and policy reform process in LLDCs, as well as the importance and prevalence of small and medium scale enterprises and household enterprises in LLDCs. Most household enterprises involve women and require support to strengthen their access to credit. You noted the importance of access to financing for the private sector to participate in public-private-partnerships.

• Short term and long term concrete deliverables from the conference were also highlighted.

• International support measures;
  1. ODA remains main international financial flows to LLDCs. But other sources of finance are increasing, for example remittances.
  2. How can we get more aid for trade for LLDCs in an equitable manner.
  3. Greater market access is important.
  4. Promotion of public and domestic private investment including foreign direct investment through creation of a conducive business environment
  5. South-South cooperation has been playing an increasing role in addressing LLDCs issues in particular through transfer of technology, access to neighbouring markets and sharing of experiences.
  6. Technology transfer is critical to LLDCs.
  7. Explore innovative funding – eg. regional infrastructure funds
8. Coherent support for LLDCs from all international organizations within the UN and outside is very important.

- Regional integration is critical in increasing economies of scale, improving regional infrastructure networks and in ensuring greater intra-regional trade as well as better transit facilities for LLDCs through the development corridor concept.

- Sharing of experiences and dialoguing – setting up an observatory and means for sharing experiences and success/best practices. There is already some information available. Eg. Best practices in border crossing. This will also work as a peer pressure and also help promote the concept of mutual benefit.

- Enhancing the follow-up mechanisms through enhancing monitoring and evaluation; introduce peer pressure into monitoring processes and identifying indicators.

You posed important questions:
- How can we improve on implementation in the next decade?
- How much of the common development challenges or emerging challenges should be in the new development agenda?

You also stressed that in framing the Post-2015 discourse and agenda for the LLDCs, it is important that attention is given to issues and challenges that are peculiar to the LLDC as a group. A strong focus on LLDC specific issues, along with ways of addressing them, including means of implementation and accountability framework is likely to yield the desired results.

In closing let me emphasize that it is my conviction that with the support and cooperation of transit countries and the international community at large, the LLDCs will be able to realize their full development potentials.

As next steps, we are preparing a summary report that we will circulate to you for your review and comments before disseminating. I also wish to inform you that the regional reviews for the Africa and the Latin America regions will be held later this year. There are pre-conference events that are upcoming in collaboration with the institutions in this room such as the infrastructure development and trade facilitation with World Bank; Global Services Forum – organized by UNCTAD, enhancing productive capacities in cooperation with UNIDO and UNCTAD. We will keep you
updated on these activities. I wish to thank all the partner institutions who have contributed substantively to this Meeting. All these organizations will be involved in providing support to the Member States as we make progress on the preparations of the Conference.

Last but not the least, allow me to express my gratitude to Ambassador Kommasith, the Chair of the Group of LLDCs, distinguished Ambassadors and delegates from the LLDCs, development partners, and transit countries, and you all for making this Meeting a great success. Thank you for your active engagement and commitment in the preparatory process of the conference. I wish those of you who have traveled here a safe trip home. I look forward to continued and expanded collaboration in the coming months and years.

I thank you for your kind attention.