NATIONAL STAKEHOLDER SENSITIZATION WORKSHOP ON THE VIENNA PROGRAMME OF ACTION

BOTSWANA

CONCEPT NOTE

BACKGROUND AND RATIONALE

The Second UN Conference on Landlocked Developing Countries (LLDCs) was held from 3 to 5 November 2014 in Vienna, Austria. At its conclusion, Member States adopted the Vienna Programme of Action for the LLDCs for the Decade 2014-2024 (VPoA). The VPoA is a comprehensive and action-oriented development agenda, with an overarching goal to address the special needs and challenges of LLDCs in a more coherent manner and thus contribute to sustainable development and poverty eradication. It underscores the commitment of the international community to support the world’s 32 LLDCs in dealing with challenges related to landlockedness, remoteness and geographical isolation through implementation of six priority areas that include: (i) Fundamental Transit Policy Issues, (ii) Infrastructure Development and Maintenance, (iii) International Trade and Trade Facilitation, (iv) Regional Integration and Cooperation, (v) Structural Economic Transformation, and (vi) Means of Implementation. The VPoA demonstrates the renewed and strengthened partnerships between LLDCs, their transit neighbours and their development partners, while also calling for strengthened partnerships within the context of South-South and triangular cooperation and partnerships with private sector.

The full and effective implementation of the goals and specific objectives and actions in the six priority areas agreed upon in the Vienna Programme of Action will not only facilitate the establishment of efficient transit transport systems in landlocked and transit developing countries, which are inevitably required if landlocked developing countries are to be effectively integrated into the international trading system, but also help them to build their productive capacities, diversify their exports, structurally transform their economies, integrate into the global and regional value chains and achieve more sustained economic growth.

The Addis Ababa Action Agenda that was adopted by Member States at the Third International Conference on Financing for Development on 16 July 2015 and the outcome document Transforming Our World: The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development that was adopted at the UN Summit on the post-2015 development
agenda on 27 September 2015 make special reference to the LLDCs and their special needs. Both documents specifically recognize the importance of addressing the special needs and challenges faced by landlocked developing and support the effective implementation of the Vienna Programme of Action for Landlocked Developing Countries for the Decade 2014-2024 (VPoA). The implementation of the VPoA goes hand in hand with the implementation of the 2030 agenda and the Addis Ababa Action Agenda.

In order to ensure the effective implementation of the VPoA, the VPoA invites Governments to mainstream the VPoA into their national and sectoral development. Regional and sub-regional organizations, including regional economic communities and regional development banks, were also invited to mainstream the implementation of the VPoA into their relevant programmes. At the global level the governing bodies of organizations in the United Nations system are invited to mainstream the implementation of the VPoA into their programme of work.

At the national level, mainstreaming means that the VPoA is systematically integrated at all levels of planning, implementation and review, as appropriate, for the purpose of addressing the special development needs and challenges of LLDCs and subsequently contributing towards an enhanced rate of sustainable and inclusive growth. Given the holistic nature of the VPoA, mainstreaming will require coordinated and coherent efforts across various actors.

Mainstreaming at national level can be done through integrating the VPoA into national plans such as, national development plans; sectoral plans; and annual budgets. The specific priorities of the VPoA, objectives and actions will be integrated into the relevant sector visions or broad strategies for achieving the priorities of the National Development Strategy. LLDCs can also mainstream the VPoA through acceding to and ratifying key international conventions and agreements related to transit, transport and trade facilitation, with the view to significantly reduce transaction costs and facilitate trade.

Monitoring and review of the implementation of the VPoA at the national level is critical for its effective implementation. The VPoA encourages LLDCs to establish national coordination mechanisms, where appropriate and involve all relevant stakeholders as appropriate in monitoring and review. It is therefore critical that appropriate mechanisms and indicators for monitoring the implementation of the VPoA at national level are identified.

It is in this context that the Government of Botswana has decided to undertake a national stakeholder sensitization workshop on the VPoA to be held 27 to 29 October 2015 in Gaborone, Botswana.
BOTSWANA SITUATION

Botswana attaches great importance to initiatives, taken at both national and international level which are aimed at enhancing her competitiveness. These include among others the VPoA, WTO-Agreement on Trade Facilitation and Aid for Trade Initiative. This is in view of the evident urgent need for: sustainable economic structural transformation, employment creation and poverty alleviation.

Botswana continues to contend with the challenges emanating from its narrow economic structure and the associated over-dependence on the mining sector, in particular diamonds. Botswana’s contribution to world trade remains quite minimal at around 0.006% and at regional level (SADC) remains below 10% having reached a low of 5% in 2008.

Whilst Botswana continues to make efforts to diversify her economy as well as her export products, this remains to be fully realized. The inability by Botswana to expand the export base to the desirable levels can be attributed to many factors. Some international reports, including the World Economic Forum Reports, namely the Global Enabling Trade Report, the Global Competiveness Reports, and the Global Information Technology continuously indicate that key matters necessary for global trade integration are still inadequate. These include the following:

Infrastructure (quality of roads, quality of ports infrastructure, quality of airport transport, quality of electricity supply, etc).

Technological readiness (availability of latest technology absorption, internet bandwidth, etc).

Business sophistication (local supplier quality and quantity, cluster development, value chain breadth, production process sophistication, extend of marketing, etc).

In addition to the above stated challenges, the Botswana’s National Export Strategy (NES) has also identified the following as factors influencing Botswana’s performance in the export market: geographical location (being a landlocked country), and trade support institutional capacity among other.

The implementation of the VPoA can make a meaningful contribution to improving Botswana’s competitiveness and thus contribute to economic diversification.
WORKSHOP OBJECTIVES

The overall goal of the workshop is to enhance understanding of key stakeholders, including Government officials, civil society and private sector so that they can effectively implement the Vienna Programme of Action and mainstream it at the national level. The objectives of the workshop are:

➢ to sensitize stakeholders about the VPoA,
➢ ensure that there is ownership,
➢ improve knowledge amongst key national stakeholders about how to effectively implement and mainstream the VPoA into national planning,
➢ facilitate mainstreaming of the Programme into Sectorial Development plans,
➢ develop modalities for monitoring and reporting, and
➢ identify opportunities for assistance

FORMAT OF THE WORKSHOP

The workshop will be conducted over the period of two and half days. It will consist of a number of sessions, organized as panel sessions, with presentations by a number of speakers/experts from the Government of Botswana and selected UN and other International Organizations, and development partners followed by interactive discussions and exchange of views.

PARTICIPATION

The Workshop will bring together a select number of national stakeholders from the Government, Civil Society, Regional Organization, Private Sector, Development Organizations, Donor countries, and some UN and other International Organizations such as OHRLLS, UNCTAD, UNECA, UNDP, World Bank. About sixty (60) participants are expected to attend the workshop.

CONTACT INFORMATION

Ms. Mmanyabela Nnana Tshekega
Ministry of Trade and Industry
Tel: +267 3685300
Email: tshekega@gov.bw

Ms. Gladys Mutangadura
UN-OHRLLS, New York,
Tel: 212-963-3316/Cell: 9172384436
Email: mutangadura@un.org