



UN-OHRLLS

United Nations Office of the High Representative for the Least Developed Countries, Landlocked Developing Countries and Small Island Developing States (UN-OHRLLS)

Statement

by

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

at Meeting of the LLDC Group

16 January 2014, 3:00pm – 6:00pm

Conference Room 4 NLB

Excellencies,

Distinguished colleagues,

Happy New Year to you all.

I would like to sincerely thank you for this opportunity to update you on the status of preparations for the ten-year review conference on the implementation of the Almaty Programme of Action.

At the outset, allow me to thank Lao PDR Ambassador Mr. Saleumxay Kommasith for the excellent leadership of the LLDC Group. 2013 has been an especially busy year for the Group and for my Office, with the ongoing preparations for the Conference. Laos and His Excellency Saleumxay Kommasith personally, relentlessly advocated the special needs of the LLDCs and worked hard to ensure support for the preparatory process for the Conference.

Let me give you a brief overview of where we stand now in the preparatory process for the Second UN Conference on LLDCs and what we have achieved in 2013. The preparatory process has really gathered momentum in the last few months in all three of its tracks, the Intergovernmental Track; the Inter-Agency Track; and the Private Sector Track.

With regards to the intergovernmental track, LLDCs have been requested to prepare national report on the implementation of the Almaty Programme of Action. To date, my office has received national reports from 17 countries. I would like to, once again, urge countries that have not prepared to do so and submit national reports on the implementation of the Almaty Programme in time for the findings to feed into the substantive preparations of the outcome document of the Conference.

In addition, all three regional reviews, in the Euro-Asian, African and Latin American region have been organized by regional commission in close collaboration with my office, with the last Latin American meeting taking place in Ascuncion, Paraguay in November last year. The regional meetings presented an assessment of the implementation of the Almaty Programme in the region and providing proposals for the next development decade.

With regards to the inter-agency track, the next, fourth, meeting of the Inter-Agency Consultative Group, which comprises key UN system, international development and financial institutions and other regional organizations, will take place on 20 February in Geneva. The meeting will focus on consultations on the substantive and organizational preparations for the Conference, including the modalities for the Conference and elements for

the outcome document, and consultations on the initial list and preparations of side events at the Conference.

UN-OHRLLS and other UN system and other international organizations have during 2012 and 2013 organized some thirteen pre-conference events starting with the ministerial meeting in Almaty, Kazakhstan on trade and trade facilitation in September 2012. These events have focused on key developmental issues of crucial importance to LLDCs, including for example international trade, trade facilitation, aid for trade, transport development, impacts of climate change, desertification, land degradation and drought, ICT development and connectivity, priorities for the development agenda of LLDCs and others.

Since I briefed you during the last meeting of the LLDC Group in May 2013, my office in collaboration with the World Bank held a meeting on Transport Development and Trade Facilitation in June in Washington DC. We organized an ECOSOC side event in July entitled Renewing Global Partnerships for Connecting LLDCs to the World Markets. During the African regional review meeting, ECA organized an Experts Group Meeting on assessing the status of implementation of trade and transport facilitation instruments and measures in Africa; UNCTAD held an Expert Group meeting on Transport and Logistics Innovations for LLDCs in October. In

Namibia in September my office together with UNFCCC and UNCCD organized pre-conference event on Building Resilience of LLDCs to the Impacts of Climate Change, Desertification, Land Degradation and Drought. During the Global South-South Expo in October in Nairobi, we organized an event on Enhancing ICT development and connectivity for LLDCs together with ITU and with UN Office for South-South Cooperation, we launched the pilot South-South technology transfer facility for LLDCs. All these pre-conference thematic events provided very important recommendations on the key needs and priorities of LLDCs in these areas.

The Private Sector Track has also been launched. OHRLLS in collaboration with the ICC have set up a private sector steering committee and have held regular conference calls. The aim of the private sector track is to ensure that the private sector is fully engaged in the preparatory process and are active in identifying concrete, action-oriented proposals addressing LLDC-specific problems and challenges in the area of trade and transport facilitation, investment and enterprise development.

All these efforts undertaken along the three preparatory tracks, the findings and recommendations, will feed into the substantive preparations for the Conference and its preparatory committees.

Excellencies,

As per the UN General Assembly resolution 68/225, the Second UN Conference on LLDCs will take place in 2014. It is my immense pleasure to inform you that after consultations the Government of Austria has offered to host the Conference in Vienna.

As you may recall, in resolution 68/225 the General Assembly requested the Secretary-General to prepare a note on the organizational aspects of the conference, including the venue and specific dates for the Conference and the two sessions of the intergovernmental preparatory committee, and submit to the Assembly by 15 January 2014. I will now highlight the key proposals made in the Secretary-General's note. I hope that the General Assembly would give due consideration to it and extend its necessary approval.

Based on consultations with the potential host country and relevant departments of the United Nations Secretariat, particularly DGACM, it was proposed that the Conference be held from 3 to 5 November 2014.

The two sessions of the intergovernmental preparatory committee for the Conference are proposed to be held, each for duration of 2 days, on 12 and 13 June 2014, and 2 and 3 October 2014, both at the United Nations Headquarters in New York. In order to conduct the sessions of the

intergovernmental preparatory committee and informal consultations, as appropriate, a bureau with equitable geographical representation would be established. The intergovernmental process of the Conference itself will consist of the Committee of the Whole and plenary meetings.

With regards to the private sector track, it is envisioned that a high-level private sector forum will be organized either during or immediately before the Conference. The Forum's outcome will be reported to the Conference.

In addition, interactive thematic roundtables and side events would be organized at the side lines of the Conference to facilitate exchange of views and build consensus on special needs and priorities of landlocked developing countries in key development areas, as well as to announce specific deliverables and initiatives in favour of LLDCs. The themes of these events will be determined through inter-agency consultations and with relevant Member States.

The Conference and its preparatory committee shall be open to all States Members of the United Nations as well as intergovernmental organizations, United Nations system organizations, other international organizations and regional financial and development organizations. At the same time, we will

strive to ensure the effective participation of civil society and the private sector in the Conference and its preparatory committee sessions.

But we still have a long way to go before the Conference and in ensuring that the Conference is a success. My office still has a number of pre-conference events and other activities planned, in collaboration with other partners, in the coming months. Allow me to briefly outline some of these. We will organize shortly a retreat with key stakeholders, in order to discuss the key elements of the outcome document of the Conference.

In terms of upcoming pre-conference events, my office will organize an event on enhancing productive capacities in LLDCs in collaboration with UNCTAD and UNIDO in Vienna. A pre-conference event on international support measures is envisioned in collaboration with UNDP. My office will also assist the Government of Mongolia in organizing a high-level meeting in Mongolia on the outcome of the WTO Trade Facilitation Agreement and its implications for the LLDCs.

I hope that this briefing gives you an idea of where we are and where we are heading. In conclusion, I would like to request all Member States to be actively engaged and extend full support to OHRLLS in organizing and participating in all activities related to the Conference and in actively

negotiating the new programme of action for the LLDCs. We need to work for a results-oriented new partnership framework that looks towards the future which would guide us to a broader vision for LLDCs' sustainable development and economic growth for the next decade.

It is very important from three perspectives: it is held once in ten years; it helps to create norms and collaborations; and its being held before the finalisation of the Post 2015 Development Agenda.

What the pre-conference activities highlighted is that while the transport sector is definitely important for improving trade and the greater integration of LLDCs into the international market, there is a need to address trade issues in a more coherent and holistic manner, ensuring that broader aspects of poverty alleviation and sustainable development are also addressed. For example, efforts to improve the transit transport infrastructure and trade facilitation need to be accompanied by efforts to build productive capacity, improve market access, promote value addition, industrialization, diversification of economies, technology transfer, develop and increase use of information and communication technologies, and build resilience to external shocks including the effects of climate change.

I would also like to call on all of you to ensure highest level possible participation of your government in the Conference. From my side, I will continue to advocate for the LLDC interests, including by mobilizing resources for the Trust Fund to ensure effective participation of LLDCs in the Conference, intensifying advocacy efforts on the Conference and further mobilizing and coordinating the active involvement of the organizations of the United Nations system. We have to work together to ensure that the Conference is a success. I will also continue to push the LLDC agenda in the post-2015 Development Agenda. My office stands ready to continue to support the LLDC Group Chair and the Bureau in the lead up to and during the Conference this year.