

**Pre-session of the Special Body on Least Developed Countries, Landlocked Developing and Pacific Island Developing Countries**  
**3 August, 2014**

**Conference Room 4, United Nations Conference Centre**  
**Bangkok, Thailand**

Under-Secretary-General and Executive Secretary of ESCAP  
Chair of the LDCs, LLDCs and SIDS group here,  
Excellencies, ladies and gentlemen,

At the outset, I would like to commend the distinguished members of ESCAP for making the sessions of the Special Body on LDCs, LLDCs and Pacific Island Developing Countries an integral part of the senior officials segment. Since a majority of the Member countries of UNESCAP belong to this vulnerable group, there is an added importance of the meeting.

I would also thank Executive Secretary Shamshad Akhtar for inviting me to participate here. The special body provides an important platform to undertake substantive discussions on the development status and develop renewed strategy to overcome them. Let me also take this opportunity to thank UNESCAP for providing consistent support for capacity building and technical support for all the vulnerable groups.

I am very glad to inform you that in the last couple of months, my office has been particularly at the forefront on events and issues related to the vulnerable groups. I have just come from the ministerial meeting of LDCs on productive capacity building and new partnerships in Benin. Last month I was in Kazakhstan for the ambassadorial retreat on formulating the outcome of the LLDC conference. Similarly, my office took the lead role and took all the SIDS ambassadors to Washington DC for a daylong extensive discussions on SIDS conference and we were there following and providing relevant support for SIDS during the finalization of the outcome document.

Similarly, we were very happy to take up the issue of vulnerable countries during the high level week of ECOSOC, HLPF and ARM, which were participated at a high level from various vulnerable groups. From the perspective of engagements and advocacy, last few months rightly were busy time for all of us. There is no doubt that we were all supporting and following the OWG on SDG, which had a marathon session for 36 hours on the last day to finalize its report to the UNGA for intergovernmental negotiations.

The Asia Pacific LDCs, LLDCs and SIDS are making considerable progress in their socio-economic development by utilizing their human and natural resources and deploying their entrepreneurial skills. Despite some progress, they are yet to overcome deep-rooted and multifaceted structural challenges. They are lagging behind other developing countries in many respects. High incidence of extreme poverty, lack of productive capacity, poor infrastructure, narrow economic base, high export concentration, low per capita energy supply, absence of skilled workforce and youth unemployment are a common challenge in these countries.

The new and emerging challenges, including climate change and disaster, further undermined their development trajectory. Many of them will not be able to reach many of the MDG targets by 2015. Some robust measures at both national and international levels to deal with the current situation with a view to further accelerating their progress are critical. Unless their economies find a strong footing and are cushioned against structural constraints, merging risks and shocks, they will not be able to move to a sustainable development path.

Last week, the Government of Benin in close partnership with my office organized a Ministerial Conference on “new partnerships for productive capacity building in LDCs”. The event offered an important opportunity to forge new partnerships involving the development partners, countries of the South, private sector and UN system organizations including the WB Group. The level of commitments that LDCs have demonstrated to bring structural change in the economy with a strategy were prominent. They are making their headways to lay a solid foundation for rapid sustained and inclusive growth. Many of them have embarked on a new development trajectory depending on their own home-grown ideas. I am convinced that with appropriate global policies and support in place, many of them will be able to bring about such transformation sooner than later. But important call was made that together with investment in development of human resources and institution building there is a need to give due focus on building productive sectors, investing in energy, infrastructure, science and technology. That would not be possible without a sustained, enhanced and comprehensive partnership with the North, the emerging South and international institutions and other stakeholders. They all stressed that there is an opportunity to do so in an accelerated manner as we all are gearing efforts for post 2015 development agenda. They also stressed that many LDCs are committed to move fast on to the path of graduation, as envisaged by IPOA, yet they pointed out that there has to be a strong international support measure to accompany them towards graduation and sustain the support to ensure that even after graduation they continue to make progress and not fall back on their progress. As per the UNGA resolution of the last year 67/220, we are working on to put in place and lead UN system wide coordination mechanism on this issue based on discussions with all the relevant stakeholders.

The challenges that LLDCs are facing are directly related to the direct lack of access to sea, efficiency and effectiveness of transit transport. They face high trading costs which make them less competitive in the global market. Besides, it is having a huge impact on their economic growth potential and building robust resilience. The average cost of exporting a container for LLDCs is \$3,203 compared with \$1,287 for transit countries. OHRLLS estimated that development of LLDCs is on average 20% lower than what it would have been were the countries not landlocked. Studies by many development economists like Paul Collier and Jeffrey Sachs have shown that the high cost of transport and infrastructure challenges have cost the LLDCs as much as 1.5 to 2 percent of their growth rate per annum. Like other countries their development is undermined by impacts of climate change and disasters such as desertification, land degradation and melting of glaciers.

Keeping these structural constraints and the impact on development in mind, we are undertaking necessary preparations for the Second UN Conference on LLDCs, to be held in Vienna from 3 to 5 November 2014. We hope that the conference would be attended at a high level to provide the necessary push to the cause of LLDCs and garner necessary support for better transit transport

development, regional cooperation and overall progress for the people in these countries. This is once in a decade Conference. The Secretary-General places the issues of LLDCs Conference high on his agenda. He will be attending personally and many other heads of States and Governments of these countries will also be attending the conference. I urge all of you to make sure that there is a high level of participation from all the relevant countries. The outcome of the conference will feed into the Post 2015 development agenda as well.

The Third International Conference on SIDS will be convened in Apia, Samoa, from 1-4 September, 2014. The theme of the conference, as we all know is very important. The sustainable development of SIDS through genuine and durable partnerships. The Preparatory Committee for the conference, under the co-chairmanship of New Zealand and Singapore, have already approved the outcome of the conference the SIDS Accelerated Modalities of Action Pathway or S.A.M.O.A Pathway that will be adopted in Samoa in September.

The outcome document undertakes to realize a transformational strategy for the sustainable development of SIDS. It covers all the important areas of importance not only to SIDS but to the international community as a whole, as the SIDS concerns, whether they are livelihood issues, market access and inclusive growth, energy access, connectivity or climate change impacts and disasters including the threat to survival, food security, health and education or means of implementation, they are all directly relevant for the global partnership. for example, SIDS are custodians of oceans. As such, global actions affect the livelihood of the people in SIDS. It underlines the urgent need to strengthen international cooperation and ensure genuine and durable partnerships at the national, regional and international levels. It also calls for enhanced international cooperation, including North-South, South-South, triangular and especially SIDS-SIDS. It requests the Secretary General to present recommendations for a partnership framework to monitor and ensure the full implementation of pledges and commitments through partnerships for SIDS.

Similarly, UN Secretary General is going to attend the conference. Many leaders from SIDS and partners are also attending the meeting. we hope that there will be high level of participation from all SIDS as well as partner countries to give concrete shape and commitment to the partnerships.

My office will organize a Private Sector Partnerships Forum jointly with the Government of Samoa and the Samoa Chamber of Commerce on 30 and 31 August, 2014. The Forum will focus on seven thematic areas: Oceans and marine resources, Sustainable Tourism, Renewable Energy, Connectivity – Transportation/ICT, Agriculture, Disaster Risk Reduction and finance and support measures to private sector.

Excellencies,  
Ladies and Gentlemen,

The days ahead are very important to shape the global development agenda. The process of elaboration of the post-2015 development agenda has already started. This will determine global development paradigm for the next decade and a half. The specific challenges and priorities of LDCs, LLDCs and SIDS need to be placed at the front and center of the post-2015 Development

agenda for its legitimacy and effectiveness. Secretary General has repeatedly said that the post 2015 development agenda would not leave any one behind, it should be transformative and it should ensure a life of dignity and prosperity for all. For this to happen, the vulnerable groups of countries should continue to take active role in the process and raise their voices both individually and collectively in all relevant forums. My office has been providing the necessary analysis and support to the member states as well as to the UN system through technical support team. But ultimately, it is the member states that have to decide on the priorities and the direction of the post 2015 development agenda.

The Asia Pacific region has much to offer, because of a high level of its diversity that is inclusiveness of all groups, from the most dynamic and successful to the least developed landlocked and SIDS. The regional cooperation has a great potential to complement global development agenda. We will be looking forward to that in the years ahead.

As you are aware, the Open Working Group on Sustainable Development Goals has recently concluded its work. The Outcome document adopted a number of ambitious targets which can bring about a transformative shift in the lives of the poor people. Such targets include, among others, by 2030, eradicating extreme poverty and hunger for all; universal access to food; universal access to health, quality primary and secondary education, safe and affordable drinking water, sanitation and hygiene for all; universal access to affordable and modern energy services; full and productive employment and decent work for all to climate change and peace and security and means of implementation.

The Outcome of the Open Working Group seeks to build a seamless connection with MDGs with a view to concluding the unfinished business of the MDGs and responding to new challenges. It contains an integrated, indivisible set of goals and targets which are action oriented, aspirational and universal in nature. But the implementation of that at the national level will take into account the relevant national conditions and circumstances. Each Government will be setting its own national targets guided by the global level of ambition but taking into account national realities, capacities and levels of development. As mandated by the Rio outcome, the SDGs should be coherent with and integrated into the UN development agenda beyond 2015.

We are gratified to see that the productive capacities now occupy a central stage in the UN development thinking. The OWG outcome document distinctly features the productive capacity building by setting specific goals on infrastructure, energy, growth, industrialization and innovation. This is a paradigm shift in the United Nations development agenda. You may wish to recall that we prominently advance this issue over the last two years through our reports and advocacy.

The outcome document also sets some very important targets as enablers to achieve the goals with special focus on LDCs, LLDCs and SIDS taking into account their specific circumstances. It refers to the commitment of the United Nations to implement all the UN conferences related to the specific vulnerable groups.

The outcome document is yet to fully elaborate the means of implementation. It is expected that the report of the Intergovernmental Committee of Experts on Sustainable Development

Financing, scheduled to be released this month, will propose options for a sustainable development financing strategy. The substantive outcome of the third International Conference on Financing for Development to be held in July 2015 in Ethiopia is expected to come up with specific recommendations on financing.

The Secretary-General is also going to submit a synthesis report which will inject ambition and transformative vision into the process to prepare the outcome of the 2015 Summit. The report will take stock of the main messages of the preparatory processes including OWG-SDGs, sustainable financing committee, technology process, GA Presidents event and SG's HLP report and contributions from all the stakeholders to sustainable development. The report is expected to be submitted later this year. As in the past, we will be making efforts to ensure that the report will continue to give due priority to the challenges and priorities of LDCs, LLDCs and SIDS.

In conclusion, I would like to highlight that our voices in all relevant fora should be raised to register our concerns. I have been meeting the development partners to emphasize the special plights, multiple vulnerabilities and capacity constraints of LDCs, LLDCs and SIDS. There has been some positive feelings towards more resources going to those who need it most. There is also in 2013 some positive upturns in ODA commitments. But there is a long way to go to meet international commitments. Furthermore, SD agenda is so big and the requirements are so much that we have to look for all forms of partnership in post 2015 development agenda. ODA plus agenda that will take into account trade, investment, philanthropic works and innovative financing to complement an enhanced level of domestic resources are all crucial for accelerating our common sustainable development agenda. Strong national leadership with equally strong regional cooperation and global support and collaboration with a multi-stakeholder approach would be the key to the promotion of sustainable development agenda in the post 2015 period. There is a common stake in it for all of us. Those most vulnerable have much more expectations than others, because of their capacity and resource constraints. And it is in the interests of international community, in a globalized and integrated world, to ensure the progress and prosperity of the vulnerable groups. It promotes global peace and stability on a sustainable basis.

Thank you very much.