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**Briefing**

by

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**Briefing to UN Member States and UN System Organisations  
in New York on the Preparations of the Second United Nations  
Conference on Landlocked Developing Countries**

**New York  
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**Excellencies Ambassadors and Permanent Representatives of UN Member States  
to the United Nations,  
Representatives of UN Agencies,  
Ladies and Gentlemen,**

It gives me a great pleasure to be with you this afternoon and brief you on the progress towards the preparations made for the Second United Nations Conference on Landlocked Developing Countries that is scheduled to take place in Vienna, from 3 to 5 November 2014.

I would like to sincerely thank all of you for attending this important meeting, and I look forward to receiving your support for the successful organization of the conference.

Let me start my briefing by recalling the key challenges faced by landlocked developing countries in their development efforts.

The fundamental characteristics of landlocked developing countries, including the remoteness from major international markets, inadequate transport infrastructure, lengthy customs and border crossing procedures and high transport and trade transaction costs continue to put them at the margin of the global economy and at a disadvantage on their development path.

Excellencies,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

To deal with the constraints facing landlocked developing countries, and ensure that the benefits of globalization is shared by all, including LLDCs, the United Nations organized the first International Conference in Almaty, Kazakhstan, in August 2003 that adopted the Almaty Programme of Action. It provided the international

community with a unique opportunity to galvanize international solidarity and partnership to assist landlocked developing countries to effectively participate in and get due benefit from the international trading system, economic activities and improve the livelihood of the people in these countries.

In March 2014, the United Nations General Assembly, in its Resolution 66/214, decided to hold the Second United Nations Conference on Landlocked Developing Countries in Vienna.

The Conference and its preparatory process offer a critically important and timely opportunity for the landlocked and transit developing countries and their development partners to assess the implementation of the Almaty Programme, looking in particular at its best practices and the areas where it needs improvements. Based on that assessment, the Conference should develop a new common action-oriented strategic framework for the next decade to support the landlocked developing countries in their efforts to grow in a sustained and sustainable manner, eradicate poverty and to become more active players in a growingly complex and interdependent global economy.

The Government of Austria has generously offered to host the Conference in Vienna, and we are very grateful for the offer and the support and cooperation that we have received from the Austrian government.

The conference is on LLDCs, this is a UN conference, attended by all UN Member States and other stakeholders.

The Vienna Conference will enable participants from governments of LLDCs, transit developing countries and donor countries, UN and other international organizations and the private sector, to shape the new development agenda for the landlocked developing countries for the next decade.

Excellencies,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

With regard to the preparations of the Vienna Conference, we are at the final stage.

The preparatory process was staged in three tracks: intergovernmental, UN-Agency and Private sector.

During the preparatory period, in the last one year, I undertook extensive consultations with Governments, UN institutions, and private sector institutions. Today, a large majority of them have submitted their national reports on the implementation of the Almaty Programme of Action at national levels. Regional review meetings have been organized for Africa, in Addis Ababa, Asia and Europe, in Laos, and Latin America, in Paraguay. In addition, two retreats for New-York-based Ambassadors were organized to discuss key priorities of the new programme.

With regard to UN agencies and international institutions, 17 pre-conference events were organized on key topics relevant to landlocked developing countries, as well as two brainstorming meetings to facilitate dialogue and outreach discussions on challenges and possible priorities.

I was invited to several conferences and forums and made presentations on special needs and challenges facing landlocked developing countries.

We launched the private sector track, in close collaboration with relevant partners. The aim of the private sector track is to ensure that private sector is fully engaged in the preparatory process and is 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.

Excellencies,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Let me now tell you about the structure of the conference itself.

The Conference will take place at the Vienna International Centre, from 3 to 5 November 2014. The Secretary General of the United Nations has sent out invitation letters to all UN Member States, requesting them to be represented at the highest level possible. He has already confirmed his participation, attesting his personal engagement in the cause of landlocked developing countries. Some member States, including Heads of States, have already confirmed their participation.

The conference will feature a number of events: Plenary meetings, the Committee of the Whole, High-Level Thematic Roundtables, Side events, Business Investment Forum, Private sector discussions, exhibitions.

A new programme of action will be adopted by the conference in Vienna. A draft outcome document is under negotiation among the member states.

Four **high-level thematic round tables** will be organized on the following themes: (i) Achieving Structural Transformation of LLDCs' Economies; (ii) Regional Integration and Transit Cooperation; (iii) Priorities in the Post-2015 Development Agenda; (iv) Harnessing International Trade and Investment Opportunities for LLDCs' Development. These round tables will bring together Heads of States/Governments, key Ministers and Senior Officials, Heads of UN agencies and the IFIs, eminent development personalities, distinguished representatives of international institutions, the private sector and the academia in a multi-stakeholder discussion on the issues which are crucial in shaping the LLDCs' development strategy in the next decade. The objective is to highlight success stories, obstacles and constraints in addressing special needs and challenges faced by LLDCs during the last decade with a view to identifying concrete recommendations for the way forward including innovative initiatives to translate global commitments into concrete results.

There will also be **Side Events** on relevant key priorities of landlocked developing countries. To-date, approximately 17 side events have been proposed. The aim of the side events is to launch, discuss or announce concrete deliverables, new mechanisms or initiatives in support of LLDCs' long-term and sustained development. High-level participation is encouraged to convey strong political support on the event's deliverables. Those wishing to organize a side event should contact my office for more details.

**The Business and Investment Forum** is organized during the 2nd United Nations Conference on Landlocked Developing Countries (LLDCs). The event will bring together business leaders, government officials from LLDCs and transit countries, as well as development partners and senior officials from major international organizations, to exchange views on the challenges and opportunities faced by LLDCs and to discuss possible partnerships and strategies in regards to the role of the private sector in the overall sustainable development of LLDCs. The event aims to leverage the inspiration and insights from attendees in order to continue strengthening the contribution of business and investors to implementing a new Programme of Action for LLDCs.

The objectives of the forum will be to: Inspire greater action by business and Government; Discuss possible partnerships and strategies in regards to the role of the private sector in the overall sustainable development of LLDCs; Enable a synergetic transfer of knowledge and expertise between the private and the public domains; Provide a platform for best and emerging practices by sharing and reviewing lessons learned – with an emphasis on moving beyond anecdotal examples; Produce a call to action on business engagement in supporting sustainable development in LLDCs for companies and investors based in and/or operating in LLDCs.

We have also arranged space for Exhibits by Member countries, UN Agencies or private business organizations in the margins of the conference. The primary objective of the exhibition is to create a platform for LLDCs to provide information, such as tourism

and investment opportunities available in their countries, along with their unique products and services. It is also an opportunity for private sector entities, UN system organizations and other international institutions to demonstrate their relevant work and initiatives in support of LLDCs and transit developing countries.

All other information on the conference can be viewed from the conference website.

Let me conclude by reiterating three things.

First, as the Secretary General of the Conference, I would like to urge all the UN Member States, UN Agencies, development partners, private business organizations and the academia to participate at the highest level possible in the conference. Please finalize your delegations as soon as possible and get necessary visas well in advance. I understand that certain days are required for visa processing.

Second, this Conference is a once-in-a-decade event, dedicated to the concerns and aspirations of around 450 million people from the LLDCs. The importance of this conference cannot be more emphasized. Many of them are also the countries with lowest human and development indicators. But they also have a huge potential for peace, development and stability. Therefore, I call for cooperation from all member States and relevant institutions, including by contributing to the Trust Fund.

Third, I sincerely hope that this Conference will come out with effective global partnerships that will help the LLDCs to deal with the challenges, eradicate poverty, firmly set these countries on the road to greater integration in the global trading systems, promote economic prosperity and ensure sustainable development. As this is taking place before the shaping up of the post 2015 development agenda, the meeting will immensely contribute to the articulation of the future development agenda. As we have all agreed that future development agenda has to be inclusive of all and should be transformative, this fits very well with the aspirations of the people in the LLDCs.

Thank you for your kind attention.