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**Statement**

**by**

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**Informal Stock-taking meeting of the Economic and Social Council  
on the Second United Nations Conference on LLDCs**

**Conference Room 4, UN Headquarter, New York  
1000-1300 Hours, Tuesday, 13 January 2015**

**President of ECOSOC,  
Excellencies, Distinguished Panellists, Deligates  
Ladies and Gentlemen,**

It is with great pleasure that I have the honour to address this meeting. Happy New year to you all! Let start by congratulating Ambassador Khairi of Tunisia on his election to join the ECOSOC Bureau.

I am grateful to our host, Ambassador Sajdik, President of ECOSOC, for convening this discussion among the earliest activities of the year 2015 in which we will be also marking the 70<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the United Nations.

**Excellencies,**

The Second UN LLDC conference was organized in response to the United Nations General Assembly resolution 66/214. This Conference had the following four objectives.

**First**, to undertake a comprehensive appraisal of the implementation of the APoA; **second**, to review current and emerging challenges and identify effective policies, partnerships and opportunities. **Third**, to reaffirm global commitment to addressing the special development needs faced by LLDCs and **finally**, to formulate and adopt a renewed development partnership framework in favour of LLDCs for the next decade.

The preparatory process followed a Member States' endorsed roadmap in which activities were organized along three principal tracks: the intergovernmental track, the interagency track, and the private-sector track. At the national level, LLDCs undertook self-appraisal in the context of the priority areas of the Almaty Programme of Action. Three regional review meetings were successfully organized for the Euro-Asia, Africa and the Latin America regions.

Along the interagency track, five consultative meetings were held on substantive and organizational preparations. With invaluable support from other UN system agencies, my Office was able to organize 18 preconference events. Additionally, a Private Sector Steering Committee was formed to build consensus and contribute private sector-specific inputs into the process.

**Excellencies,  
Ladies and Gentlemen,**

It was against this background that the Second United Nations Conference on Landlocked Developing Countries was held 3-5 November 2014 at the Vienna International Centre in Vienna, Austria. It was attended by nearly a thousand delegates and High-level officials from 129 Member States, including Heads of State and Governments, Ministers, officials, private sector representatives, academia and civil society representatives as well as representatives from the UN system and other international organizations.

It was a successful conference from the perspective of high level participation, substantive and multistakeholder discussions and a forward looking outcome document. I thank the Government of Austria, in particular the Foreign Minister of Austria, H.E. Sebastian Kurz for all his support as well as successful leadership of the Conference in ensuring fruitful and productive discussions that led to a positive outcome. Ambassador Martin Sadjik and his team were instrumental in making sure that the conference was successfully held in Vienna.

The Conference had an intergovernmental track which included an inaugural ceremony.

It was opened by the President of Austria and addressed by UN Secretary General, President of the UNGA, Chair of the LLDC Group Minister from Zambia, EU Commissioner, UNDP Administrator, Director General of WTO, and Secretary General of WCO, among others. It was followed by a general debate in the Plenary in which Heads of State and Government, Ministers and high level representatives delivered statements. It was well represented by transit countries as well as development partners.

Private sector track activities included a Business and Investment Forum and a High-Level Luncheon; Agencies were responsible for organizing four High-level thematic roundtables, 18 side events, as well as a 3-day exhibition. The roundtables, business events and side events were very useful to delve deeper into the challenges but also best practices, and collaborative opportunities of LLDCs.

**Excellencies,  
Ladies and Gentlemen,**

Allow me now, to congratulate you all on the adoption of the forward-looking Vienna Programme of Action for the 2014-2024 decade, a positive and forward looking development blueprint with six priority areas. This new programme is a holistic and results-oriented agenda with specific goals and time-bound results-oriented objectives that seek to achieve rapid, inclusive and sustained economic growth along with poverty reduction for more than 450 million people. It commits itself to turn LLDC into Land-Linked countries with holistic and multistakeholder partnerships of all, including the private sector and civil society. That is a very important message coming out of Vienna, especially as Austria is a landlocked country but does not feel like so, because of the regional integration, infrastructure network and institutional arrangements.

Drawing upon lessons learned, gaps and experiences from the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), the Almaty Programme of Action and other global development frameworks, this new Programme reflects the desire of the global community to tackle challenges that LLDCs face in a more comprehensive manner. The Vienna Programme of Action acknowledges that LLDCs continue to face unacceptably high costs of transaction and delays when compared to their maritime neighbours. In addition, these problems are compounded by limited productive capacities, institutional and policy weaknesses as well as new and emerging challenges such as climate change, external shocks and increasing economic informality.

In order to deal with these challenges, VPoA proposes genuine partnerships involving LLDCs, transit developing countries and their development partners, including multilateral institutions. It seeks to enhance LLDCs' international trade performance, trade facilitation, productive capacities building, economic diversification, value-addition in manufacturing and agriculture, increased connectivity to regional and global value chains, regional integration, and collaboration with vibrant a private sector based on expanded partnerships. They are very important contributions and provide a very strong basis for taking forward the positive agenda.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank Ambassador Per Thoresson of Sweden, and Ambassador Khiane Phansourivong, PR of Laos for stewarding the prepcom process for the outcome document and LLDC, chair Ambassador and

PR of Zambia, Dr Mwaba Patricia Kasese-Bota, and her team for leading the negotiation process, as well as the Ambassadors of Bureau of LLDCs and all the LLDCs and their partners for their respective contributions that made the conference a success.

The forthcoming **Report of the Secretary-General on the Outcome of the Second United Nations Conference on LLDCs** provides an assessment of how the Conference enhanced our collective understanding of and reinforced our commitment to enhance LLDCs' social and economic prosperity through strengthening of investments and policy measures in areas that include but not limited to: transit arrangements, transport infrastructure, structural transformation, trade facilitation, sustainable energy, multistakeholder partnerships, capacity building, international support measures, climate change impacts and building resilience.

**Excellencies,  
Ladies and Gentlemen,**

There are a number of issues that I would like to highlight at this informal stock-taking event. First, and as I have previously emphasized, the Vienna Programme of Action was realized through broad-based consultations and participatory process involving United Nations system organizations, LLDCs, transit developing countries, development partners, international organizations, the private sector as well as the civil society. **Building on the momentum generated by the preparatory process, I would like to emphasize the need to use these partnerships as a basis and avenue for the full and effective implementation of the Vienna Programme of Action.**

*Second*, the Vienna Programme of Action offers us a very important framework, with which we can comprehensively address challenges of landlockedness, geographical isolation and remoteness in a holistic manner. Therefore effective integration of VPOA in LLDCs, transit countries and development partners will be crucial.

In this context, I am confident that the United Nations, through its different organs such as ECOSOC will **support the development of complementary policies through policy discussions and coherence, and contribute to mainstream the Vienna Programme of Action into the short-to- medium term development plans of LLDCs and their transit neighbors, and ensure**

**that the entire UN system delivers as one when it comes to the LLDCs agenda.** I would like to assure you that my Office will consistently follow up on it and encourage all to effectively mainstream this programme of action in their development agenda.

*Third*, effective partnerships and honest efforts to deliver on all commitments made in a timely fashion are crucial. Important as they are, we must also ensure that the LLDCs agenda is integrated into other global processes, such as the post-2015 development dialogue, climate change discussions and multilateral trade negotiations.

In particular, I am confident that the international community will capture the spirit and recognize various elements of the Vienna Programme of Action in the final negotiations of the Post-2015 development agenda, the third International Conference on Financing for Development in Addis Ababa, the United Nations Climate Change Conference, COP21, in Paris, and the 10th WTO Ministerial Conference in Nairobi, among others.

*Fourth*, we are cognizant of the need for an effective mechanism to review and follow-up on the implementation of the goals and objectives outlined in the new programme of action for the LLDCs. The outcome document calls upon my office to develop, in collaboration with other relevant stakeholders, relevant indicators for measuring progress in implementing this programme. I am pleased to inform you that we have begun an exploratory exercise on how such indicators should look like, with the aim of providing substantive, evidence-based analytical reports.

We are also working on a review strategy with a number of stakeholders in and outside of the UN. It is equally important that we coordinate and ensure coherence with Development finance, trade and customs institutions to promote our common agenda and ensure its effective multi-sectoral implementation.

In addition to the annual report of the Secretary-General as requested by the General Assembly, my Office would be working on an annual publication, each issue focusing on one of the six priority areas of the Vienna Programme of Action. The first of this publication, to be available later in 2015, will highlight “**Transit Transport Policies, Legal Framework and Trade Facilitation Efforts**”. This is so because they are the most important aspect of LLDCs.

In fact, we have heard and various analyses have shown that hard ware and software side of border crossings and infrastructure are key to deal with the challenges of LLDCs. There are various UN instruments and regional mechanisms to help accelerate the process. **The UN Convention on Harmonisation of Frontier Control of Goods** is one such key instrument useful in facilitating trade. Similarly, harmonising legislation, removing nonphysical barriers and ensuring fast and free flow of goods including through TIR system, are critical for all. One border stop, transparency, reduction of time and cost and sharing of best practices is crucial in promoting competitiveness and the transformation of LLDC economies and the lives of the people.

Trade facilitation agreement in WTO now provides an important opportunity for all to focus on these issues and implement measures on the ground with strong global partnership. I hope that LLDCs will also accede, on a priority basis, to UN instruments and other regional instruments that facilitate trade.

*Fifth*, the comprehensive review of the Almaty Programme of Action showed that a number of LLDCs suffer from lack of quality data, **and it is thus critical to provide targeted support that would strengthen their national institutions to enable them generate and share timely, quality, and disaggregated data.** Indeed, as delegates to the Vienna conference repeatedly acknowledged, economic and social wellbeing in a number of LLDCs has improved in the past decade but this progress remains unstable and unbalanced. Member States need to be supported to pursue science-based policies anchored in robust and quality data. We must enhance our support to LLDCs, in particular, the weakest and most vulnerable among the group.

Finally, please allow me once again to thank the President of ECOSOC, Ambassador Sajdik, and this important panel for this stock-taking event. I have no doubt that today's informal meeting will be an important signpost for a close working relationship between the LLDC Group and ECOSOC. I am confident that the LLDC Agenda, including the Vienna Programme of Action would be highlighted and considered in the programmatic cycle of ECOSOC that includes the High-Level Political Forum (HLPF), the Annual Ministerial Review (AMR), and the Development Cooperation Forum (DCF).

I thank you for your kind attention.