Livingstone Call for Action for the Accelerated Implementation of the Vienna Programme of Action for Landlocked Developing Countries
Adopted on 4 June 2015, Livingstone, Zambia

Introduction
The Vienna Programme of Action for Landlocked Developing Countries for the Decade 2014-2024 (VPoA) was adopted at the Second United Nations Conference on Landlocked Developing Countries (LLDCs) and endorsed by the General Assembly in December 2014 in resolution 69/137. The VPoA underscores the commitment of the international community to support LLDCs in dealing with challenges related to landlockedness, remoteness and geographical disadvantages. It is a comprehensive but ambitious development agenda that aims to put the world’s 32 LLDCs on a steady path of sustainable, inclusive and rapid economic growth and development with the stated goal of ending extreme poverty through implementation of six priority areas that include (1) Fundamental transit Policy Issues, (2) Infrastructure Development and Maintenance, (3) International Trade and Trade Facilitation, (4) Regional Integration and Cooperation, (5) Structural Economic Transformation, and (6) Means of Implementation.

The Government of the Republic of Zambia in collaboration with the United Nations Office of the High Representative for Least Developing Countries, Landlocked Developing Countries and Small Island Developing States (UN-OHRLLS) hosted a three day High-Level Follow-up Meeting to the Second United Nations Conference on the LLDCs that was held in Livingstone, Zambia from 2 to 4 June 2015. The event brought together more than 200 participants including ministers, senior representatives and participants from LLDCs, transit developing countries, development partners, UN, international, regional and sub-regional organizations, private sector and other stakeholders. The meeting discussed and conceptualized the way forward in implementing the Vienna Programme of Action. It also served as a platform for sharing experiences, showcasing best practices and concrete initiatives at the national, regional and global levels. The Meeting also deliberated on concrete initiatives needed to accelerate the implementation of the VPoA.

Call to accelerate the implementation of VPoA

In view of the discussions, the meeting made a call on the following actions to accelerate the implementation of the VPoA:

1. Structural economic transformation in LLDCs
   i. Development of productive sectors in LLDCs presents a major contribution towards structural transformation. Job rich and inclusive industrialization, access to energy, productivity enhancement, agro-business development, access to finance, skills development and services sector development together with concrete programs for rural upliftment will be critical to bring structural transformation in LLDCs especially in SMEs.
   
   ii. LLDCs should establish/ strengthen industrial clusters, such as Special Economic Zones (SEZs). It is critical that SEZs are carefully planned and managed to ensure success. This entails focusing the SEZs on industries to ensure expansion of their exports and economic diversification. It is also critical that these economic zones
foster skills, innovation and competitiveness. Industrial production in the SEZs should focus on support for the manufacture of value-added goods. SEZs should also conform to WTO rules.

iii. LLDCs should continue to build their productive capacity, which is a key driver of structural economic transformation. It determines the ability of the LLDCs to add value, improve productivity, upgrade technology and produce goods that they can sell competitively in international markets and create employment. Having a more dynamic productive capacity underpinned by a strong and vibrant private sector and conducive macro-economic environment will enable the LLDCs to transform their economies.

iv. LLDCs need international assistance for enhancing innovation and technology. It is also important for LLDCs to allocate increased funding in research and technology development, especially among small and medium scale enterprises. Research and development can also stimulate the development and leveraging of the competences of high- and emerging-technology firms.

v. LLDCs where appropriate, should establish a special fund from the windfall of the extractive industry. These funds should be reinvested in competitive, value-added and diversified local supply industry based on the identified trade opportunities.

vi. LLDCs need to increase investment in technical capacity and specialized know-how required for the transformation of natural resources and negotiation of contracts with MNCs. Development partners and UN agencies, such as UNCTAD and UNDP, can provide technical assistance and/or help contract experienced consultants to support resource-rich LLDCs in the crucial negotiation of contracts/licenses. This would also lead to the concurrent development of the LLDC’s own capacity.

2. International trade, trade facilitation and fundamental transit policy issues

i. Developed and developing countries should consider establishing a preferential market access scheme specifically for exports from LLDCs, with tariff concessions and without non-tariff barriers.

ii. There is a strong need to address supply-side constraints in LLDCs to enable them to take advantage of market access.

iii. LLDCs and transit developing countries should domestically ratify the WTO Trade Facilitation Agreement as soon as possible, in order to ensure its coming into force by the time of the WTO’s 10th Ministerial Conference in Nairobi.

iv. WTO members should launch a dedicated work programme for LLDCs under the auspices of its general council. The objective of this work programme is to arrive at concrete responses to help LLDCs integrate into the multilateral trading system and overcome the trade-related challenges derived from their geographical situation. Such work programme should focus primarily, but not exclusively, in the areas of Trade Facilitation, trade diversification, services, Aid for Trade, electronic commerce and WTO accession.
v. International Organisations including the ITC, UNCTAD and the World Bank should continue to assist LLDCs to categorise their commitments under the WTO Trade Facilitation Agreement and develop bankable projects for development assistance.

vi. Developed and developing countries must work towards the conclusion of the Doha Development Agenda creating new market access opportunities for the LLDCs and eliminating trade distortive practices that affect their exports.

vii. Donors should pledge financial support for the WTO's Trade Facilitation Agreement Facility to ensure that LLDCs receive the assistance necessary to realize the full benefits of the Trade Facilitation Agreement, and to support the ultimate goal of full implementation of this new Agreement.

viii. International and regional organizations, including UNCTAD, World Bank, WCO and regional development banks, should establish special facilities and dedicated windows for the LLDCs to assist them with execution and scaling-up of trade facilitation initiatives and effective implementation of international, regional and sub-regional conventions and other legal instruments on transit and trade facilitation.

ix. WCO should establish special technical assistance and training programme for LLDCs, aimed at enhancing human and institutional capacity building in customs area in LLDCs; modernizing and automating customs procedures through the use of ICT; simplification and harmonization of customs procedures; ensuring transparent and predictable customs environment and promoting collaboration between LLDCs and transit countries to enhance efficiency of customs controls.

tax. Relevant UN system and international organizations, including regional commissions, World Bank, WTO, WCO and IRU are requested to support LLDCs in improving the efficiency of the movement of goods in transit through assisting them in the accession, ratification and implementation of relevant international conventions.

3. Infrastructure, regional integration and cooperation

i. The international community should work towards at-least doubling annual investments for infrastructure development in the LLDCs from all sources, domestic resources, official development assistance, north-south, south-south and triangular cooperation and public-private partnerships and national and multilateral development banks, in order to bridge the infrastructure gap and close the missing links. New and additional funding from development banks will be especially instrumental in efforts to reach this goal.

ii. Multilateral financial and development institutions and regional development banks should establish dedicated infrastructure funding for the LLDCs and provide the LLDCs with a special window for allocation of resources for infrastructure development and maintenance.

iii. LLDCs should develop and imbed infrastructure investment development plans in their national development strategies, and strengthen the domestic enabling environment. The international community should provide financial and technical
support for LLDCs to translate these plans into concrete project pipelines, as well as for individual implementable projects, particularly with regard to the preparation of feasibility studies, negotiation of complex contracts, and the management of projects. Efforts should aim to develop local skills and capacity.

iv. The role of economic corridors, corridor management organisations, sub-regional arrangements and regional groupings in achieving deepened regional integration should be strengthened.

4. Means of implementation

i. Donors should honour their ODA commitments and ensure distribution of ODA that is based on country-specific priorities and needs of the recipient countries, with particular consideration for LLDCs where the need is greatest. Donors should ensure that a larger share of Aid for Trade is directed towards LLDCs, given their particular infrastructure and trade-related needs.

ii. International and regional development banks should support regional investments in infrastructure projects on transport, energy and ICT in order to support deeper regional and sub-regional integration, as well as deepening of regional markets and enhance competitiveness of LLDCs. In particular the World Bank should establish a multi-donor platform and trust fund for implementing solutions to improve connectivity of LLDCs to their immediate neighbours, their sub-regions and more broadly to international markets. The proposed solutions should be grounded in growth oriented development strategies, and draw on existing bilateral and multilateral legal instruments and analytical work. The solutions should be cross-sectoral in nature addressing a number of areas including, transport infrastructure and service, ICT, trade and customs, and regional integration.

iii. UN and specialized agencies should support LLDCs on their need for advisory and capacity-building services in the area of investment promotion to strengthen their capacity to create and manage the policy and institutional framework for attracting and retaining foreign investment, in particular to high value added sectors, for transport infrastructure development, to increase exports and improve access to technology and know-how. The UNDP should through the regional hubs and the UN Resident Coordinators support the implementation of the Vienna Programme of Action. LLDCs should work with the ITC to help build the competitiveness, trade and market intelligence of their trade and investment support organisations to ensure that these can be multipliers on the ground, helping to support SMEs to internationalise and benefit from regional and global trade.

iv. LLDCs that have not yet done so should ratify the Multilateral Agreement for the Establishment of an International Think Tank for LLDCs.

5. Mainstreaming and monitoring of the VPoA

i. Member States should mainstream the VPoA in their sectoral and national plans. The integration at national level could be conducted through implementation of relevant protocols/ conventions, etc. Regional economic commissions and other UN agencies
should get the mandate to mainstream the VPoA into their programmes, through a resolution or board, as appropriate. Regional Economic Communities should integrate the VPoA in their plans. Regional Development Banks should target investment in priority areas as outlined in the VPoA. One example is investment in infrastructure, including completion of missing links.

ii. OHRLLS should support national and sub-regional dialogue in order to raise awareness and encourage the LLDCs and transit countries to mainstream the VPoA in their sectoral and national plans.

iii. There is a need to promote accession by LLDCs and transit countries to major international conventions to facilitate trade and transportation.

iv. There is also a need to establish a high level bilateral mechanism between LLDCs and transit countries as necessary, to resolve matters with respect to implementation challenges of transit arrangements.

v. LLDCs and transit developing countries should collect relevant data to ensure effective monitoring. For example, make efforts to collect relevant information, such as, cost of transport and road corridor speed. Transit countries should make available information on port dwelling time.

vi. Based on a selection of relevant indicators for monitoring progress, Member States and other partners should on a regular basis report on the progress towards attaining VPoA objectives. To enhance efficiency, LLDCs should appoint a Ministry as a focal point to coordinate mainstreaming and monitoring of the implementation of the VPoA. Member States should share with OHRLLS annual progress reports and other reports, as deemed necessary.

6. Integration of the LLDCs into the global development agenda

i. LLDCs should redouble their concerted efforts to integrate the implementation of the Vienna Programme of Action into the Post-2015 development agenda, financing for development, climate change, global trade talks and others so that their interests are fully reflected in the follow-up to these global development agenda.

Acknowledgment

The participants of the High-level meeting expressed their profound gratitude to His Excellency Mr. Edgar Lungu, President of the Republic of Zambia, for his full support and inspiring message to the Meeting. Participants thanked the Government of the Republic of Zambia for hosting the meeting and for its leadership as the Global Chair of the Group of LLDCs. The substantive support and financial contribution of the Office of the High Representative for LDCs, LLDCs and SIDS to the High Level Meeting was acknowledged.