Anförande sr Bolund

“High-Level Interactive Panel on Financing for infrastructure development and regional integration for the LLDCs”

Addis Ababa 15 juli, 2015

Excellences, Mr. President, honourable ministers, Mr. Under-Secretary-General, Heads of International and Regional organizations and Distinguished Delegates,

I am very honoured to be representing the Swedish Government at this event, as well as at this critical Third international conference on the financing for development.

Last year, Sweden had the pleasure to co-chair, together with Laos, the deliberations in New York and Vienna, which led to the forward-looking and action oriented Vienna Program of Action. We also participated actively in the successful follow-up meeting in Livingstone, Zambia, this June.

Our gathering here in Addis is a great opportunity to revisit practical ways to implement the Programme of Action and to look at ways to mobilize financial resources for the development of the LLDCs.

Throughout negotiations of the programme last fall, LLDCs raised structural transformation as a priority need. There was no way not to take this message very seriously, Sweden was
therefore very pleased that, in the end, we managed to include this as a separate priority.

LLDCs notoriously face vast distances and high transport costs to major markets. This disadvantage is particularly pronounced in land-locked countries with poor, fragile or conflict-prone neighbours. In other words, it is easier to be Luxemburg or Switzerland than to be some of the LLDCs.

Several land-locked developing countries have succeeded in rising above the ‘tyranny of distance’, which is testament to the power of their political prowess. Being landlocked has important implications for a country’s development strategy, but it does not necessarily undermine the scope and potential for development.

The importance of building endurable partnerships cannot, however, be underestimated. Traditional relationships between donor and developing countries will remain a foundation of international development. At the same time, the importance of South-South and triangular cooperation is ever increasing. The private sector’s role in fulfilling demands is key, not least considering the vast needs in areas such as telecommunications and transport that still remain for landlocked countries. I am convinced that the private sector is increasingly realizing these business opportunities, and hopefully this conference will bring some concrete results also in this regard.

When LLDCs and its partners met in Livingstone this June, it was stressed that the global community should work towards, at
the very least, doubling annual investments for infrastructure development in the LLDCs from all sources. Sweden stands ready to play its part in fulfilling this goal.

Free and fair trade works to enhance opportunities for LLDCs, this is a strong priority in Sweden for policies. So is bringing the benefits of ICT to developing countries, which is also of special importance to LLDCs.

My country also has a long-standing history of development cooperation. Our ODA has doubled over the past ten years and will remain at 1 % of GDI. (last year it was in effect 1.03%)

2015 is indeed a unique year for multilateral action towards a better future for all of us. Us meeting here in Addis and finalizing the outcome document is but one crucial step. To ensure effective implementation of the Vienna Programme of Action, we also need to give it due attention and consideration as an important input to ongoing intergovernmental processes on the Sustainable Development Goals and the post-2015 agenda.

In order to keep the United Nations’ focus on the implementation of the Vienna Programme of Action and on the special needs of the LLDCs, Sweden has taken the initiative to form a special “Friends of the LLDCs-Group” in New York to keep the issues high up on the international agenda.

Another issue that was discussed at length in New York last fall was the issue of climate change. This issue, however, barely made it into the Vienna Program of Action (para 15).
And perhaps it’s easy to forget that many landlocked countries are among the most affected by climate change. Desertification, land degradation and drought are serious obstacles to any kind of development, as well as obvious sources of civil unrest and conflict. Sweden is committed to ensure that climate financing is made available to countries in the most urgent need of adaptation to global warming, and has pledged to contribute 575 MUSD to the Green Climate Fund. This is the highest per capita contribution thus far. Naturally, we are also pushing for an ambitious, robust and long-lasting binding climate change agreement in Paris.

Sustainable water management is naturally also of the essence, and Sweden stands ready to contribute with both technical and financial support to solve the problems that many landlocked countries face.

Let me summarize my message today: LLDCs deserve access to global markets and goods. They merit strong international support and financing for all the priorities of the Vienna Program of Action.

On the part of landlocked countries themselves, the best recipe for development is to pursue a determined sustainable strategy for comparative advantage. 2015 offers opportunities for action on global development rarely seen before. The implementation of the Vienna Programme of Action has begun, and I would like to commend the work carried out by USG Acharya and his colleagues at UN-OHRLLS. Nonetheless, our continuous, common efforts are needed to keep the landlocked developing
countries on track for a future with well-deserved development and prosperity.

I thank you.