Mr. Chairman,
Excellencies,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

I am pleased to participate in this high-level forum on a subject of great importance to all of us.

2. I thank you, Mr. Chairman, for your commitment and leadership.

3. We greatly appreciate Zambia’s steadfast efforts and unwavering resolve to advance the cause of LLDCs, particularly during the very difficult negotiations on the post-2015 development agenda.

4. I also thank Under Secretary-General Acharya and his team at OHRLLS for their support and guidance.

Mr. Chairman,

5. Bhutan is a least developed country that is also landlocked. We face immense challenges.

6. However, we stand at the threshold of a new beginning defined by an ambitious and transformative agenda for sustainable development. This gives us cause to be optimistic and confident.

7. Likewise, the Vienna Program of Action addresses our special developmental challenges in a holistic manner.
8. Together, the 2030 Agenda and Vienna Program provide the normative framework and a roadmap to address our challenges - to help link LLDCs with global opportunities!

9. The focus must now shift to effective implementation underpinned by strong commitments from our development partners.

Mr. Chairman,

10. As an LLDC, there are two issues that are critical to spur economic growth:

   (i) Firstly, we need to enhance our capacity to produce goods and services; and

   (ii) Secondly, we need to develop the necessary infrastructure to facilitate economic growth.

11. Structural economic transformation has rightly been identified as a priority in the Vienna Program. Likewise, SDG-8 speaks to promoting sustained, inclusive and sustainable economic growth.

12. SDG-9 on building resilient infrastructure remains of strategic importance to LLDCs. The creation of a global infrastructure forum within the Addis Ababa Action Agenda is a welcome initiative, which will directly benefit the LLDCs.

13. We need to find new drivers of economic growth to diversify our economy and build productive capacities.
14. We need to put in place the necessary infrastructure to promote and sustain economic growth through improved connectivity and access to markets.

15. We need to create an enabling environment for trade, investment, income and employment generation and diversification of the economy.

16. This is fundamental to building strong and resilient economies - to overcome many of the challenges we face; to fully realize our potentials; and to integrate effectively into the regional and global economy.

17. At the same time, we must respect our environment. We cannot engage in wanton and indiscriminate exploitation of nature. Bhutan attaches high importance to the protection and conservation of the environment and has in fact forgone many developmental gains in view of its detrimental impact on the environment.

Mr. Chairman,

18. We have collectively defined our needs and priorities and adopted a blueprint on what needs to be done to overcome the challenges we face.

19. It is now time for us to focus on implementation by putting in place the right policies and creating the enabling environment for sustained progress.

20. However, given our circumstances and constraints, we cannot do this alone. The strong support and commitment of our development partners – bilateral and multilateral – including where
feasible, through public-private partnership is critical to realize the goals we have set for the next decade.

21. A new decade of development awaits us – one that holds promise of a better future for our peoples.

22. We must work in earnest and in a spirit of partnership and cooperation to realize our shared aspirations and to seize the opportunities that await us as a people and as a nation.

23. This new decade must be one that bridges the gap between the rich and poor, within and among nations.

25. A decade of united and collective action to address global challenges such as climate change.

24. And a decade where the special needs and challenges of the LLDCs are addressed in a robust manner so that we become land-linked to global opportunities.

25. Guided by Bhutan’s development philosophy of Gross National Happiness, my government remains committed to achieving self-reliance and inclusive economic development with poverty eradication as the overarching goal and priority.

26. In this endeavour, we look forward to the continued support of our partners as we undertake this developmental journey.

Thank you Mr. Chairman!