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Statement

By

H.E. Dr. Tedros Adhanom,
Foreign Minister of the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia

At

The High-Level Forum for LLDCs

September 28, 2015
New York
Mr. President,
Excellency, Under-Secretary-General Ambassador Gyan Chandra
Acharya,
Excellencies,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

Let me begin by expressing my gratitude to you Mr. President and your
delegation for convening this meeting of our Group.

I would also like to express the appreciation of my Government for the
crucial role your delegation played in articulating and promoting our
Group's interests in the critical negotiations that were concluded this year.

Let me also thank your Government for hosting the High-Level Follow-up
Meeting to the Second United Nations Conference on the LLDCs which
was held in Livingston last June. The meeting was extremely important to
discuss and conceptualize the way forward in implementing the Vienna
Programme of Action.

Mr. President,

This year's meeting of our Group is held at a critical and propitious time.
We have gathered in New York to commit to embark on a journey that
would change the course of development in the next 15 years. We set out
on this journey firmly believing that the new development agenda which is
an emblem for universality would ensure that no one is left behind in our
pursuit for sustainable growth, inclusiveness and preserving the
environment. And it is through this universality of the new development agenda that we have all managed to bring to the forefront our respective pressing development challenges with the view to gain from its achievement if it is implemented with vigour and firm commitment. We the landlocked countries are among those with whom the international community sets out on this critical journey of implementing the new development agenda.

It is abundantly clear, Mr. President, that the LLDCs have enormous development challenges that arise from our geographical constraint. Lack of direct territorial access to the sea, remoteness and isolation from world markets, cumbersome transit procedures and inadequate infrastructure are some of the critical ones that continue to hinder our progress and pose serious challenge to our hard-fought development gains. It is these pressing challenges of landlocked countries that led the international community to adopt the Vienna Programme of Action last year. The action programme, which is now also part of the new development agenda, sets clear objective with the aim to develop and expand efficient transit systems and transport development, enhance competitiveness of our countries, expand trade and bring about structural transformation. We need to implement these tasks if we are to collectively achieve not only the objective of the VPOA but that of the new development agenda. It is paramount that we make sure, as first business of order, that the programme of action and the SDGs are mainstreamed into our national development plans and strategies. And we
must exert all efforts to ensure that they are timely and effectively implemented.

In our pursuit to achieve this objective, equally, we need to forge strong partnership and cooperation among ourselves and with transit countries. In similar fashion, as much as the need to address our development bottlenecks requires our own efforts, there is no doubt that the support of our development partners is also crucial. Now that we are in the implementation phase of the outcomes of the various processes that were brought to a conclusion this year, we must stand united in our resolve to call on the international community to provide the necessary means of implementation. We must call for the timely implementation of the Addis Ababa Action Agenda that was agreed in July which contains critical deliverables and actionable commitments which compliment the means of implementation of the new development agenda. These are extremely paramount to for us the LLDCs.

Mr. President, Ethiopia suffers from the many disadvantages of landlockedness. Nevertheless, we are unswervingly engaged to pursue our development despite this constraint, and have now become one of the fastest growing economies in the world. We realise that the daunting task is to sustain the high economic growth we have enjoyed over the last decade. We have recently launched our ambitious second five-year Growth and Transformation Plan with the aim to continue our efforts of transforming our economy.
With regards to the VPOA, We have already integrated the Programme of Action into the national logistic strategies of the Maritime Affairs Authority. Furthermore, preparation to establish national program of action and the road map for the implementation of the Vienna Program of Action has also been finalized with the participation of the relevant ministries.

As part of our second five-year Growth and Transformation Plan, we continue to invest in our massive infrastructure programmes including on renewable energy. Our vision of becoming the region's power hub in the coming decade affords us, and the countries in the region, the opportunity to strengthen regional cooperation and integration through power infrastructure and to realise the objective of building a greener economy.

Likewise, we are extensively engaged in the construction of roads and railways with the aim of both enhancing the integration of different sectors within our economy and strengthening regional integration. I would like to specifically mention one flagship project which involves Ethiopia, Kenya and South Sudan - the Lamu Port and Lamu-Southern Sudan-Ethiopia Transport - LAPPSET. This project includes the construction of ports, railways, highways and pipelines worth $25 billion dollars. This project when completed, will not only transform the development of the region but also accelerate regional integration which can serve as a stepping stone for accessing regional and global markets. This collaboration with our neighboring and transit countries is a testimony to our commitment of
forging a partnership that can lead to a win-win situation which is critical to transform the lives of people in the region and achieve sustainable development.

In conclusion, Mr. President, we the LLDCs have much more to accomplish in the years ahead. We stand a better chance of overcoming the various development challenges that arise from the geographical barriers if we are determined to make our development sustainable, strengthen regional cooperation and forging strong partnership. The Vienna Programme of Action is our development roadmap that would help us achieve these objectives. Let's make sure that no one is left behind in our collective endeavour.

I thank you.