Republic of Zambia

STATEMENT

BY

HIS EXCELLENCY MR. EDGAR CHAGWA LUNGU
PRESIDENT OF THE REPUBLIC OF ZAMBIA

AT THE

OFFICIAL OPENING OF THE HIGH LEVEL FORUM FOR LAND LOCKED DEVELOPING COUNTRIES (LLDCS)

THEME: “LINKING LANDLOCKED DEVELOPING COUNTRIES TO GLOBAL OPPORTUNITIES”

CONFERENCE ROOM 1

15:00HRS-18:00RS.

NEW YORK

28TH SEPTEMBER, 2015
Excellencies,

President of the UN General Assembly,

Secretary-General of the United Nations,

Distinguished Delegates

I have the honour and privilege of addressing this High Level Forum for the Group of Landlocked Developing Countries in my capacity as Chair of the Group and further wish to evoke the need for us as Heads of State and Government to address the specific challenges faced by our countries based on the theme: *Linking Landlocked Developing Countries to Global Opportunities in order to deliver on our commitment of implementing the Vienna Programme of Action for the decade 2014-2024.*

Please allow me to extend a warm welcome to all our development partners, transit neighbours and friends, to this High-Level Forum. It is my firm conviction that with their strong support, partnership and solidarity, we will all progress together in this era towards the greater aspirations of human welfare and world prosperity.

Let me also take this opportunity to thank all the member states, Development Partners, the UN system and other international organisations as well as other stakeholders for coming to Livingstone, Zambia in June 2015 for the High-level Follow-up Meeting to the Second United Nations Conference on Landlocked Developing Countries which culminated into the *Livingstone Call* for the speedy and effective implementation of the Vienna Programme of Action.
Excellencies

We have an historic opportunity to move forward with the Vienna Programme of Action as well as the recently adopted 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and aligning national priority-setting, mobilisation of resources and the achievement of specific gains.

I am cognisant of the fact that persistent development challenges facing landlocked developing countries require an enhanced global partnerships for development that embrace all key facets of the means of achieving development, namely: adequate provision and mobilization of financing from all sources, domestic and international, public and private; the facilitation of fair and free trade; the development and transfer of reliable, affordable and modern technology on mutually agreed and beneficial terms; and capacity-building assistance as well as enabling institutional and policy environments at all levels, including continued and sustained international support to achieve internationally agreed goals.

Excellencies,

I wish to underscore the fact that the Vienna Programme of Action for Landlocked Developing Countries represents a comprehensive plan of action to address the special challenges and needs of our countries, and we are all committed to its implementation. However, we need resources and partnerships, including with our neighbouring transit countries, development partners, international institutions, the private sector, academia, think-tanks, and non-governmental organisations.
As already alluded to, my country, Zambia, was privileged and honoured to host in Livingstone, the first Ministerial Meeting to follow up on the Second United Nations Conference on LLDCs that highlighted actions needed to accelerate the implementation of the Vienna Programme of Action. This meeting provided great momentum for the Third International Conference on Financing for Development Conference that was held a month later in Ethiopia which adopted the Addis Ababa Action Agenda, a very promising political commitment for the achievement of sustainable development and eradication of poverty.

We are now here in New York to celebrate the 70th Anniversary of the founding of the United Nations and have agreed on an Agenda that should enable millions of people build a better future. For us, we have to ensure that none of the 450 million of our people in landlocked developing countries is left behind.

The Vienna Programme of Action is meant to transform our economies and to increase and sustain high levels of inclusive economic growth and sustainable development for all. In order to achieve this, one of the priority areas is building and modernising infrastructure, both soft and physical, ranging from telecommunications, transport, energy, water and sanitation. My country Zambia has, as an example, prioritised infrastructure development in the National Development Plans and the National Vision 2030. However, my Government has recognised that infrastructure development is an expensive venture which if left to Government alone cannot produce the desired results in good time. Therefore, in narrowing the financing gap, Zambia has opened its doors to the Private Sector to participate in the construction, rehabilitation, maintenance and financing of public infrastructure under the Public Private Partnership (PPP) arrangements. Projects to be procured range from roads, railways, airports, border support facilities,
energy, real estate and houses to agricultural and health services. The other financing option being considered is Contractor Financing.

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As we link LLDCs to global opportunities, there is need for value-addition to our products and we have to enhance the effectiveness of the value chain. In our sub-region, we have prioritised industrialisation as a means of increasing higher value exports and as a means of employment creation. This is the case for many other regions in our grouping as well.

The importance of international trade as an engine for development cannot be over-emphasised. Structural barriers and remoteness hinder landlocked developing countries` access to global markets. Additionally, capacity constraints are a limitation for landlocked developing countries` effective integration into the multilateral trading system. Therefore, our desire is that in Nairobi, in December 2015, World Trade Organisation (WTO) Members will commit and spare no effort in bringing the Doha Round of multilateral trade negotiations to a successful conclusion. The achievement of the sustainable development aspirations depends in part on the existence of a universal, rules-based, open, non-discriminatory and equitable multilateral trading system, which fully integrates the three pillars of sustainable development.

Excellencies

Another challenge affecting us is climate change which remains a great threat to our economies. Global warming above 1.5 degrees will significantly increase the impacts and damage from climate change. It is my sincere hope that specific requests of landlocked developing countries will be considered during the United
Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) COP 21 in Paris, in December 2015. We also hope for support towards the establishment of a Fund for LLDCs.

As a group, we have already noted the synergies between Disaster Risk Reduction (DRR) from Sendai, the Paris United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) COP 21 and the Ankara United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD) COP 12 outcomes in conforming to the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, and call for strengthened partnerships for the full implementation of these programmes.

As Zambia, I am happy that a number of initiatives have been embarked on, but I will only make reference to the partnership with the United Nations and the Finish Government that is promoting sustainable construction through the Zambia Green Jobs Programme and I look forward to more partnerships.

Excellencies

The Addis Ababa Action Agenda has already sent positive messages through the promise to increase financial resources in order to meet Sustainable Development objectives of developing countries, including landlocked developing countries. I furthermore call upon the other international organisations, regional organisations, development banks and the private sector to reinforce their support to promote growth, investment and sustainable development for LLDCs.

Excellencies,
I would like to commend the important role played by the United Office of the High Representative for Least Developed Countries, Landlocked Developing Countries and Small Island Developing States and the United Nations system-wide organisations in supporting landlocked developing countries. I wish to reiterate our call to the United Nations, in consultation with the international financial organisations, to strengthen monitoring mechanisms and coordinate the implementation of the Vienna Programme of Action, and in particular, develop transparent monitoring mechanisms to follow-up and measure progress.

As we already know, the Vienna Programme of Action is about renewing and strengthening partnerships between landlocked developing countries and transit developing countries; and between landlocked developing countries and their development partners. I am therefore, calling upon our transit neighbours, development partners, including international institutions and the private sector, to provide financial and technical support to our countries with a view of transforming them from landlocked to land linked countries.

I wish to encourage the member states on the need for promotion of dialogue, including at national and sub-regional levels in order to raise awareness and encourage the LLDCs and transit countries to mainstream the VPoA in their sectoral and national plans. There is need for Strengthened and revitalised partnerships with transit countries which will be key to alleviating key challenges faced especially in trade and transportation of goods for LLDCs. Policy options to explore better ways of deriving mutually benefiting transit agreements and bilateral mechanism between LLDCs and transit countries is necessary.
At the global and regional level, there is a need to promote accession by LLDCs and transit countries to major international conventions to facilitate trade and transportation in order to work towards solution to complete missing links in our railways and road transportation among LLDCs and Transit countries for effective regional trade and international trade.

As I end, please allow me to use this opportunity to inform you that Zambia will be hosting the 13th Edition of the Inter-Modal Transport Africa Conference and Exhibition from 28 to 30 October 2015 in Lusaka. This is the first time that such an event will be hosted by a Landlocked country. I hereby invite you to participate in this key Expo to explore business opportunities in the transport, construction and other sectors.

I thank you.