Statement by H.E. Mr. Tsakhia Elbegdorj,  
President of Mongolia at the High-Level Forum of Landlocked Developing Countries  

New York, September 28, 2015  

Your Excellency Mr. Edgar C.Lunngu, President of the Republic of Zambia and Chair of the Group of Landlocked Developing Countries,  

Mr. President of the General Assembly,  

Excellencies,  

Distinguished Delegates,  

Ladies and Gentlemen,  

First of all, I would like to extend to you and your delegation, Excellency, the congratulations of my country for the excellent manner in which you have been leading our group. I am confident that your team will continue to provide the necessary leadership to the group of LLDCs. Please be assured of the full support and cooperation of Mongolia.  

Excellencies,  

I believe ever since the adoption of Almaty Programme of Action, we have received the much needed recognition from the international community of our special needs and challenges. However, we still face difficulties that are so profound and complicated. Infrastructure, road, energy still remain underdeveloped in many LLDCs. Thus, an innovative action plan was needed to further the progress. We adopted the Vienna Programme of Action for Landlocked Developing Countries for the Decade 2014-2024, and it is in our hope that jointly we will be able to address our issues effectively and reflect our special needs and challenges in the formulation of the post-2015 development agenda. Our partnership, commitment and support to each other is a crucial essence in successfully implementing Vienna Programme of Action.  

Mongolia continues to attach utmost importance to the collective and coordinated efforts of the landlocked developing countries at every international event towards advancing their common interests and addressing the special needs of LLDCs. Our countries face serious constraints in their social-economic development endeavors due to their lack of territorial access to the sea and we all continue facing similar challenges in terms of the integration to international trade and transit transportation. Most of our countries including Mongolia continue facing 30-50% higher transport costs compared to representative coastal economies. Mongolia spends 6.2% of its entire GDP for transportation costs only.
It is precisely because of these constraints that we need to work together in a much more coordinated and dynamic manner. With this in mind the President of Mongolia has proposed the idea of having our own think tank in 2006. This idea became an initiative designed to enhance the analytical capability of landlocked developing countries in coordinating and substantiating our efforts to pool the best minds and mobilize targeted resources from the donor community to implement the Vienna Program of Action and achieve our respective goals agreed in the SDGs.

Excellencies,

2015 has been the year with notable successes and achievements in our foreign policy realm. Mongolia signed its first free trade agreement with Japan. This agreement opens up potentials not only to expand our trade relations with Japan, but also surge regional economic integration and gain actual economic value of our “Third Neighbor Policy”. We are confident that this EPA will become an essential instrument to promote the liberalization and facilitation of trade and investment between the two countries as it eliminates tariff and non-tariff barriers to trade, facilitates to trade and customs procedures and increases technology transfer from Japan.

At the initiative of Mongolia, for the first time, the Tri-partite Summit of the Heads of State of Mongolia, the Russian Federation and the People’s Republic of China took place during the Shanghai Cooperation Organization Summit in Dushanbe last year. The leaders of the three countries had the second Tri-partite Summit on the sidelines of the 15th SCO Summit in Ufa, Russia in July 2015. This newly established mechanism is crucial in establishing a favorable foundation to further enhancement of our cooperation and relations among three neighboring countries and providing coherent and harmonized regional policies to improve transit transport connectivity and ensure greater trade. We are of the view that this mechanism may transform Mongolia from being landlocked to land-linked.

Excellencies,

As we approach a new era of development thinking, the role of the International Think Tank for LLDCs on the discussions of the implementation of the SDGs becomes even more important to our Group. Mongolia has been assisting the International Think Tank financially as well as politically ever since it was launched in 2009. However, the operationalization of the International Think Tank to a full extent can only happen with your support and a Multilateral Agreement with at least 10 accessions, which would make the International Think Tank an Intergovernmental body.

I would like to encourage the distinguished members of the group to demonstrate leadership and ownership by acceding to the Multilateral Agreement on the Establishment of an International Think Tank for LLDCs in order to bring the ITT to its full operation. We sincerely hope that remaining members of our group will soon
become a party to the treaty with a view to fully operationalizing activities of the International Think Tank.

Like many landlocked developing countries Mongolia is impacted by climate change in a unique way. Climate change, land degradation, desertification, deforestation and drought pose a serious threat to the economic and social development and undermine our efforts towards the achievement of development objectives. It is my sincere hope that the outcome document of the Paris Summit will take due consideration of the special challenges faced by landlocked developing countries and provide us with adequate support to help to manage the negative climate change impacts.

In conclusion, may I express my delegation’s full endorsement of the draft Outcome document of this High Level Forum and its resolve to work together with fellow members towards its speedy implementation.

I thank you, Mr. Chairman.