H. E. Mr. Edgar Lungu, President of the Republic of Zambia,
H. E. Mr. Mogens Lykketoft, President of the General Assembly,
Your Excellencies Heads of State and Government, Honourable Ministers,
Mr. Under-Secretary-General, Distinguished Delegates,

I am very honoured to be representing the Government of Sweden at this important High Level Forum, and I would like to thank you, Mr. President, and the Government of Zambia for organizing it. Our gathering is indeed very timely, immediately following the adoption of the new 2030 Development Agenda.

Sweden had the pleasure to co-chair, together with the Lao People’s Democratic Republic, the negotiations in New York and Vienna last year, which resulted in the Vienna Programme of Action for Landlocked Developing Countries. The Programme, which has a holistic, forward-looking and action oriented approach, aims at achieving exactly the well-chosen theme for today’s High Level Forum: “to link Landlocked Developing countries into Global Opportunities”.

High-Level Forum of Landlocked Developing Countries
New York, 28 September 2015
Statement by Ambassador Per Thöresson
Our gathering here in New York therefore presents a great opportunity to renew our commitment to the implementation of the Vienna Programme of Action, and to mobilize support for the development of the Landlocked Developing Countries.

Mr. President,

We all know that LLDCs notoriously face vast distances and high transport costs to major markets. This disadvantage - “the tyranny of distance” - is particularly pronounced in land-locked countries with poor, fragile or conflict-prone neighbours. 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 durable partnerships cannot be overestimated. ODA 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, infrastructure and transport that still remain for landlocked countries. I am convinced that the private sector is increasingly realizing these great business opportunities.

When LLDCs and their partners met in Livingstone in June this year, 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.
My country has a long-standing history of development cooperation. Our ODA has doubled over the past ten years and will remain at one per cent of GDI. Many LLDCs are, and will continue to be, main recipients of this assistance, through bilateral as well as multilateral channels.

Mr. President,

2015 is indeed a unique year for multilateral action towards a better future for all of us. To ensure effective implementation of the Vienna Programme of Action, we need to give it due attention also in the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. We therefore warmly welcome that the Vienna Programme of Action and the special challenges of LLDCs are clearly recognized in the new Agenda.

In order to keep the international community’s 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. The aim is to mobilize support from development partners and transit countries and to keep the implementation of the VPOA high up on our agenda, and hence support the Livingstone Call For Action. Meetings like this one are crucial for us, as they give us a unique opportunity to hear your own priorities. This will help us in organizing upcoming meetings of the Friends of the LLDCs, on each of the priorities of the VPOA.
As we approach the COP21 Summit in Paris, we should not forget that many landlocked countries are among the most affected by climate change. Desertification, land degradation, drought and melting glaciers 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 and has contributed 580 MUSD to the Green Climate Fund. This is the highest per capita contribution to the fund.

Mr. President,

Let me summarize my message today: LLDCs deserve access to global markets and goods. You all merit strong international support and financing for all of the priorities of the Vienna Programme of Action. 2015 offers opportunities for action on global development which we have rarely, if ever, seen before. As the implementation of the Vienna Programme of Action has begun, I would also like to commend the work carried out so far by USG Acharya and his hard-working team at the OHRLLS.

This is a promising start, but 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, Mr. President.