Closing Remarks by Mr. Sandagdorj Erdenebileg, Chief, Policy Development, Coordination, Monitoring and Reporting Service, UN-OHRLLS

at the

Botswana National Workshop on the Vienna Programme of Action

29th October 2015
Gaborone
Madam Deputy Permanent Secretary
Distinguished Ladies and Gentlemen.

I would like to express my sincere thanks to you all on the successful conclusion of this Meeting. As I said before Botswana is the first country to undertake a national sensitization and mainstreaming workshop on the Vienna Programme of Action (VPoA). Your commitment as a country to implementing the VPoA and to achieving sustainable development is very impressive and commendable. This is the reason for success your country as I see strong endorsement by your Government on your national development.

I wish to commend you for successfully meeting the objectives that you had set for this meeting. You have undertaken a thorough analysis of what the Vienna Programme of Action means to Botswana at national level. You have mapped the actions of the programme with the relevant stakeholders that need to implement the priority areas. You have compared the programme to the existing Vision 2016 and National Development Plan 10 and have identified forward looking recommendations on how to mainstream the VPoA into the next National Vision 2036 and National Development Plan 11. You have sensitized stakeholders present here on the VPoA.

I am very confident that in this meeting you have come up with good basis to mainstream further the VPoA in all your relevant national processes, to fully implement the programme and monitor and report on its implementation.

Allow me to highlight a few observations on your process:

1. I commend you for your national commitment to tackle the challenges related to landlockedness and for your great interest to mainstream and fully implement the VPoA.
2. The mapping exercise that you undertook is very important as it is the basis for the national level action plan on the implementation of the VPoA and coordinating mechanism. The trade facilitation committee as a coordinating mechanism is a good thing – but you must also have contact persons in different ministries to liaise with the committee.
3. Your country is already implementing many actions related to the VPoA that came out in the discussions including the ratifying the WTO Trade facilitation Agreement, trade facilitation initiatives, export diversification drive, industrialization and many others.

4. Your partners – the regional organisations present here have identified areas where Botswana can benefit from deepening regional integration and cooperation with your neighbouring countries in building infrastructure, harmonizing policies, regulatory frameworks and border crossing procedures to ensure unhindered, efficient and reliable flow of goods and services.

5. As discussed in this meeting, implementing the VPoA requires adequate resources (both financial and technical). Domestic resource mobilization is important, and equally important is the need for scaled up international support - including ODA, Aid for trade, FDI and South-South cooperation. Drawing from the development institutions is also very important – the World Bank, the African Development Bank and others. The UN system organisations and other international and regional organisations such as the African Union, SADC, SACU, the Trans Kalahari Corridor and others are ready to provide support.

6. The role of the private sector is also important in implementing some of the priority areas of the VPoA such as infrastructure development – transport, ICT and energy. There is need therefore to create an enabling environment to foster private sector role. In particular, traders, freight forwarders and other private sector players need to be included in the implementation of the VPoA.

7. Reporting on how you are implementing the VPoA is very important. VPoA is result oriented and ambitious and specific on what needs to be done in order to attain the ambitious goals. It is therefore important to closely monitor and report on how you are implementing the programme.

In closing let me emphasize that it is my conviction that with the support and cooperation of your neighbours, the development partners, the UN system, international and regional organisations, and the private sector, your country will be able to implement the VPoA, the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, and Africa’s Agenda 2063 and this will help you to achieve your full development potential. Botswana is a good model that should be emulated by the other LLDCs.

It is also important for Botswana to be active at the regional and global levels. In this context I wish to encourage you to involve your missions in
Addis Ababa, Geneva and New York, updating them on the efforts that you are making in implementing the VPoA and advocating for support from the regional and global institutions.

I once again wish to sincerely thank you all for making this Meeting a great success, in particular the presenters who have shared with us rich information on how to mainstream the VPoA in Botswana. UN-OHRLLS looks forward to continue collaborating closely with you in the implementation of the VPoA.

I thank you.