



**Statement of Mr. Sandagdorj Erdenebileg, Chief, Policy
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Service, UN-OHRLLS**

at the

**Botswana National Workshop on the Vienna Programme of
Action**

**27th October 2015
Gaborone**

Ms. Ontlametse B. Ward, the Deputy Permanent Secretary of the Ministry of Trade and Industry

Distinguished Ladies and Gentlemen

I wish to thank the Government of Botswana and in particular The Ministry of Trade and Industry for organizing this workshop. Indeed Botswana is leading the way in conducting a national workshop to strategize on how to effectively implement and mainstream the VPoA into national planning. I also wish to thank all the participants for the commitment that they have made by coming to the workshop.

The landlocked developing countries face geographical challenges which constrain their trade potential and overall socio-economic progress. They face high trade and transport costs and are beset by other challenges linked to inadequate infrastructure, inefficiencies at border crossings and bottlenecks related to customs procedures.

As you may know, the international community gathered for the first time in 2003 in Almaty to address the special needs and challenges of the Landlocked Developing Countries. That Conference adopted the Almaty Programme of Action specifically aimed at addressing the special needs of the LLDCs that arise from being landlocked. After a decade of implementing the Almaty Programme, the LLDCs as a group had improved their share of world trade - the share of global exports increased from 0.5% in 2003 to about 1.2% in 2013 and their economic growth increased from 4.7% in 2003 to about 6% in 2013 albeit large diversity across the group and time. The LLDCs also made some advances in social

development including primary education, gender parity, representation of women in decision-making, and in stemming the spread of HIV/AIDS.

However despite the progress the LLDCs continue to face stark challenges. Transit transport infrastructure is still inadequate and inefficient and as a result transport costs are still the highest in the world. LLDCs export diversification and competitiveness remains limited, they lack up gradation in the value chain and their productive capacities are inadequate and as a result LLDCs are highly vulnerable to external shocks. They are also disproportionately affected by desertification, land degradation and drought because a large proportion of their lands are under dryland ecosystems. Desertification, Land Degradation and Drought foster food insecurity resulting in widespread water shortages, hunger and increased populations living in extreme poverty and exacerbates increased migrations, instability and other social crises.

Distinguished Ladies and Gentlemen

It is in this context that the Second UN Conference on LLDCs took place last November in Vienna, Austria and adopted the Vienna Programme of Action for the LLDC for the decade 2014-2024 which is the successor programme to the Almaty Programme of Action. The Vienna Programme of Action is a holistic and action-oriented plan with 6 specific goals and 21 time-bound results-oriented objectives in its 6 priority areas of fundamental transit policy issues, infrastructure development and maintenance, international trade and trade facilitation, regional integration and cooperation, structural economic transformation, and means of implementation. The specific objectives under these priority areas are to be

achieved through specific actions by LLDCs, transit countries and development partners.

The overarching goal of the programme of action is to address the special development needs and challenges of landlocked developing countries in a more coherent manner and contribute to sustainable and inclusive growth and eradication of poverty for more than 450 million people in the 32 landlocked developing countries.

The international community noted that in order to achieve better results at national level, there is need to mainstream the Vienna Programme of Action. Thus in paragraph 74 of the Programme of Action, LLDCs are invited to mainstream the implementation of the Programme into their national and sectoral development strategies. The Vienna Programme of Action also recommended the establishment of national coordination mechanisms that would facilitate its implementation and monitor and regularly report.

In this regard, I wish to commend your country for taking the initiative to sensitize all stakeholders concerned about the Vienna Programme of Action and consult each other on how to go forward on its implementation. I am confident that with this kind of follow-up, Botswana is well on its way to develop national and sectoral development strategies that fully integrate the Vienna Programme and that can yield desirable outcomes to convert her from being landlocked to become land-linked. Botswana has already made headway in implementing actions that are in the Vienna Programme of Action. For example you have led the way among the LLDCs in ratifying the WTO Trade Facilitation Agreement. The

agreement has potential to yield benefits to LLDCs, as it seeks to drive customs efficiency, lower trade costs, and reduce delays at border crossing.

Ladies and Gentlemen

Today's workshop also comes at a crucial time when the international community has just adopted the new global development framework – Transforming our World: the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development that is aimed at eradicating poverty and achieving sustainable development whilst ensuring that no one is left behind. And last July, the international community adopted the Addis Ababa Action Agenda. Both the 2030 Agenda for sustainable development and the Addis Ababa Action Agenda recognize the special needs and challenges faced by landlocked developing countries and stress the need for the international community to support the development efforts of the LLDCs.

There is great complementarity between the Vienna Programme of Action, the 2030 agenda and the Addis Ababa Action Agenda. They are all aimed at helping the LLDCs transform their economies and spur sustained social and economic progress. I am also happy to note that they are also in conformity with Africa's Agenda 2063 where you are focusing a lot on infrastructure development, trade integration, structural transformation and regional cooperation among others. The full implementation of these development programmes would result in greater success in the social, economic and environmental development pillars of the LLDCs. I encourage your country to forge strong coherence in implementing these global programmes.

National leadership and coherence is indispensable. But equally critical is international solidarity support for means of implementation. The LLDCs have clearly articulated the need for greater share of official development assistance and its catalytic role and stressed that together with trade, investment and technology will play a very important role in effectively implementing the Vienna Programme of Action.

Partnerships with transit countries, development partners, the UN system, the private sector and civil society will be indispensable towards raising the necessary resources for ensuring implementation and achieving effective results on the ground. We have to focus on action oriented partnerships, to make it a success. Our Office has been engaged in advocacy efforts within the United Nations as well as outside with international and regional financial institutions and bilateral development partners, north and south to deliver on the commitments made to the vulnerable countries.

Let me conclude by assuring you, that the United Nations as a whole and my Office in particular, will continue to support your efforts in the implementation and follow-up of the Vienna Programme of Action, the 2030 agenda for sustainable development, the Addis Ababa Action Agenda and Africa's Agenda 2063.

I wish you a successful workshop.

I thank you for your kind attention.