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Statement

by

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High Representative
for the Least Developed Countries, Landlocked Developing
Countries
and Small Island Developing States**

at

LLDCs Ambassadorial Meeting

New York

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The Chair of LLDCs, Excellences and Distinguished Delegates

I would like to thank H.E. Ambassador Kesese-Bota for inviting my Office to join your meeting and to update and consult with you on the activities that we have been undertaking in support of landlocked developing countries. From the outset, I would like to express my appreciation for the strong leadership that you have provided to advocate and raise the issue of LLDCS in the last one year. The year has been an extraordinary one in view of the many important decisions that were taken during the international conferences. I would like to congratulate you all for your collective efforts and also for the reflections of your interests and concerns in the important documents like AAAA and 2030 Agenda for sustainable development. We were also very happy to lend our full support in your work and advocacy efforts.

Your diligence and hard work have well highlighted that structural impediments that LLDCs face go beyond their lack of territorial access to the sea, and inadequate infrastructure. As it was reaffirmed in the Addis Ababa Action Agenda, addressing the special challenges and needs of LLDCs would require that their economies are adequately and structurally transformed. In addition, both the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction have amplified LLDC issues and proposed a set of global solutions that are comprehensive and holistic in nature.

I am confident that this momentum would be carried forward to the COP 21 Climate Conference in Paris, and the 10th Ministerial Conference of the World Trade Organization in Nairobi, Kenya. My Office is ready to provide the support in advocating your interests in these global processes.

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We have made significant progress since the Vienna Programme was adopted by the General Assembly last December. In order to achieve better results at all levels – global, regional and national, the Vienna Programme of Action calls for mainstreaming of the Programme into national and sectoral development strategies; into relevant programmes of the regional and sub-regional organizations; and into the programme of work of the governing bodies of the United Nations system. The UN Secretary General wrote to all

heads of state and government calling for that and also to regional and sub-regional organizations. We do hope that all LLDCs are working on mainstreaming the Vienna Programme of Action. I would like to thank the Government of Botswana for inviting us to co-organize a National Stakeholder Workshop on the Vienna Programme of Action that was held last month in partnership with its Ministry of Trade and Commerce. That workshop yielded important lessons on raising national awareness on the Vienna Programme of Action, strategies of how to integrate in the national development and sectoral plans and coordination of the implementation and monitoring and review that will inform similar events that we hope to undertake next year in different regions.

In an effort to support countries in mainstreaming the VPoA at the national level, we have prepared a draft report on how this could be accomplished. This document is still work-in-progress that will continue to evolve, reflecting lessons and feedback that we will gather from the national workshops.

At the regional level, the Africa (UN ECA) and Asia (ESCAP) regions have passed resolutions calling upon their member states to mainstream the VPoA at the annual sessions of their Commissions this year. I am also pleased to inform you that other UN Organizations have also made efforts to mainstream the VPoA including UNCTAD and ITC.

In April this year, we held the first meeting of the Inter agency Consultative group in where we consulted the United Nations agencies and relevant international organizations on the way forward for the implementation of the Vienna Programme of Action, including the preparation of a roadmap of activities by the agencies to implement the Vienna Programme of Action, mainstreaming of the VPoA into their work and identification of indicators for monitoring the implementation of the Programme. The meeting was quite successful. We are going to have another inter-agency meeting here in New York on the morning of 10 December 2015 to update each other and also to discuss the linkages between the 2030 Agenda for Action, the Addis Ababa Action Agenda, the WTO Trade Facilitation Agreement and the Vienna Programme of Action and how to build coherence among all of them.

Since one of the core mandates of the Office is to raise awareness and advocate with respect to the special needs of the LLDCs, whilst I was in

Geneva after the inter agency meeting, I also gave a briefing to all the UN Member States based in Geneva on the outcome of the Second United Nations Conference on Landlocked Developing Countries. In collaboration with the Chair and Bureau of the LLDC Group we undertook an advocacy mission to the World Bank in March. I have also made important follow up interactions with the agencies outside the United Nations like the WTO and the IRU among others, to raise their awareness and seek their support in the implementation of the Vienna Programme of Action. Working together with all the stakeholders, my Office will continue to advocate for the needs of the LLDCs and ensure a coordinated follow-up and effective monitoring of and reporting on the implementation of the Vienna Programme.

My Office has also supported the organization of important meetings on the LLDCs. For instance, the High-level follow-up meeting in Livingstone that was generously hosted by the Government of Zambia highlighted the need to double our efforts in implementing the Programme. Indeed, the Livingstone Call for Action has become an important reference document in various discussions related to the VPoA. I would like to thank the Government of Zambia as the Chair of the LLDC Group for organizing that meeting.

My Office supported the Chair in organizing the High-Level Interactive Panel on Financing for Infrastructure Development and Regional Integration that was held in the margins of the Addis Ababa Conference on Financing for Development and was chaired by the Minister of Finance of Zambia. The objective of that meeting was to link two priority areas of the Vienna Programme of Action - infrastructure development and regional integration - with the broader financing discussion and provided important recommendations.

I also wish to express my appreciation to this Group and to the Chair for inviting my office to participate in the High Level Forum of Heads of State and Government of LLDCs, at the opening of the seventieth session of the General Assembly. The level of engagement and the richness of the discussion that ensued underscored the commitment by your Governments to ensure that VPoA and the 2030 Agenda are integrated and fully implemented, and that the two processes achieve their stated objectives. That High-Level Forum sent a clear message that LLDC's issues matter. It also emphasized the importance that your Governments attach to the VPoA and its six priority areas.

I would also like to highlight another meeting that my office organized in collaboration with the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification that was held during the twelfth Conference of Parties of the UNCCD in Ankara Turkey, in October under the theme: Achieving Land Degradation Neutrality in LLDCs, Challenges and Opportunities.

In the context of Goal 15 target 3 of the SDGs that relates to land neutrality, and in view of the overarching objective of the Vienna Programme of Action, that meeting made several recommendations, including the establishment of the Land Degradation Neutrality Fund that would promote the rehabilitation of degraded land and support sustainable land use by providing adequate and long-term financing and technical assistance.

We will reiterate the same message during the 21st Conference of the Parties on Climate Change, in Paris, next month. In the margins of the Conference, my Office, with the collaboration of the Government of Zambia, Chair of the Group of LLDCs, will organize a side event on the theme of: Supporting of Climate Change Adaptation and Mitigation Needs for Landlocked Developing Countries. The event will be held on 6 December 2015, from 2pm to 5pm. I encourage all LLDC representatives to the conference to participate at the event and highlight once again how climate change affects economic development of our countries and how it will impact on the effective implementation of the Vienna Programme of Action. As you are aware, the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change acknowledges the vulnerability of all countries to the effects of climate change and has called for actions to mitigate and adapt climate change, especially in developing countries which lack the resources to do so on their own. We do hope that the climate change Agreement, to be adopted in the context of the COP 21 of the UNFCCC at the Paris Summit in December 2015, will take due consideration of the special challenges faced by landlocked developing countries and provide them with adequate support to help them manage the negative climate change impacts. Your Governments have received invitations to the event, as well as the concept note.

Excellencies and Distinguished Delegates

This year the Office prepared the first report of the Secretary-General on the implementation of the Vienna Programme of Action based on inputs provided by some member states, development partners, and UN and other international, regional and sub-regional organisations. The report indicates

that many of your countries are experiencing strong economic performance. However, as it also highlighted that real GDP per capita in 16 countries remains well below \$ 1,100 and the share of LLDCs' global merchandise trade has remained flat at 1.2 per cent. This insufficient trade performance highlights the unmet potential that needs to be exploited. Effective participation in international trade has implications on sustainable development, employment, value-addition and manufacturing, as well as a strong bearing on productivity and poverty eradication efforts.

The report also showed that ODA flows to LLDCs increased slightly - but remained well below the 2010 level, of \$26.5 billion. FDI receipts fell by 11 per cent - marking the first time that FDI flows to LLDCs have fallen in two consecutive periods. It is important that we continue to engage the international community for actions, so that this trend can be arrested since FDI plays a critical role in building up and strengthening the productive capacity, export growth, technology transfer, the diffusion of productive know-how, managerial skills and capital, and opening up of new markets among others.

The Office is currently undertaking regional studies on - Improving transit cooperation, trade and trade facilitation for the benefit of the LLDCs in the Africa, Latin America and Asian regions and synthesizing these reports into a global report. An Expert Group Meeting to review the reports and discuss the issues in more detail will be held from the afternoon of 10 December and whole day on 11 Dec 2015 here in New York. All the LLDCs have been invited to participate and contribute to the meeting.

Excellencies and Distinguished Delegates

As way forward allow me to highlight other important issues that we are paying attention to:

First, there is ongoing work to develop appropriate indicators to determine progress in the implementation of the Vienna Programme. This work is being undertaken through the Inter-Agency Group consultations. Preliminary outcome of this effort was presented during the Livingstone meeting as well as at the mainstreaming workshop in Gaborone, Botswana. We will make every effort to continue to share and work with you and see that this work is completed as soon as possible.

Second, there is a Member States-driven process to develop indicators related to the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. This work is expected to accelerate early next year. It is important that LLDCs continue to engage in these important deliberations. We on our part will provide the support for the process.

Third, climate change is an important issue for LLDCs as it is to other vulnerable groups of countries. I am confident that your Governments will engage with the partners during the COP21 Conference on Climate in Paris.

Fourth, I am grateful for an invitation from your Group through the Coordinator on trade and development issues to attend the LLDC Ministerial meeting during the upcoming Ministerial Conference of the World Trade Organization in Nairobi, Kenya. As indicated in the issue note of that meeting, it is imperative for LLDCs to explore means and ways through which they can deepen their global trade. It is instructive that several LLDCs were among the first countries to ratify the 2013 Trade Facilitation Agreement. There is a need to hasten this and other processes.

Fifth, I wish to underline the importance of bringing coherence in the implementation of the Vienna Programme of Action, the Addis Ababa Action Agenda and the 2030 Agenda for sustainable development. It is important that the LLDCs are able to mainstream, implement and report on all three in an integrated manner without duplication. It is also important to note that the High Level Political Forum will adopt a follow-up and review of the 2030 Agenda and will pay particular attention to vulnerable groups and countries in special situations. The ECOSOC Forum on Financing for Development which is mandated by the Addis Ababa Action Agenda will be launched during the current cycle of ECOSOC and the inaugural forum is expected to be held in the first quarter of next year.

I would like to reiterate that my office will continue deploying efforts to raise awareness towards development partners, including UN system institutions and international organizations, with a view to mobilizing support for the effective implementation of the Vienna Programme of Action and ensure that no one is left behind.

Let me conclude by once again thanking you for this opportunity.

I thank you.