United Nations Office of the High Representative for the Least Developed Countries, Landlocked Developing Countries and Small Island Developing States (UN-OHRLLS)

Statement

by

Mr. Gyan Chandra Acharya
Under-Secretary-General and High Representative for the Least Developed Countries, Landlocked Developing Countries and Small Island Developing States

at Retreat of the LLDCs Group
The Implications of the New Global Development Agenda for the LLDCs and the Way Forward

1 March 2016

Glen Cove Mansion Hotel and Conference Center,
Long Island, New York
H.E. Dr. Mwaba Patricia Kasese-Bota, Permanent Representative of Zambia to the United Nations and the Chair of the LLDCs

H.E. Mr. Jan Kickert, Permanent Representative of Austria to the United Nations,

H.E. Mr. Per Thöresson, Deputy Permanent Representative of Sweden to the United Nations

Mr. Lenni Montiel, Assistant Secretary-General of UN DESA

Ambassadors, Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen

I am pleased to welcome you to Glen Cove Mansion Hotel for this retreat of the LLDCs to discuss The Implications of the New Global Development Agenda for the LLDCs and the Way Forward.

The Vienna Programme of Action for the Landlocked Developing Countries was agreed upon by the international community in Vienna in November 2014 as a development blueprint for LLDCs for the period 2014-2024 and as an evolutionary successor programme of the Almaty Programme of Action. The VPoA reflects a holistic approach to the challenges faced by the LLDCs that are linked to their landlockedness including among many the high cost and difficulties in trading internationally; transit issues; inadequate infrastructure and limited connectivity; high commodity dependency; low productive capacities and the need to structurally transform their economies. It is important to remind us that effective implementation of the VPoA’s six priority areas of fundamental transit policy issues; infrastructural development and maintenance; international trade, and trade facilitation, regional integration and cooperation, structural economic transformation and means of implementation, will indeed help to achieve rapid, inclusive and sustained economic growth along with poverty reduction for the more than 470 million people in the 32 LLDCs.
Last year we witnessed the adoption of important outcomes which now define our development trajectory for the next 15 years. These include the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015-2030; the Addis Ababa Action Agenda; the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development; Paris Agreement on climate change and the WTO Nairobi Ministerial among others.

These outcome documents have important supportive provisions for the LLDCs, thanks to the collective efforts lead by the LLDCs. Let me just highlight a few synergies. Both the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the Addis Ababa Action Agenda recognize the special challenges and needs of LLDCs and underscore the importance of the implementation of the VPoA. The World Leaders noted that the VPoA is integral to the 2030 Agenda.

It is important that the VPoA and global programmes are taken together, as they complement each other. Besides universal goals of poverty eradication, education and health for all, there are some specific goals of importance to LLDCs including SDG 9 that calls for sustainable and resilient infrastructure development; SDG 7 on energy; and SDG 10. The 2030 Agenda also calls for provision of capacity-building support on statistics for developing countries including LLDCs, including the strengthening of national data systems and evaluation programmes; promotion of inclusive and sustainable industrialization; significant increase in the exports of developing countries; provision of trade-related capacity-building to developing countries, including LLDCs; and promotion of regional economic integration and interconnectivity.
The Paris Agreement is a landmark agreement. The effective implementation of the agreement will help the LLDCs to build their resilience to climate change impacts such as desertification, land degradation, recurrent droughts, and flooding, including glacial lake outburst floods. The Sendai Framework calls for adequate, sustainable and timely provision of support, including through finance, technology transfer and capacity-building to countries (including LLDCs) facing specific disaster risk challenges.

You may also recall that the 2013 WTO Ministerial conference adopted the Bali Package that includes the Trade Facilitation Agreement which will have a great impact on effective transit procedures and if fully implemented will be beneficial to the LLDCs.

In December 2015, at the WTO ministerial conference in Nairobi, members agreed on the Nairobi Package. One of the important elements of the Nairobi Package is the Ministerial Decision on the elimination of agricultural export subsidies which is particularly significant in improving the global trading environment for the LLDCs. The LLDC Group also held a ministerial meeting in the margins of the Tenth Ministerial Conference that adopted a communique that has important pronouncements such as request for a specific Work Programme for LLDCs in the WTO, ratification and implementation of the trade facilitation agreement and mainstreaming and implementation of the Vienna Programme of Action.

Excellencies

Now that the global development agenda is in place, now is the time for implementation. As you know OHRLLS is mandated to mobilize and
coordinate international support for the effective implementation of the VPoA; to advocate and raise awareness on the special needs of the LLDCs; and to report on the implementation of the VPoA at national, regional, global levels including UN system.

Just to recapitulate some of the important events:

1. UN Secretary General’s letter to all for implementation;
2. Livingstone Call for Action adopted in Zambia. I wish to thank the Government of Zambia for hosting the meeting and the Government of Sweden for providing resources to organise the meeting.
3. ECA and ESCAP passed resolutions on the VPoA and UNCTAD, and ITC have specific programmes on LLDCs.
4. The LLDCs’ High-Level Forum of Heads of State and Government at the 70TH session of the General Assembly.
5. Inter-agency Consultative group on LLDCs meetings and development of indicators.
6. Dedicated meeting on transit issues.
7. The visit to the World Bank with the LLDC Bureau.
8. Side events held in collaboration with UNCCD and UNFCCC during their Conference of Parties (COP) meetings.

Excellencies

Looking ahead, 2016 marks the beginning of a new biennium for the programmed work of the office. In this coming 2016/2017 biennium, the Office will focus on issues related to implementing the VPoA. Some of the issues include meetings and studies on the WTO trade facilitation agreement on LLDCs; review of the progress in the implementation of the Vienna
Programme of Action; achieving structural transformation in LLDCs; assisting LLDCs to join global value chains; regional workshops on transit issues and identifying measures to enhance the role of the private sector in implementing the Vienna Programme of Action.

We have a few meetings that are in the pipeline. These include: The meeting of LLDC Ministers responsible for Trade. I wish to thank the Government of Netherlands for their support towards this initiative. The Senior Officials Meeting on Promoting Sustainable Energy for all in LLDCs will be held in Vienna, Austria, towards the later part of the year. I wish to thank the Government of Austria for their support towards this initiative. We are also organizing regional workshops on transit transport conventions and the benefits of accession in Africa and Asia.

There are also several important upcoming fora that address development issues that are relevant to the LLDCs. Including - the Fourteenth session of the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD 14); The High-Level Political Forum which will pay particular attention to vulnerable groups and countries in special situations; the ECOSOC Forum on Financing for Development; the 2017 Special Global Expo in Astana, Kazakhstan under the theme “Future Energy” and among others.

Against this background, this retreat is very timely. It gives us a valuable opportunity for the LLDC Group to reflect on: Where do we stand at the moment in terms of the new global development agenda? What are the synergies and opportunities that we can tap from? Where are the gaps? How can the international community build coherence at all levels to ensure that they can deliver meaningful outcomes for the LLDCs?
Today’s programme comprises of 4 main sessions. After this opening session, we will review the follow-up processes, implementation and coherence between the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, the Addis Ababa Action Agenda and the Vienna Programme of Action. In the second session, we will review how we can build coherence in the indicators for monitoring the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, Addis Ababa Action Agenda and the Vienna Programme of Action.

In the third session, we will deliberate on how to enhance the legal framework for Transit Cooperation particularly on how Member States can become party to the important legal instruments on trade and transport facilitation. Last and not least, the fourth session will cover the way forward to ensure that we will implement what we will discuss here today.

I wish to encourage you to openly and frankly discuss the issues and I count on you to bring your best ideas to our discussions so we can make a difference for the LLDCs and our common future.

Let me conclude by stressing that the UN system is ready to do its utmost to support your efforts to effectively implement the 2030 Agenda and the VPoA and bring synergy and coherence to a new level. At the end of the day what we are looking for is bringing about change in the lives of about 470 million in LLDCs through effective implementation of such programmes of action and agenda in the years ahead.

I thank you.