

Statement by H.E. Mr. Michiel den Hond, Ambassador at Large and  
Special Representative of the Minister of Foreign Affairs of the  
Kingdom of the Netherlands

Excellencies,

Ministers of Trade, dear distinguished partners; thank you, Ambassador Acharya. It is my pleasure to address you here during this fifth meeting of Trade Ministers of Land-locked Developing Countries.

First of all, I would like to thank our close partners here today: Zambia as global chair of the LLDCs, The United Nations Office of the High Representative for the Least Developed Countries, Landlocked Developing Countries and Small Island Developing States for organizing this important event... and of course the WTO for hosting this meeting and Director-General Azevêdo for his substantive opening remarks!

Trade is important! Due to trade, the Netherlands flourished, and trade spurred our development, boosted our knowledge and our expertise. It strengthened our competitiveness and enhanced our general welfare.

Trade and investment relations between developed countries and developing countries, land-locked or otherwise, are rapidly intensifying.

More attention is being given to ensuring that trade will lead to inclusive and sustainable economic growth.

Global value chains have helped stimulate growth and investment, helping to lift millions of people out of extreme poverty and towards a better existence. And it doesn't stop here. These chains also facilitate the transfer of knowledge, and stimulate development.

Moreover, integration into the multilateral trading system and into global value chains can contribute to good governance and strengthen respect for human rights.

The Kingdom of the Netherlands is one of the first countries to effectively link the policy areas of aid and trade. There's one minister for both portfolios. To stress our commitment, the Dutch government invests heavily in the Aid for Trade Agenda. After the UK, France and Germany, we are the largest European donor to this cause. Many programs, like the Advisory Center on WTO Law, the Netherlands Trainee Program and our support to the WTO's Trade Facilitation Agreements, are examples of this commitment. We want to be a partner in enabling developing countries to take part in the multilateral trading system as much as we do.

We acknowledge that many LLDCs are still not reaping the benefits of the global trading system. Or they still benefit too little. Therefore, we

fully support The Vienna Programme of Action to create equal opportunities for all. It is about the delivery of the Addis Ababa Action Agenda, the SDGs, the Paris Climate Agreement, the WTO Trade Facilitation Agreement and the recent WTO Nairobi Package. But ultimately it is the concrete and integrated implementation of these agreements on the ground that will lead to sustainable and fair growth. From Astana to Kathmandu, and from Amsterdam to Ouagadougou.

We recognize that LLDCs face a specific set of concrete and practical challenges when it comes to integrating in the global trade system. This is why we committed €150 million for 2015-2016 to our Development Related Infrastructure Investment Vehicle, which facilitates investments in infrastructural projects. This is also why we made a substantial financial contribution to this conference, to facilitate the exchange of knowledge and experience.

I hope this meeting will provide an opportunity to critically discuss the challenges, and even more so the opportunities, that the future holds. I hope we can share ideas and good practices in order to successfully deploy the trade potential of LLDC's and ensure that trade works for all.

Thank you.