Ministry for Foreign Affairs of Sweden

FIFTH MEETING OF TRADE MINISTERS OF LANDLOCKED DEVELOPING COUNTRIES, 23-24 JUNE 2016

HARNESSING THE TRADE POTENTIAL OF THE LLDCS TO IMPLEMENT THE VIENNA PROGRAMME OF ACTION FOR LLDCS AND 2030 AGENDA FOR SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

Opening session statement by Ms Veronika Bard, Ambassador and Permanent Representative of Sweden to the United Nations in Geneva

(Mme/Mr. Chair), Mr. Under-Secretary-General, Mr. Director-General, Excellences, ladies and gentlemen, dear friends

I am very honoured to be representing Sweden at this important fifth meeting of LLDC trade ministers, and I would like to thank you, USG Acharya and Director-General Azevêdo, and your teams for organizing it.

Following the adoption of the 2030 Agenda, the Paris Agreement on climate change, as well as the global trade agreement in Nairobi, this is indeed a timely occasion for us to meet and take stock on how to interpret these agreements in the light of the landmark Vienna Programme of Action.
Sweden had the pleasure to co-chair, together with the Lao People’s Democratic Republic, the negotiations in New York and Vienna 2014, which resulted in the historic Programme of Action. Needless to say, transit and trade issues were central to these negotiations from day one. After the negotiations, Sweden has also taken the initiative to form the special Group of Friends of the LLDCs in New York.

We truly see the Vienna Programme of Action as quite unique in its holistic, forward-looking and action oriented approach, clearly recognizing the particular vulnerabilities of the landlocked developing countries. Sweden warmly welcomes the recognition of the Vienna Programme of Action and the special challenges to the LLDCs being clearly articulated in the 2030 Agenda, as well as in the Addis Ababa Action Agenda on development financing.

When looking at the new development agenda, Sustainable Development Goal 17 on global partnerships includes a strong section on trade, including the facilitation of market access and increase of exports for developing countries. It provides a very concrete example of an important connection between the Vienna programme of Action, and the 2030 Agenda, and the potential of trade for development.

(Mme/Mr. Chair) Friends,

The importance of building endurable partnerships when fighting the “prison of geography” LLDCs face cannot be overestimated. ODA will remain a foundation of international development. At the same time, the importance of regional and triangular cooperation is ever increasing.

Sweden has a long-standing history of development cooperation. Our ODA has doubled over the past ten years and will remain at one per cent of GDI.
Many LLDCs are, and will continue to be, main recipients of this assistance, through bilateral as well as multilateral channels. We continue to see Aid for Trade as a central concept for strengthening the capacities for developing countries to become more efficient and successful actors on the world market. It’s plain to see that many LLDCs face extraordinary challenges, not least with supply side constraints such as those related to lack of proper infrastructure.

The private sector’s role in fulfilling demands is key, not least considering the vast needs in areas such as telecommunications and transport that still remain for landlocked countries. Sweden hopes that SDG17 on partnerships will provide a strong mandate for solutions customized for the needs of the LLDCs.

(Mme/Mr. Chair) Friends,

Sweden sees the Paris Agreement on climate change as indivisibly linked to the 2030 Agenda. Trade also intersects with climate change in a multitude of ways, and the climate perspective must always be present when addressing trade issues. It’s sometimes easy to forget that many landlocked countries are among the most affected by climate change.

It is clear that the landlocked developing countries have a continuous need of their fair share of climate financing. Sweden is working hard with all the climate funds to make resources for adaptation and mitigation more easily accessible.

(Mme/Mr. Chair) Friends,

The Nairobi trade agreement was a major success for countries such as Sweden, heavily dependent on foreign trade, and LLDCs alike, and we can
only hope that it will revitalize further negotiations on world trade. Needless to say, the implementation of the Trade Facilitation Agreement from Bali remains essential for the future of the economic development for LLDCs.

The landlocked developing countries need support on the ground to ratify or accede to trade and transport related conventions. We encourage active LLDC-participation in the upcoming Treaty Event, which will be held from 19 to 23 September at the UN headquarters in New York, and we are looking into ways of being of further assistance.

(Mme/Mr. Chair) Friends,

The aim of the “Friends of the LLDCs - Group” in New York is to mobilize support from development partners and transit countries and to keep the implementation of the Vienna Programme of Action high up on the international agenda. A meeting like this one offers great opportunities to increase the attention on a Geneva level, as well as a unique opportunity for a constructive dialogue on your own priorities.

As the implementation of the Vienna Programme of Action has now been going on for well over a year, I would like to conclude by once again commending the work carried out by USG Acharya and his hard-working team.

We are off to a promising start, but our continuous, common efforts are needed to keep the Landlocked Developing Countries on track for a future with well-deserved sustainable development and prosperity.

I thank you.