As delivered

Statement

by

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At the Fifteenth Annual Ministerial Meeting of Foreign
Ministers of Landlocked Developing Countries
Time: 10:00am – 1:00pm

Venue: Conference Room 5, UN HQ, New York
22 September 2016
• H.E. Mr. Munkh-Orgil Tsend, Minister for Foreign Affairs of Mongolia and Vice Chair of the Group of Landlocked Developing Countries
• Honourable Ministers,
• Ms. Helen Clark, Administrator of UNDP,
• Mr. Wu Hongbo, Under-Secretary-General of DESA,
• Excellencies,
• Distinguished Delegates,
• Ladies and Gentlemen,

It is a great privilege to participate in this Ministerial Meeting with the theme “Harnessing coherence in the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the Vienna Programme of Action”. This theme is very timely as we strive ahead with the implementation of the Vienna Programme of Action and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. The Addis Ababa Action Agenda supports and complements the 2030 Agenda and helps to contextualize its means of implementation targets with concrete policies and actions.

The VPoA is a holistic development framework that reflects a commitment of the international community to help the world’s 32 LLDCs tackle landlockedness. Its priority areas have been made comprehensive and holistic for the first time: fundamental transit policy issues; infrastructure development and maintenance; international trade and trade facilitation; regional integration and cooperation; structural economic transformation; and means of implementation.
Both the 2030 Agenda and the Addis Ababa Action Agenda recognize the special needs of LLDCs. The 2030 Agenda states that the implementation of the VPoA is integral to the new Agenda. All the 17 SDGs are relevant for the LLDCs in their pursuit of sustainable development. The VPoA addresses the specific needs of the LLDCs and its effective implementation in coherence with the SDGs is instrumental for a transformative change in the LLDCs.

I would like to underscore the importance of fostering coherence at all levels, national, regional and international in order to maximize the sustainable development outcomes for the LLDCs. We witnessed in July, the High-Level Political Forum as it gave particular attention to vulnerable groups and countries in special situations. It is an important forum for the LLDCs to bring up your special needs.

The global infrastructure forum is another follow-up process that has great relevance to the infrastructure needs of the LLDCs. I participated and presented the infrastructural needs of LLDCs in the inaugural Forum which was held in Washington DC. The Forum will be hosted in the future by different development banks and I strongly encourage the LLDCs to actively participate in the Forum and to advocate for dedicated funding or special facilities to help bridge the infrastructure gap.

There is also need to build coherence in the implementation of the VPoA with the other development processes including: The Paris Agreement on Climate Change, the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction, the Nairobi Package of the Tenth Ministerial Conference of the WTO, the WTO Trade Facilitation Agreement, outcome of UNCTAD 14, the
outcomes of the Humanitarian Summit and Refugees and Migrants Summit and others.

Honourable Ministers, Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen

We are almost two years into the implementation period of the Vienna Programme of Action and coherence with the SDGs. Effective implementation of the Vienna Programme of Action hinges on the ability to successfully mainstream it into national and sectoral development plans and into the programme of work of regional and international organizations. OHRLLS is gearing up its efforts towards this direction.

At the regional level, the Thirty-Sixth Session of Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean, this May adopted a resolution on mainstreaming the implementation of the VPoA in the region. Similar resolutions were adopted in the Africa and Asia Pacific regions at their Commission sessions. Furthermore some UN entities have also integrated the implementation of the VPoA into work programmes.

Let me provide some highlights based on the Report of the Secretary General. On fundamental transit policy issues; progress is being made in the ratification of the WTO Trade Facilitation Agreement. To date 10 LLDCs and 15 transit countries that are WTO members have ratified the agreement. The LLDCs have a lot to benefit from the agreement and I sincerely urge countries that have not yet done so to consider ratifying the agreement as soon as possible in order to ensure that it comes into force as soon as possible. It is a legal agreement that will help strengthen and facilitate international trade of LLDCs. There are also important UN relevant international conventions that support cooperation between
LLDCs and transit countries on transit and trade facilitation such as the TIR and Harmonisation conventions that I wish to encourage LLDCs and transit countries that have not yet done so to ratify.

With respect to infrastructure development and maintenance, LLDCs and transit countries in cooperation with their development partners continue to make efforts to expand and upgrade their road transport infrastructure and infrastructure at border crossing points. Mobilization of additional resources for infrastructure development is critical to complement the domestic efforts of the LLDCs.

With regards to trade, the share of exports of LLDCs in global exports continued to fall in 2015 to just 0.96% from 1.21% in 2011, largely due to a sharp decline in commodity prices. This indicates a continued marginalization of a large number of LLDCs from the global trading system and the need to harness all efforts to reverse this trend. In addition, greater efforts are needed to support the LLDCs to diversify their exports, promote value-addition and connect to international and regional value chains.

On regional integration and cooperation, LLDCs are party to, on average, 3.8 regional trade agreements which shows their commitment to improved connectivity, market expansion and increased trade potential. It is important that these regional agreements are effectively implemented. Furthermore trade facilitation initiatives that have proved to be effective should be scaled up and replicated.

On structural economic transformation it is important to note that the trends in the value-added of agriculture and manufacturing sectors as a
percentage of GDP in the LLDCs have continued to decline underscoring the need to build proactive capacities and nurture industrialisation.

On Means of implementation, in 2014, net ODA to LLDCs decreased slightly by 1% compared to 2013. ODA remains the main source of external finance, accounting for 5% or more of gross national income in 15 LLDCs. FDI inflows to LLDCs fell slightly by 3% in 2014. The means of implementation to support the LLDCs’ efforts in implementing the VPoA and towards achieving the SDGs remains critical.

The UN system and international and regional organisations continue to undertake joint work to ensure the effective implementation of the VPoA. OHRLLS recently jointly organised the Fifth meeting of Trade Ministers of LLDCs in collaboration with the WTO in June in Geneva where a forward-looking declaration was adopted. Similarly an LLDC trade Ministers meeting was organized just before the Nairobi meeting of UNCTAD. OHRLLS also organised a side event during the HLPF in collaboration with UNIDO and the Group of Friends of LLDCs on “Leaving no country behind: sustainable industrialization and infrastructure to support the LLDCs”.

We also have a few meetings that are in the pipeline. The high-level meeting on sustainable transport of LLDCs being organised in cooperation with DESA and Government of Bolivia will be held in Santa Cruz, Bolivia next month. The meeting will define strategies, initiatives and recommendations on how to improve transit transport infrastructure and sustainable transport systems for increased and facilitated connectivity of the LLDCs. The outcomes of the meeting will feed the perspectives of the LLDCs to the global conference on sustainable
transport to be held in November 2016 in Turkmenistan. I would particularly like to call on all the LLDC Ministers to ensure that the transport ministers are present there. I am coming just now from a courtesy call on President Eva Morales, who himself expressed his personal commitment and involvement for the success of the ministerial event.

The High-Level Seminar on Accelerating Sustainable Energy for All in Landlocked Developing Countries through Innovative Partnerships to be held in Vienna also next month will come out with strategies for harnessing partnerships and initiatives at national, regional and international levels to contribute towards accelerating sustainable energy for all in LLDCs and the implementation of the Vienna Programme and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. We hope that this meeting will be linked to Kazakhstan’s 2017 Special Global Expo to be held in Astana, under the theme “Future Energy”.

The Government of Vietnam has offered to host a High-Level Meeting for the Euro-Asia Region on Improving Cooperation between LLDCs and Transit Countries on Transit, Trade Facilitation and the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development to be held in the early part of 2017. We intend to organise similar regional level meetings for other groups next year.

I call upon all LLDCs to actively participate in these meetings.

In conclusion, I would like to stress that the Vienna Programme of Action has ambitious goals and specific objectives to be achieved and they also need to achieve the transformational SDGs. I am hopeful that if all parties
fulfil their commitments, these goals can be achieved. You can rest assured that my office will do its best to carry out its mandate in support of the full, effective and timely implementation of the Vienna Programme of Action and to assist the LLDCs in fostering coherence with the 2030 Agenda and the other development frameworks.

Finally, I wish to express my sincere thanks and deep appreciation to the Government of Zambia, Chair of the LLDCs Group and the Bureau (Mongolia, Niger, Rwanda, Bhutan, and Bolivia) for their able leadership of the Group and to the Government of Paraguay for coordinating the trade and development matters of the Group in Geneva.

I thank you for your attention.