Honorable Ministers,

Mr. Gyan Chandra Acharya, Under-Secretary-General and High Representative for LDCs, LLDCs and SIDS, UN-OHRLLS

Ms. Helen Clark, Administrator of UNDP

Dr. Mukhisa Kituyi, Secretary-General of UNCTAD

Mr. Wu Hongbo, Under-Secretary-General of DESA

Excellencies and distinguished delegates,

Ladies and gentlemen,

Let me begin by expressing our high appreciation to our colleagues from Zambia for their excellent stewardship of our Group in New York over the recent years.

I wish to also commend the continued support extended by Under-Secretary-General Acharya and his office to LLDCs.

Excellencies,

We are gathering at a critical time when the effective implementation the Vienna Program of Action for LLDCs has become the order of the day.
National, regional and global implementation of the Vienna Program of Action (VPA) needs to be closely aligned with the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development\textsuperscript{1} and the Addis Ababa Action Agenda\textsuperscript{2} on financing for development.

LLDCs continue to face considerable challenges inherently linked to their geographical handicap. In addition, LLDCs are among the hardest hit by the global economic slowdown, failing commodity prices, food and energy shortages along with serious impact of climate change. These challenges do not only affect economic growth, but have major implications for social and environmental aspects of development thus affecting the implementation of both the VPA and respective SDGs of LLDCs.

LLDCs remain largely marginalized in the global economy. Their combined share in global exports stood at 1.2 percent in 2014, with commodities accounting for the bulk of exports. Increased international assistance for export diversification, value-addition, infrastructure development, institutional and productive capacity-building and better market access are essential for LLDCs.

We endorse the decision of our trade ministers to set up a specific Work Program for LLDCs by its 11\textsuperscript{th} WTO Ministerial Meeting. The Work Program should address specific needs of LLDCs in order to increase their participation in the Multilateral Trading System with key areas on Trade facilitation, Aid for trade, Services and Accession.

We also encourage an expeditious ratification and implementation of the WTO Trade Facilitation Agreement. On our part, we have submitted the Agreement to the Parliament for ratification at its autumn session.

Excellencies,

\textsuperscript{1} http://www.un.org/ga/search/view_doc.asp?symbol=A/RES/70/1&Lang=E
Sub-regional and regional cooperation play an important role in advancing the VPA objectives.

During the tripartite Summit meeting between Mongolia, China and Russia last June in Tashkent, we signed an agreement on establishing an economic corridor and a customs cooperation agreement between the three countries. Mongolia proposed to establish in Ulaanbaatar an Investment Center to mobilize funding and a Regional Cooperation Planning Center to carry out coordination and feasibility studies for projects along the economic corridor.

Furthermore, Mongolia together with its two neighbors – Russia and China - is now in a final stage of finalizing an Intergovernmental Agreement on International Road Transport along the Asian Highway Network\(^3\). It will, once concluded, become a historic trilateral transit agreement we have been working on for almost two decades.

As part of its efforts to join regional economic integration, Mongolia has successfully concluded negotiations with all 6 participating States of the Asia-Pacific Trade Agreement (APTA). We expect the domestic ratification process to be complete by the end of this year.

Excellencies,

At the national level, Mongolia is committed to implementing the relevant goals set forth in the 6 priority areas of the VPA. They are reflected in our national development strategy, including the 2030 Sustainable Development Vision and the Government’s Action Program for 2016-2020.

In April this year, our Ministry together with the International Think Tank and the UN Office of the High Representative for the LDCs (Least developed countries), LLDCs and SIDS (Small Island Developing States) organized in Ulaanbaatar a national workshop

\(^3\) [http://www.parliament.mn/laws/projects/899](http://www.parliament.mn/laws/projects/899)
on the VPA's implementation. Representatives of relevant line ministries, private sector and academia learned about the specific means of mainstreaming the VPA into national and sectoral development plans in the areas of transit issues, infrastructure development, trade and trade facilitation, structural transformation and commodity value chains. It should be underscored that sample VPA indicators, prepared by the High Representative Office, proved to be most useful, adjusted to a national context, in monitoring a country's progress in implementing the program of action over the years.

Excellencies,

Mongolia is a host to the International Think Tank (ITT) for landlocked developing countries, formally launched by the UN Secretary-General in July 2009.

The initiative has been receiving strong support in different international fora. In March 2010, the General Assembly welcomed the establishment of the International Think Tank for LLDCs in its resolution A/RES/64/214 and UNDP is currently implementing a joint project with the Government of Mongolia on its operationalization.

The Government of Mongolia has provided financial contribution of 1 million USD to the ITT to carry out its activities and research in the interim period. Hence, the ITT has been conducting home-grown research, publishing reports and handbooks and organizing various international conferences with a view to enhancing analytical capacity and visibility of LLDCs.

The research agenda of ITT has included so far reports and studies on trade facilitation, a handbook for LLDCs on multilateral trade negotiations, post-Bali institutional environment, transit transport, sea access, case studies and ICT development and disaster resilience, that have been launched at various conferences and networking events. Here, I wish to draw the kind attention of the fellow countries to a research in the pipeline on “Economic diversification of LLDCS: Case of Mongolia, Nepal, Bhutan
and Paraguay" to be shortly commissioned by the Perez-Guerrero Trust Fund as an important South-South cooperation undertaking by the ITT.

In order to fully utilize the potential of this institution we, as a group, need to actively work towards early entry into force of the Multilateral Agreement for the Establishment of the International Think Tank for LLDCs. We remain short of two signatories and five ratifications

Taking this opportunity, I would like to express my sincere gratitude to the Governments of Afghanistan, Armenia, Kazakhstan and Laos for ratifying the Multilateral Agreement. I would also like to encourage the Governments of Ethiopia, Niger and Paraguay for an early completion of their respective ratification process.

On behalf of the Government of Mongolia I wish to reiterate the call of the Ministerial Communique we are adopting today, encouraging all LLDCs to join the Multilateral Agreement so that the International Think Tank becomes a full-fledged international organization.

Once fully operational, the Think Tank will undoubtedly become an effective instrument to defend our joint interests and advance our common agenda to fully and effectively implement both the Vienna Program of Action and the 2030 Sustainable Development Agenda.

Thank you for your attention.

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4 Currently eight countries (Afghanistan, Armenia, Kazakhstan, Ethiopia, the Lao PDR, Mongolia, Niger and Paraguay) have signed the agreement out of which five have ratified it – namely Afghanistan, Armenia, Lao PDR, Mongolia and Kazakhstan.