STATEMENT BY HON. BRIAN MUSHIMBA M.P. MINISTER OF TRANSPORT AND COMMUNICATIONS AS LLDCS CHAIR AT THE HIGH-LEVEL MEETING ON SUSTAINABLE TRANSPORT OF LANDLOCKED DEVELOPING COUNTRIES

SANTA CRUZ, BOLIVIA

13TH -14TH OCTOBER, 2016

Your Excellency Mr. Evo Morales Ayma, President of the Plurinational State of Bolivia
Your Excellency Mr. Milton Claros Hinojosa, Minister of Public Work and Housing Services of the Plurinational State of Bolivia
Distinguished Honourable Ministers
Mr. Wu Hongbo, Under-Secretary-General of DESA
Mr. Gyan Chandra Acharya, Under Secretary General and High Representative for LDCs, LLDCs and SIDS
Mr. Ruben Costas, Governor of Santa Cruz
Mr. Percy Fernandez, Mayor of Santa Cruz de la Sierra
Excellencies, Ministers present
Ladies and gentlemen,

It is my great honour to address this opening session of the high-level meeting on Sustainable Transport of Landlocked Developing Countries.

First and foremost, I am a bearer of a message from His Excellency Mr. Edgar Changwa Lungu, President of the Republic of Zambia. The President requested me to commend His Excellency Mr. Evo Morales Ayma, President of the Plurinational State of Bolivia for hosting this important High level Meeting on Sustainable Transport of Landlocked Developing Countries (LLDCs) and wished everyone present fruitful deliberations. Zambia as Chair of the Landlocked Developing Countries remains committed to finding solutions to the challenges faced by our group of countries.
Please allow me on my own behalf and that of my delegation to thank the Government and people of Bolivia for the warm hospitality accorded to us since our arrival in this scenic City of Santa Cruz.

I would also like to thank the United Nations Office of the High Representative for the Least Developed Countries, Landlocked Developing Countries and Small Island Developing States and the United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs for organizing this meeting and supporting our participation.

EXCELLENCIES

Our Ministers of Foreign Affairs met just last month in New York and discussed important issues on fostering coherence in the implementation of the Vienna Programme of Action, the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and other global development frameworks, as well as follow-up processes.

The meeting was resolved to illuminating the implementation of the Vienna Programme of Action for LLDCs as a necessary requirement for integration of the LLDCs into the global economy and for achievement of the 2030 agenda for sustainable development.

Indeed, as LLDCs, we cannot attain the Sustainable Development Goals without realising the priority goals of the Vienna Programme. At the national level, I urge all member states to mainstream the Vienna Programme of Action into national development strategies. This is the first and crucial step towards implementation.

Enhanced transport, mobility and connectivity are indispensable investments vital for overcoming the geographical constraints of land-lockedness, and thus linking the LLDCs to both regional and global markets.

The Vienna Programme of Action prioritises transport and transit infrastructure not only as a means of facilitating regional integration, but also as an enabler of sustainable development for the LLDCs. We also recognise the transformative potential of transport for structural economic change in the LLDCs. Infrastructure development and maintenance, including transport infrastructure, is rightfully reflected as the second priority of the Vienna Programme of Action.
Many initiatives are already taking place in our countries towards reaching the objectives of the Vienna Programme, including on transport and transit infrastructure development, regional connectivity and facilitating of trade. Yet, transport infrastructure is typically inadequate to support greater integration of our countries into regional and global trading networks and is characterised by many missing links. WITH THE 2030 AGENDA IN PLACE, SUSTAINABLE TRANSPORT WHICH SPEAKS TO EFFICIENCIES OF TRANSPORTATION MEANS AND CLEAN FUELS ARE A MUST DO CONTRIBUTION TO SUSTAINING THE GLOBAL EFFORTS OF PRESERVATION OF THE ENVIRONMENT.

For LLDCs, close cooperation with our transit neighbours on transport is a necessity for enhancing connectivity. Development of transit and transport corridors and closer cooperation on improving the soft infrastructure, harmonization of transit regulations and procedures and trade facilitation measures have been effective in reducing the high transport costs and delays.

EXCELLENCIES,

At the same time, more resources are needed towards the achievement of sustainable transport. On behalf of the LLDC Group, I call on our development partners, the organizations of the United Nations system and other international organizations, international financing institutions and development banks and the private sector to enhance financial and technical assistance to landlocked developing countries and transit developing countries for the sustainable and inclusive development of transport. As a Group, we have been advocating for dedicated funding and special facilities for infrastructure development and maintenance for the LLDCs, which we believe are critical in supporting our national efforts.

As a Group, we are also keen to ensure that the International Think Tank becomes fully operational as this will provide top-quality research on issues of critical importance to the LLDCs, including transport and transit issues. I therefore call upon Members of the LLDC Group that have not yet done so, to ratify the Multilateral Agreement on the establishment of the International Think Tank for the LLDCs.
EXCELLENCIES,

We have come together less than two months before the Global Sustainable Transport Conference taking place in Turkmenistan in November. Let us take this opportunity to consolidate a strong common position of our Group that we can take with us to the Global Conference.

I thank you.