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STATEMENT
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BY
THE LLDCS CHAIR
ON
AGENDA ITEM 22(B):
GROUPS OF COUNTRIES IN SPECIAL SITUATIONS: FOLLOW-UP TO THE SECOND UNITED NATIONS CONFERENCE ON LANDLOCKED DEVELOPING COUNTRIES

NEW YORK
19 October, 2016
I have the honour to deliver this statement on behalf of Landlocked Developing Countries. The Group of LLDCs would like to thank the Secretary-General for the comprehensive report (A/71/313), on the implementation of the Vienna Programme of Action. We also convey our appreciation to the Under Secretary-General in the Office of the High Representative for LDCs, LLDCs and SIDS for introducing the report of the Secretary-General and for his office’s continued support to the Group.

We welcome the fact that the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the Addis Ababa Action Agenda recognize the special needs and challenges of the 32 LLDCs, arising from lack of territorial access to the sea, remoteness from world markets, and high transit costs and risks. These factors erode our competitiveness and limit our ability to harness the benefits of international trade, structurally transform our economies, and overcome the adverse impacts of climate change, land degradation, desertification and deforestation, to achieve sustainable development.

Indeed, as LLDCs, we cannot attain the Sustainable Development Goals without realizing the priority goals of the VPOA. For the successful implementation of the new development agenda, we emphasize the importance of fostering strong synergy and coherence in the implementation, follow up, and review of the 2030 Agenda and the Vienna Programme of Action. This is critical for the transformation of landlocked developing countries into land-linked countries, ensuring that no one is left behind.

The introduction of the report of the Secretary General is taking place just after our Ministers of Foreign Affairs met last month in New York and discussed important issues on fostering coherence in the implementation of the Vienna Programme of Action, the 2030 Agenda, and other global development frameworks, as well as follow-up processes. The LLDCs also held a High level Meeting on sustainable transport in Bolivia last week. These two meetings adopted outcome documents that raise important issues on our development that are also discussed in the Report of the Secretary General.

The Report has highlighted progress made by the LLDCs and their development partners in implementing the Vienna Programme of Action in the 6 priority areas. The Group expresses concern about the fact that the economic growth and social
well-being of landlocked developing countries remain very vulnerable to external shocks, in particular, volatility in commodity prices. Because of high commodity dependence, our global share of exports fell in 2015 to just 0.96% from 1.2% in 2014. Furthermore the report indicates that the LLDCs still face high costs of transport and trade transaction costs despite the progress made in improving transport infrastructure and trade facilitation.

Based on the findings in the report and outcomes of our two recent meetings, we would like to highlight some key issues that need to be addressed to advance the implementation of the VPoA.

First: Mainstreaming of the Vienna Programme of Action into the global development agenda is important for ensuring effective implementation of the VPoA. We thank the United Nations organizations that have mainstreamed the VPoA into their work and encourage those that have not yet done, to do so.

Secondly: The establishment and maintenance of secure, reliable, efficient and quality infrastructure and transit transport systems remains critical to reducing transport and trading costs, and in enhancing LLDCs’ competitiveness and full integration into regional and global markets. However, the magnitude of resources required for investment in infrastructure development and maintenance, remains a major challenge. We call on the international community to support our efforts on infrastructure development and call on the multilateral financial and development institutions and regional development banks to establish dedicated infrastructure funding or special windows to meet our needs. We also request the Global Infrastructure Forum to ensure greater participation of LLDCs, and address infrastructure and capacity gaps, in particular transit infrastructure needs.

Third: Trade is critical for LLDCs. Improved trade facilitation will lower our trade transaction and transport costs, increase the competitiveness of our exports and contribute to the promotion of rapid and inclusive economic development, and structural transformation. The WTO Trade Facilitation Agreement will significantly assist LLDCs in minimizing their challenges through improved customs’ efficiency, lowered trade costs, and reduced delays at border crossing. The report also notes that implementation of the Trade Facilitation Agreement can help developing countries like the LLDCs to diversify their economies in terms of both exported products and markets reached and can also enhance their participation in global value chains. We call on all WTO member States for a rapid
ratification and implementation of the Trade Facilitation Agreement. We call on our development partners to support our efforts on trade facilitation including through increasing Aid for Trade resources to the LLDCs.

**Fourth:** The LLDCs need an urgent increase of their resilience to commodity price fluctuations including through accelerating industrialization, value addition, promotion of services and integration into global value chains. In this regard, we call upon the international organizations and development partners to provide financial and technical support to LLDCs.

**Fifth:** We also call upon the international community to assist LLDCs in undertaking research and analysis on the impact of landlockedness on sustainable development and the effective participation of LLDCs in international trade and achievement of the priorities of the VPoA and SDGs.

**Sixth:** LLDCs remain highly exposed to climate change and are disproportionately affected by its adverse impacts due to geography, low income, low institutional capacity, and greater reliance on climate-sensitive sectors like agriculture. This is further exacerbated by desertification, land degradation, drought, floods, cyclones and other natural and man-made disasters. We look forward to ambitious action by all, as well as the mobilization of resources to assist its implementation. We request that LLDCs be provided with adequate levels of resources in order to enhance our resilience to climate change.

**Seventh:** Regional integration and coherent and harmonized regional policies improve transit transport connectivity and ensure greater international trade. We call upon our transit partners to accede to or ratify, in an expeditious manner, all the conventions and agreements that are directly relevant to promoting trade facilitation, smooth transit, efficient border crossings and the movement of goods and services between countries. We urge our development partners to support our efforts in this respect.

**Eighth:** ODA remains the main source of international financing for many LLDCs. It is essential as a catalyst for development, facilitating the achievement of national development objectives, including achieving sustainable development goals and the Vienna Programme of Action in a coherent manner. In this context, we call upon development partners to increase the amount of ODA to LLDCs, in a
sustainable manner, to help us to overcome the obstacles imposed by geography and to integrate into the multilateral trading system.

**Lastly:** we would like to thank the Under-Secretary-General and his team for the continued substantive support that they have provided to the LLDCs. Over the years, the substantive and technical needs of the LLDCs have increased. There is need therefore, for a strong synergy and coherence in the implementation of the VPoA, the Addis Ababa Action Agenda and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

The LLDCs require increased and strengthened support to secure coordinated implementation and coherent follow-up of these development frameworks VPoA and other relevant development frameworks. UN system organizations, especially the Office of the High Representative for LDCs, LLDCs and SIDS, need to further strengthen support to LLDCs in order to enhance the effective implementation of the Vienna Programme of Action. Therefore, UN-OHRLLS needs to be adequately resourced.

I thank you for your kind attention.

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