STATEMENT BY
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UNDER AGENDA ITEM 22:
GROUPS OF COUNTRIES IN
SPECIAL SITUATIONS

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Mr. Chairman,

Zimbabwe aligns itself with the statements delivered by Thailand on behalf of the G77 and China as well as Zambia on behalf of the Group of Landlocked Developing Countries. Allow me to make additional remarks in my national capacity.

Mr. Chairman,

Zimbabwe is committed to implementing the Vienna Programme of Action for landlocked developing countries particularly priority area 5 on “Structural economic transformation” as it is in line with priorities of the country’s economic blueprint, the Zimbabwe Agenda for Sustainable Socio-Economic Transformation (Zim-Asset). Under Zim-Asset, Zimbabwe is undertaking industrial value - addition and beneficiation with a view to get better returns from the exports of the country’s primary products especially from the mining and agricultural sectors. We encourage foreign investors to take advantage of the vast opportunities for investment under Zim-Asset particularly in the areas of value addition and beneficiation as well as infrastructure development and maintenance. We also appeal for coherent and coordinated international support for the implementation of the Vienna Programme of Action, the Addis Ababa Action Agenda and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

Mr. Chairman,

Zimbabwe joins other landlocked developing countries in calling for the timely and full implementation of the Vienna Programme of Action as well as the Bali Package, in particular, the Agreement on Trade Facilitation. We call upon the United Nations development system, in collaboration with other international and regional organizations and development partners, to provide technical support for mainstreaming the Vienna Programme of Action into national and sectoral development strategies.

Mr. Chairman,

Participation in regional and global value chains often presents opportunities for countries to generate greater economic growth through greater integration into world markets. Sadly, for too long, landlocked developing countries remain unable to participate in regional or global value chains. To
overcome this problem, Zimbabwe urges regional development banks, international development organizations and the United Nations development system to put in place frameworks aimed at helping landlocked developing countries diversify their economies and exports as well as integrate into regional and global value chains. We also appeal to development partners work with landlocked developing countries in facilitating the integration of their small and medium enterprises within international trade through strengthening institutions that support trade, fostering trade competitiveness and building spaces for private-public dialogue.

Mr. Chairman,

The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development acknowledges that international trade contributes to the promotion of sustainable development and is vital for inclusive economic growth and poverty eradication. The Vienna Programme of Action for Landlocked Developing Countries for the Decade 2014 – 2024 also identifies trade as a means to accelerate sustainable development. Sadly, landlocked developing countries continue to account for around 1,2 percent of the global merchandise exports owing to very high trade costs and urgent actions are needed to address trade-related challenges of landlocked developing countries. Through the AID for Trade programme, the WTO must provide capacity-building support to landlocked developing countries to help them diversify their economies, build their productive capacities, build and strengthen trade-related infrastructures as well as add value to their export products. Access to affordable and adequate trade finance is critical in helping a country to derive greater benefits from international trade.

Mr. Chairman,

Poor and inadequate transport and logistics infrastructure continues to limit landlocked developing countries’ participation in international trade as well as regional and global value chains. To help address this problem, Zimbabwe calls upon multilateral financial and development institutions as well as regional development banks to establish dedicated infrastructure funding for landlocked developing countries and to provide them with a special window for allocation of resources for infrastructure development and maintenance. We urge the Global Infrastructure Forum to strive for
action-oriented programmes that address the infrastructure needs of landlocked developing countries in a focused manner.

Mr. Chairman,

In an effort to address trade facilitation challenges, the Government of Zimbabwe has adopted the policy of establishing One Stop Border Posts. The first pilot One-Stop Border Post initiative, supported by COMESA, was established at the Chirundu Border Post between Zimbabwe and Zambia. This One-Stop Border Post has resulted in reduced transactions costs, increased revenues, reduction in waiting time at the border post, reduction in duplication of efforts and strengthening of political ties between the two countries.

Following the success of the Chirundu One Stop Border Post, the Government of Zimbabwe is considering setting up other One Stop Border Posts at the country’s three other border posts. Zimbabwe and South Africa are finalizing discussions for the establishment of the Beitbridge One-Stop Border Post. The idea is to harmonize operations and improve efficiency at Beitbridge Border Post, one of the busiest in our sub-region. Inadequacy of infrastructure at the Beitbridge border post remains the main bottleneck towards the establishment of the proposed One-Stop Border Post. In view of this, the Government is working on upgrading and expanding the infrastructure at the Beitbridge Border Post with a view to expedite the implementation of the One-Stop Border Post and international support in this endeavor is greatly appreciated.

Mr. Chairman,

The information and communication technology sector is an important enabler in facilitating trade. As part of a raft of measures to address issues affecting the smooth flow of both cargo and human traffic at the country’s border posts, the Government has installed information and communication technology equipment at the border posts in order to enhance border management systems with a view to promote integration and the implementation of the single window concept which is aimed at bringing all border agencies together to simplify customs clearance, reduce the costs of cross-border transit.
We are confident that this raft of measures will contribute towards transforming our country from being landlocked to being land-linked.

I thank you Mr. Chairman.