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Opening Remarks by Ms. Fekitamoeloa Katoa ‘Utoikamanu,

Under-Secretary-General

High Representative

for the Least Developed Countries, Landlocked Developing Countries

and Small Island Developing States

UN OHRRLLS

at the side event:

**Accelerating Inclusive and Sustainable Development in Landlocked Developing Countries
(LLDCs) Through Structural Transformation: Pursuing Policy at the Nexus of
Infrastructure and Industrialization**

High Level Political Forum 2017

Wednesday, 19 July 2017, 6:15pm -7:30pm

Conference Room 11

Honourable Ministers,
Excellencies,
Distinguished Guests,
Ladies and Gentlemen.

I would like to warmly welcome all of you to this Side Event on *Accelerating Inclusive and Sustainable Development in Landlocked Developing Countries through Structural Transformation: Pursuing Policy at the Nexus of Infrastructure and Industrialization*, co-organized by Permanent Mission of Austria, Permanent Mission of the Republic of Zambia, UNIDO, and UN-OHRLLS.

My name is Fekita 'Utoikamanu. I am the High-Representative and Under Secretary-General for the Least Developed Countries, Landlocked Developing Countries and Small Island Developing States, and I will be moderating this session

The aim of this meeting is to share experiences, increase awareness and identify key policy recommendations on infrastructure development and industrialization for achieving sustainable development in LLDCs. The session will examine how LLDC's – through a synergistic consideration of the nexus – can develop policies and implement programmes that will fast-track the industrialization process and ensure the achievement of the 2030 Agenda.

Before I hand over the floor to our distinguished speakers, allow me to briefly highlight a few issues to set the stage for our discussion today.

The 32 landlocked developing countries represent more than 470 million people, spread over four continents. They are marginalized from the global economy due to geographical handicaps that result in high trade and transport costs. Their challenges are exacerbated by inadequate infrastructure, lack of structural transformation and economic diversification and there are signs of de-industrialization. As a result, high levels of poverty, low levels of human capital, and increased vulnerability to economic, environmental and other external shocks continue to hinder their efforts to achieve sustainable development. About 30% of their population continue to live below the international poverty line of US\$1.90 per day.

To achieve the Sustainable Development Goals and the Vienna Programme of Action in LLDCs, the catalytic and cross cutting role of infrastructure development and industrialization is vital. Making progress on SDG 9 will have positive effects on other SDGs, such as poverty, hunger, health, education, water and sanitation, affordable and clean energy, amongst others.

Structural economic transformation, centered upon industrialization of the LLDC economies in an inclusive and sustainable manner, is critical for successfully integrating into the global economy and achieving sustained, broad-based and employment-creating economic growth. Industrialization would also support the move from traditional economic activities into higher value-added and more diversified economic activities. It will allow LLDCs to become more competitive in the international markets and be connected with regional and global value chains.

Establishment of a robust and competitive industrial sector in LLDCs requires a strong supportive infrastructure - particularly in the transport, energy, and information communication technology sectors, as identified in the Vienna Programme of Action.

Additionally, inclusive and sustainable industrial development allows for rapid and sustained increases in living standards for all people, and provides the technological solutions to environmentally sound industrialization.

In this context, OHRLLS has partnered with stakeholders to facilitate the implementation of the VPoA and the SDGs. For example OHRLLS organised a High-Level Meeting on Sustainable Transport of LLDCs in collaboration with Bolivia and UN-DESA held in October last year; a High-Level Seminar on Accelerating Sustainable Energy for All in LLDCs through Innovative Partnerships in collaboration with the Austria, UNIDO, and Sustainable Energy for All held also in October last year; a High-Level Meeting for the Euro-Asia Region on Improving Cooperation on Transit, Trade Facilitation and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development in collaboration with Viet Nam, WCO and IRU held in March 2017; and an event on enhancing the role of the private sector in the implementation of the VPoA and the 2030 Agenda, held in May 2017. OHRLLS has also facilitated joint consultations of the LLDCs with the World Bank aimed at facilitating a continuous dialogue on the special needs of the LLDCs and its support from the World Bank.
