



**Statement**

**by**

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**High-Representative and Under-Secretary-General for the  
Least Developed Countries, Landlocked Developing  
Countries and Small Island Developing States**

**At**

**The Oceans Conference**

**Side-Event on enhancing the participation of the  
landlocked states in the implementation of Sustainable  
Development Goal (SDG) 14 (Conserve and sustainably  
use the Oceans and Marine Resources for Sustainable  
Development)**

**8<sup>th</sup> June 2017 at 3:00PM - 16:30PM**

**Conference Room A**

Excellencies and distinguished delegates,  
Ladies and gentlemen,

It is an honour and pleasure for me to welcome you to this Oceans Conference side event on “Enhancing the Participation of the Landlocked Countries in the Implementation of Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 14”, organized by the Permanent Mission of Zambia and OHRLLS.

Oceans are fundamental to life and to the proper functioning of the ecosystem. They play a key role in climate regulation especially in neutralising the effects of increasing levels of greenhouse gases in the atmosphere and rising global temperatures. In addition, the Oceans have immense socio-economic benefits. According to the OECD estimates, the ocean economy’s output was estimated at USD 1.5 trillion, or approximately 2.5% of world gross value added in 2010. Direct full-time employment in the ocean economy was also estimated to be around 31 million jobs in the same year.

The ocean is recognised as being indispensable for addressing many global challenges including climate change, food security, provision of energy and natural resources. Whilst the oceans are such an important resource to humankind, they are becoming degraded due to human activities and as such they are under tremendous pressure of rising seawater temperature, ocean acidification and ocean deoxygenation. This situation affects the functioning of the Ocean as the climate regulator leading to climate change. The devastating effects of climate change are already evident. The landlocked developing countries are experiencing the impacts of El Niño, desertification and land degradation exacerbated by climate change. This situation greatly affects their development as most of them are dependent on natural resources particularly

Agriculture. Agriculture remains the mainstay of most of the LLDCs' economies and is also a main source of employment for their rural population, climate change therefore has undesirable effects on the LLDCs' efforts to fight poverty.

The achievement of SDG 14 is therefore of paramount importance for the survival of all including those in landlocked countries and it therefore requires collective-action of all the stakeholders from both coastal and landlocked states.

Excellencies and distinguished delegates, Ladies and gentlemen,

Whilst the landlocked countries are not directly connected to the oceans due to their geographical location, they have the right to access and the right to use the ocean space including the marine resources. The UN Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS) confers these rights. Some of the provisions which give the right to access and to utilize the Oceans by the landlocked includes: article 69 on *Right of land-locked States*, Article 125 on *Right of access to and from the sea and freedom of transit*, Article 136 on *Common heritage to mankind* and Article 140 on *Benefit of mankind*. The UNCLOS states that the Area and its resources are common heritage of mankind and activities in the Area are to be carried out for the benefit of the mankind as a whole irrespective of the geographical location of States. Therefore all nations including the landlocked countries can be actively involved in the exploitation of the resources from the common heritage region.

A number of the landlocked states are party to the UNCLOS. Out of the forty-four landlocked states, twenty-eight have ratified the UNCLOS and twenty of these countries are Landlocked Developing Countries. The overall participation of these countries, particularly of the Landlocked Developing Countries, in the

implementation of the UNCLOS including in the meetings related to the implementation of UNCLOS is however limited. The participation of the landlocked countries in the ocean economy has also been limited as demonstrated by the number of ships registered under their flag. According to the International Maritime Organisation Database, only twelve Landlocked Developing Countries have ships registered under their flags. The limited participation of these countries may be attributed to several reasons including limited resources, lack of awareness and challenges of access.

Freedom of transit remains a major challenge for the landlocked countries especially landlocked developing countries to access the seas. Whilst article 125 (1) gives these countries the legal right of access to and from the sea, the practical implementation of landlocked states' rights depends on the concerned states' relations, agreements, and/or the political will of transit states as well as transit infrastructure. Challenges in accessing the sea greatly affect the participation of the LLDCs in international trade since international trade is mainly conducted through international shipping. This situation impacts the implementation of the Vienna Programme of Action and the achievement of the sustainable development goals by the LLDCs. It is therefore important to enhance access and freedom of transit of the LLDCs so that they can be integrated into global trade and into the blue economy.

OHRLLS continues to work with LLDCs, transit countries and the development partners address transit challenges including the integration of the LLDCs into the global economy. OHRLLS has previously organised events to discuss these issues and some of the notable events include; a panel discussion on “UNCLOS and Landlocked Developing Countries: practical implications” which was held in June 2012, an Expert group meeting on improving transit cooperation, trade and trade facilitation held in 2015, a Seminar on the Importance of the key trade

and transport conventions held in 2016; a Side event at the Global Sustainable Transport Conference on Financing Sustainable Transport Infrastructure for enhancing Connectivity of the LLDCs and a High-Level Meeting for the Euro-Asia Region on Improving Cooperation on Transit, Trade Facilitation and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development held in 2017.

Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen,

Today's event is organised to deliberate on how access to the sea as well as the participation of the landlocked countries in the blue economy may be enhanced. Integrating these countries will facilitate the implementation of SDG14 as all the stakeholders will be involved in this process and no one will be left behind. The integration of these countries is also important for the achievement of the overall 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

Thank you.