



UN-OHRLLS

Opening remarks by

**Ms. Fekitamoeloa Katoa ‘Utoikamanu,
Under-Secretary-General and High Representative
for the Least Developed Countries, Landlocked Developing
Countries and Small Island Developing States**

at

**High-Level Luncheon
on the Occasion of the Entry into Force of
The Multilateral Agreement for the Establishment of
an International Think Tank for Landlocked Developing Countries**

6 October 2017

13:00-15:00

Delegates Dining Room (Private Dining Room 1-3)

Your Excellency Mr. Sukhee Sukhbold, Ambassador of Mongolia to the UN,

Your Excellency Mr. Lazarous Kapambwe, Ambassador of the Republic of Zambia to the UN and the Chair of the LLDCs,

Your Excellency, Mr. Odbayar Erdenetsogt, Ambassador at-Large and Interim Director of the Think Tank for LLDCs,

Excellencies and distinguished delegates,

Ladies and gentlemen,

It is with great pleasure that I welcome you to our joint OHRLLS and Think Tank Interim Secretariat luncheon.

It was a very rewarding moment of this week when, together with you, I could announce the formal establishment of the International Think Tank.

It is a true milestone.

So, congratulations to the LLDC Group and the Think Tank for reaching this crucial step.

My sincere thank you goes to the Government of Mongolia for hosting the Think Tank and supporting the interim management. The Think Tank would not have been able to get off the ground without your support.

This milestone marks the establishment of the first ever intergovernmental body of the Group.

Again - Congratulations !

I have no doubts that the full operationalization of the Think Tank will contribute to giving greater voice to the landlocked developing countries.

It is my hope that the Think Tank through analytical work, best practices sharing and its knowledge base fully contributes to your national and our global efforts to achieve the 2030 Agenda.

It also hope that the Think Tank will complement the work of the United Nations in supporting the landlocked developing countries.

From the very first moments of this visionary idea to establish the Think Tank, through General Assembly resolutions up to supporting the development of the Agreement itself, the United Nations endeavoured to stand by your side.

OHRLLS worked closely with the Interim Management of the Think Tank. Jointly we organized events such as on national mainstreaming of the Vienna Programme of Action and trade facilitation for LLDCs.

The establishment of the Think Tank required a minimum of ten ratifications and several of your Governments are also undertaking the domestic process of ratification.

Today, I urge other LLDCs to follow suit. This is very important. A united collective voice always is greater and more impactful voice. This will also ensure that all of the LLDC community will have a voice on the Board of the Think Tank.

As I mentioned during this week's Press Conference, the Think Tank, as a centre of excellence for high quality research, analytics, policy advice and best practice sharing has in the interim period, and will continue to support priority areas of the implementation of the Vienna Programme of Action and support LLDCs to strengthen homegrown analytical capacity and as I said, formulate common positions on key issues.

This week, we fully opened the door to operationalisation of the Think Tank. We will today see a glimpse of the benefits of this visionary undertaking and we now must quickly turn to full capacity so that the Think Tank provides tangible and value-adding service to you all.

Let us together accelerate work and build on the work accomplished by the Interim Management.

We at OHRLLS would like to assure you of our continued commitment to this exciting and yet also challenging undertaking. OHRLLS stands ready to participate as an observer on the Board of Governors.

You have my personal assurances that we will continue to promote the Think Tank, work closely with the Think Tank, will undertake joint activities to address the special needs of the LLDCs. We will also continue to engage in mobilizing UN system capacities and ensure coordinated follow-up on the implementation of the Vienna Programme of Action.

Again, I congratulate you and look forward to seeing the Think Tank become a valued and valuable tool for you all.

Thank you.