Report of the Ambassadorial Retreat on the Implications of the New Global Development Agenda on the LLDCs and the Way Forward

1 March 2016
Glen Cove, New York
A. Introduction

The United Nations Office of the High-Representative for Least Developed Countries, Landlocked Developing Countries and Small Island Developing States (UN-OHRLLS) organized a Retreat of the LLDCs Group to discuss the Implications of the New Global Development Agenda on the LLDCs and the Way Forward. The retreat was held in the Glen Cove Mansion Conference Centre, Glen Cove, New York on 1 March 2016. The aim of the retreat was to analyse all the recent developments on the global development arena and recommend ways of fostering coherence in the implementation of the 2030 Agenda, Addis Ababa Action Agenda, and Vienna Programme of Action at regional, national, and global levels to ensure success.

The meeting was chaired by Mr. Gyan Chandra Acharya, Under-Secretary-General and High Representative for the Least Developed Countries, Landlocked Developing Countries and Small Island Developing States and Dr. Mwaba Patricia Kasese-Bota, Permanent Representative of Zambia to the United Nations and the Chair of the global coordination bureau of LLDCs. Mr. Jan Kickert, Permanent Representative of Austria to the United Nations and Mr. Per Thöresson, Deputy Permanent Representative of Sweden to the United Nations participated in the meeting as the Co-Chairs of the Group of Friends of LLDCs.

The meeting was attended by about 60 participants that included Ambassadors and Permanent Representatives, and delegates from LLDCs and other selected member states, and experts from United Nations System organizations, as well as international organizations as shown in the participant list in annex 1. The meeting followed the programme of work presented in annex 2.

B. Opening Session

In this session statements were presented by Mr. Gyan Chandra Acharya, Under-Secretary-General and High Representative; Dr. Mwaba Patricia Kasese-Bota, Permanent Representative of Zambia to the United Nations and the Chair of the LLDCs; Mr. Jan Kickert, Permanent Representative of Austria to the United Nations; Mr. Per Thöresson, Deputy Permanent Representative of Sweden to the United Nations; and Mr. Lenni Montiel on behalf of Under-Secretary-General for Economic and Social Affairs Mr.Wu Hongbo.

In his statement, Mr. Acharya indicated that the Vienna Program of Action for LLDCs adopted by the international community in Vienna in November 2014 is a very inclusive development blue print. He noted that the VPoA reflects a holistic approach to the challenges faced by the LLDCs that are linked to their landlockedness. He stressed that the effective implementation of the VPoA’s six priority areas of fundamental transit policy issues; infrastructural development and maintenance; international trade, and trade facilitation, regional integration and cooperation, structural economic transformation and
means of implementation, will help to achieve rapid, inclusive and sustained economic growth along with poverty reduction for the more than 470 million people in the 32 LLDCs.

The Under-Secretary-General highlighted that important outcome documents adopted in 2015 including the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015-2030; the Addis Ababa Action Agenda; the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development; and the Paris Agreement on climate change have important supportive provisions for the LLDCs. He highlighted some of the synergies between these outcome documents and the VPoA and stressed that it is now important to ensure that the VPoA and the 2030 Agenda are mainstreamed into national development plans and are effectively implemented.

Mr. Acharya noted that UN-OHRLLS is mandated to mobilize and coordinate international support for the effective implementation of the VPoA; to advocate and raise awareness on the special needs of the LLDCs; and to report on the implementation of the VPoA at national, regional, and global levels. He highlighted some of the work that the UN and UN-OHRLLS in particular had undertaken to implement the VPoA. These include: the UN Secretary General’s letter to Member States calling for implementation; the High level follow-up meeting to the Second UN Conference on the LLDCs that was held in Zambia which adopted the Livingstone Call for Action; the adoption of resolutions on mainstreaming of the VPoA by ECA and ESCAP annual sessions and mainstreaming efforts by UNCTAD, and ITC; the LLDCs’ High-Level Forum of Heads of State and Government at the 70th session of the General Assembly; the meetings of the Inter-agency Consultative group on LLDCs and the development of indicators; a dedicated meeting on transit issues; the visit to the World Bank by UN-OHRLLS and the LLDC Bureau; Side events held in collaboration with UNCCD and UNFCCC during their Conference of Parties (COP) meetings; and technical support to the Botswana national workshop on the VPoA. He also highlighted upcoming events by UN-OHRLLS.

In concluding his statement, Mr. Acharya indicated that the retreat was very timely and offered a good opportunity to analyze the new global development arena and recommend ways of fostering coherence in the implementation of the 2030 Agenda, Addis Ababa Action Agenda, and Vienna Programme of Action to ensure optimal benefits to the LLDCs.

In her statement, Dr. Mwaba Patricia Kasese-Bota noted that the Vienna Programme of Action adopted at the Second UN Conference on LLDCs in 2014 is a transformative and ambitious development framework for LLDCs which holistically addresses the various challenges faced by LLDCs. She highlighted that the Livingstone Call for Action for the Accelerated Implementation of the VPoA adopted at the High-Level Follow-up Meeting to the LLDC Conference in 2015 in Livingstone, Zambia stresses the key actions required to ensure the speedy implementation of the Vienna Programme. She indicated that the global development processes of 2015 (the Addis Ababa Action Agenda and the 2030 Agenda for sustainable development) further catalysed the recognition and implementation of the VPoA. She noted that both the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable
Development and the Addis Ababa Action Agenda recognize the special challenges of the LLDCs.

Dr. Kasese-Bota indicated that the VPoA is recognised as integral to the 2030 agenda and therefore the attainment of the SDGs is directly and inherently linked to the capacity and level of implementation of the VPoA. She emphasized that implementation of the VPoA requires enhanced capacity and necessary tools to implement the ambitious programme and require renewed and strengthened partnerships between LLDCs, transit countries and development partners, as well as enhanced support and partnership efforts with relevant international and regional organizations, private and public sectors and stronger and widened North-South and South-South cooperation. She noted that the LLDCs also participated in the Paris Climate Change Conference and the Conference on Disaster Risk Reduction in Sendai, as well as the WTO Ministerial conference in Nairobi in December 2015.

Ambassador Kasese-Bota underscored the need for the LLDCs to be part of the discussion on the follow up and review mechanisms of the 2030 Agenda, the Addis Ababa Action Agenda as well as the Paris Agreement and other processes. She noted that the statistical commission was meeting that week to work on the indicators and expressed her wish that the indicators will reflect the interconnectedness, and synergies of various development frameworks including the VPoA and the 2030 Agenda. She concluded by indicating that the retreat presents an opportunity to dialogue on the follow-up processes of the important development agendas and to identify specific follow-up activities that the LLDCs could focus on that would foster coherence in the implementation of the 2030 Agenda, the Addis Ababa Action Agenda and the Vienna Programme.

In his statement, Mr. Jan Kickert noted that Austria is a landlocked country and therefore the country has a natural understanding on the special development needs and challenges of LLDCs and can also attest to the fact that being landlocked and underdeveloped is not an inescapable fate. He pointed out that Austria is ready to share its experiences and know-how. As host of the Second United Nations Conference on LLDCs in Vienna in 2014, he commended that the VPoA has a holistic approach the needs of the LLDCs and also noted that the VPoA is recognized as part of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. He encouraged countries to implement the commitments and that Austria will do its own part.

Ambassador Kickert highlighted that several LLDCs have the status of priority countries for the Austrian Development Cooperation as set out in its new programme for 2016 to 2018. He also noted that Austria in co-operation with UN-OHRLLS, SE4All, and UNIDO is currently organizing a meeting to be held later in 2016 in Vienna, in order to bring together senior officials from LLDCs, transit developing countries and development partners, including the private sector. The aim of the meeting, scheduled to take place in October, will be to increase awareness of the VPoA and its implementation as well as to enhance knowledge and technical capacity of the LLDCs on how to expand and upgrade infrastructure for supply, transmission and distribution of modern and renewable energy services in rural and urban areas. He also noted that Austria is ready to
serve as Co-Chair of the “Friends of the LLDC-Group” and expressed his hope that through this group the positive momentum generated by the Vienna Conference and the adoption of the 2030 Agenda could be used to push ahead the cause of the LLDCs.

In his statement, Ambassador Per Thöresson noted that after adopting the Addis Ababa Action Agenda, the 2030 Development Agenda and the Paris Agreement on Climate Change, the retreat provided a good time to meet and review, and strategize on implementation. He indicated that for Sweden, the identification of the linkages and synergies and making the most out of it for the LLDCs is a clear priority.

He pointed out that he had the honour to co-chair with Ambassador Phansourivong of the Lao People’s Democratic Republic, the negotiations of the draft outcome of the Second UN Conference on the LLDCs that was adopted as the VPoA. He noted that the VPoA is quite unique in its holistic, forward-looking and action oriented approach, clearly recognizing the particular vulnerabilities of the LLDCs. He also noted the recognition of the VPoA and articulation of the special challenges to the LLDCs by the 2030 Development Agenda, as well as the Addis Ababa Action Agenda. He highlighted some of the synergies between the VPoA and the 2030 Agenda.

Ambassador Thöresson stressed that ODA will remain a foundation of international development and that Sweden’s ODA has doubled over the past ten years and will remain at more than one per cent of GNI. He underscored the importance of increased private sector role in implementing the VPoA and 2030 Agenda and that overall strengthening of partnerships is essential. He noted that the Livingstone call for Action stresses that the global community should work towards, at the very least, doubling annual investments for infrastructure development in the LLDCs from all sources. He indicated that Sweden stands ready to play its part in fulfilling this goal.

Ambassador Thöresson underscored that when it comes to implementing the Paris Agreement, we must bear in mind that many landlocked countries are among the most affected by climate change. He noted that international support on climate change is very important to LLDCs, since many do not have the capacity and resources to cope with its negative impact. He mentioned that Sweden contributed approximately 580 million USD to the Green Climate Fund, and is also one of the largest donors to the Adaptation Fund, the Least Developed Countries Fund and the Global Environmental Facility. He provided good examples of projects supported by these funds in LLDCs - from increasing climate resilience in agriculture in Turkmenistan to improving early warning to reduce the impact of climate change in Lesotho. He also noted that Sweden is working hard with the secretariats of all the funds to make resources for adaptation and mitigation more easily accessible and that his mission was organizing a seminar on access to the Climate Fund and other funds to be held later on in March.

Ambassador Thöresson indicated that following the adoption of the VPoA, Sweden together with Austria had formed a Group of Friends of LLDCs in New York. The aim of the “Friends of the LLDCs - Group” is to mobilize support from development partners and transit countries and to keep the implementation of the VPoA high up on the
international agenda. He concluded by noting that meetings like the retreat offered a unique opportunity for a constructive dialogue on the LLDCs’ priorities.

In his statement delivered by Mr. Lenni Montiel, Assistant Secretary-General for Economic Development, UN DESA, Mr. Wu Hongbo, Under-Secretary-General for Economic and Social Affairs pointed out that the special needs and challenges of LLDCs are well reflected in both the Addis Ababa Action Agenda and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. He noted that the 2030 Agenda makes it clear that the special challenges and needs of countries in special situations have to continue to receive special attention and that the LLDCs are also mentioned in several targets of the SDGs. He also noted that the VPoA goes deeper than Agenda 2030 on issues relating in particular to SDGs 7, 9 and 11, including on transport infrastructure, energy and information and communication technology infrastructure, international trade and trade facilitation, and regional integration, reflecting the challenges that LLDCs face in relation to these issues. He underscored that it will be important to find synergies in the specific objectives, goals and targets of the two agendas, in order to ensure that LLDCs are in a position to optimally benefit from both.

The Under-Secretary-General noted that among the many policy actions agreed in Addis Ababa, some of the key deliverables on trade, transport and infrastructure are critical for LLDCs. He indicated that UNDESA together with the World Bank, WTO, UNCTAD, UNDP, UNIDO and ICC, are working to convert the important agreements into concrete actions and progress on the ground. He indicated that the Infrastructure Forum provides an important platform to address the infrastructure gap of LLDCs and encouraged the active participation of the LLDCs in the work of the forum to ensure that their voices are heard.

The Under-Secretary-General underscored the need for effective linkages to be made between the follow-up and review process for Agenda 2030 and the follow-up and review arrangements of all relevant United Nations conferences and processes, including on LLDCs. In this regard he stressed that it will be particularly important to find synergies between the two processes, in order to promote integration and avoid duplication of reporting efforts. He called on LLDCs to address the issue in the high-level political forum (HLPF) to be held in July.

Mr. Hongbo noted that one of the concrete deliverables of the Addis Ababa Action Agenda is the decision to put in place a dedicated and strengthened financing for development follow-up process to review the financing for development outcomes, as well as all the means of implementation of the 2030 Agenda. He pointed out that the new ECOSOC Forum on Financing for Development will be the centrepiece of the inter-governmental follow-up process. Its inaugural session under the current cycle of ECOSOC will set the stage for a strong and inclusive follow-up to the commitments made in Addis. He also said that the Secretary-General has convened an inter-agency task force to report on progress in implementing the Addis Agenda and the means of implementation of the SDGs and that the report will serve as the main substantive input to the FfD Forum.
C. Follow-up processes, implementation and coherence between the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, the Addis Ababa Action Agenda and the Vienna Programme of Action

In this session chaired by Mr. Gyan Chandra Acharya, UN DESA, World Bank, UNCTAD, UNIDO, and UNDP made presentations.

Mr. Acharya opened the session by highlighting that international support is critical for capacity development to solve major development challenges. Although countries face many challenges, he said that he believes that it is possible to make change because we are going through very transformative commitments that the international community has made in the form of the development agendas. He noted that the in the session participants needed to discuss how to bring the beneficial impacts of the transformative agenda to the lives of the people in LLDCs.

In his presentation, Mr. Neil Pierre, Chief of Policy Coordination Branch, Office of ECOSOC Support and Coordination, UN DESA focused on the role of ECOSOC in providing policy coherence and coordination to the global processes. He stressed that the overarching provisions of the VPoA are an important complement to, and are fully aligned with the commitments made in the 2030 Agenda and the AAAA. In addition to these normative frameworks, numerous GA and other resolutions, such as 68/1 and 67/290, guide the work of the ECOSOC system in the follow-up processes of the outcome documents.

Mr. Pierre pointed out that the report of the Secretary-General on critical milestones towards coherent, efficient and inclusive follow-up and review of the 2030 Agenda includes a number of practical recommendations to unite the contributions of intergovernmental bodies, within and outside the United Nations into the global reviews taking place at the HLPF. He mentioned that ECOSOC will support implementation, review, and follow-up of the 2030 Agenda by functioning as a dynamic system of functional and Regional Commissions, expert committees and forums, including the HLPF meeting under its auspices. He pointed out that the functional and Regional Commissions, as subsidiary bodies of ECOSOC, are given important roles to support implementation, review and follow-up of the 2030 Agenda, complementary to their roles to support VPoA implementation. He also mentioned that the Financing For Development Forum will convene this year. One specific proposal in the SG report is for ECOSOC to establish a forum for reviewing implementation of the 2030 agenda in countries in special situations.

Mr. Pierre noted that the annual cycle of ECOSOC presents opportunities to address LLDCs issues and the VPoA. Some of the opportunities include: the Special Meeting on Inequality on March 30, which will cover the multidimensional aspects of inequality, including between countries, and policy responses; Partnerships Forum on March 31, which will discuss how to promote partnerships for development; ECOSOC Integration Segment from 2-4 May which will focus on how policy innovation can support
implementation of the SDGs; and High-level Political Forum and High-level Segment in July, which will begin the review of progress in implementation and provide political guidance to Member States.

In his presentation, Mr. Baher El-Hifnawi, Global Lead on Development Corridors and Regional Integration, World Bank, introduced the global solution group which he leads, which promotes competitiveness through business linkages and alleviation of cross border barriers. LLDCs’ constraints have always been some of World Bank priorities and each year $2 billion is invested to improve connectivity for the LLDCs. In addition, trust funds are managed to provide an additional $1 billion in resources to LLDCs.

He highlighted that dealing with soft infrastructure is more difficult than hard infrastructure, and thus we need to work collectively to bring the political will to focus on the soft side. He showcased some of the impacts that have been seen, such as reduction of the transit time from Mombasa to Kigali from 19 days in 2005 to 6 days. The World Bank is trying hard to use different lending instruments to implement the LLDC agenda, involving LLDCs and transit countries. He noted that to improve transport, World Bank financed $3.2 billion to develop section of the new silk road in Kazakhstan, which helped reduce transit time from 15 to 9 days between China and Kazakhstan. He also pointed out that the World Bank is providing loans to both LLDCs and transit countries. Mr. El-Hifnawi also said that upstream analytical work is also taking place at the World Bank.

He noted that the measurement of corridor performance is not done systematically, but could be done on a sustainable basis with ICTs, to give insight into how it can be improved. He stressed that it is important to look at regional integration on how it can enlarge the corridors and bring participation of the private sector. He noted that World Bank stands ready to create and manage a dedicated LLDC trust fund, if there is enough donor interest. He indicated that such a trust fund would assist the LLDCs clients – and their transit neighbours – in policy reforms to improve their connectivity, and in upstream studies to facilitate infrastructure investments that will landlink them.

In her presentation, Dr. Chantal Line Carpentier, Chief of the UNCTAD New York Office said that UNCTAD has supported the LLDCs to derive maximum benefits from international trade through substantive and technical work on LLDCs. She noted that the 2015 regular session of UNCTAD's Trade and Development Board officially invited UNCTAD to mainstream the VPoA into its programme of work. Dr. Carpentier highlighted UNCTAD’s work on productive capacities, as well as on helping LLDCs to participate in global value chains. She mentioned the UNCTAD publication “Facilitating the Participation of Landlocked Developing Countries in Commodity Value Chains” which presents case studies (mining sectors of Botswana and Zambia, the cotton-textile sector of Uzbekistan, the sugar sector of Paraguay and the copper/coal sector of Mongolia) as well as best practices, challenges and recommendations on how to create more value and move up value chains.

UNCTAD is also working with LLDCs that are also LDCs, such as organizing with the Government of Lao PDR and UNDP a workshop on graduation and implications to Lao
PDR, which addressed the need for implementing trade and development policies. In Livingstone, Zambia, UNCTAD co-organized a side event on productive capacities and how LLDCs can address lack of economic diversification. She also noted that UNCTAD is undertaking a development account project focusing on diversifying fish exports in Uganda, as well as organizing dialogue in Ethiopia to look at best practices and articulating strategies and policies for using the diaspora to help national development. She said that UNCTAD also recently held Cabinet Briefing in Malawi to help the government formulate an integrated national development strategy and ensuring its implementation, in light of the 2030 agenda. In addition, UNCTAD is developing an index for measuring structural economic transformation.

In conclusion, Dr. Carpentier informed that UNCTAD XIV will be held in Nairobi this year. The LLDC group in Geneva is working with secretariat on the outcome document, which includes a number of key LLDC issues, such as trade in services, productive capacities, LLDC integration in trade, trade logistics and customs cooperation, and WTO TFA implementation.

In his presentation, Mr. Paul Maseli, Director of UNIDO New York Office and Representative to the UN and other international organizations mentioned that UNIDO’s mandate speaks to the needs of LDCs and LLDCs for enhancing productive capacities and moving up value chains. Above all, people need strong employment opportunities and the industrial sector has linkages with other sectors of the economy. He noted that the AAAA stressed industrial development for developing countries and therefore part of the battle has already been won as the international community recognized the link between economic development, jobs and sustainable development.

Mr. Maseli informed the meeting that UNIDO supported LLDC governments such as Burundi, Mali, South Sudan, Bhutan, Mongolia, Central Asian LLDCs and Bolivia through technical cooperation activities and implementation of a wide array of strategy and innovative tools, focusing on for example modernizing fisheries industry, promoting youth employment, strengthening agro-industries and increasing trade competitiveness through strengthening compliance with SPS measures and WTO rules and regulations. He noted that UNIDO has developed country programmes for 6 LLDCs in Africa, namely Burkina Faso, Chad, Lesotho, Niger, Uganda and Zambia, in accordance with the special needs and development plans of the countries. The country programme for Afghanistan is under formulation. Mr. Maseli highlighted that UNIDO is moving towards a new generation of country programmes, based on partnerships, so called partnership country programmes. He concluded by saying that the new UNIDO partnership country programmes aims amongst others to help countries address coordination failures and to provide the platform to bring together various stakeholders in a country to and address developmental challenges.

In her presentation, Ms. Gail Hurley, Policy Specialist on Development Finance, UNDP stated that UNDP has worked on the implementation of many development agendas. She informed the meeting that in terms of SDG implementation UNDP is focused on mainstreaming the SDGs at national and local levels, integrating SDGs into national
plans, raising awareness of SDGs at national level, and also supporting governments to generate the data necessary to monitor the SDGs.

Ms. Hurley highlighted the Tax Inspectors Without Borders project, a partnership launched by UNDP and OECD, which provides targeted technical assistance for tax auditing and capacity enhancement of national tax authorities. Through the project, trained/experienced tax auditors work alongside tax administrators in developing countries to provide them with on the job training. She informed the meeting that the pilot phase of the project carried out by OECD over 18 months period demonstrated success of this kind of technical assistance. OECD and UNDP are now scaling up the project, building on UNDP country level presence.

Ms. Hurley also noted that UNDP is supporting governments to implement the actions in the VPoA, AAAA, and 2030 Agenda. Recognizing that data collection is challenging, UNDP supports developing countries in the process of data collection and harmonization. Despite the importance of the commitments to strengthen domestic resource mobilization for sustainable development, it is no panacea. She concluded by saying that UNDP advocates increases in ODA and or larger proportion of aid going to those most in need.

**Discussion**

In the following discussion, participants expressed their views on the implementation of the different developmental processes and how to bring coherence. The participants expressed appreciation to OHRLLS for organizing the retreat and to the organizations for their various initiatives towards LLDCs and the implementation of the VPoA. One of the main points highlighted in the session was the critical role of partnerships between LLDCs, transit countries, developed countries and the UN system and other international organizations. Participants also stressed the important role of South-South and Triangular cooperation, including the need to exchange experience such as between regions. The issue of how to implement the many different commitments, through different mechanisms coherently was raised.

The Permanent Representative of Netherlands shared the experience of Netherlands within the European context by highlighting that Rotterdam is the biggest port for Austria, even though there are other closed ports. He explained that this is because of the deep integration of Europe, which facilitates commerce. He noted that the Netherlands is a committed development partner and will continue to provide official development assistance. He said that Netherlands is also working to support awareness raising of the international community on preferential market access.

The participants stressed that the meeting was a great opportunity to engage on issues related to LLDCs and discuss the importance of advocacy in strengthening partnerships for the LLDCs. In terms of coherence within the UN system, the need for coordination within the UN system agencies was called for. The revolutionary proposal by Kazakhstan to transform ECOSOC into the Global Development Council, where not only simply UN member states but also all heads of UN specialized agencies including the IMF and
World Bank are present was mentioned as a way for the Council to act as a global economic regulator to help decrease the risk of global crises, as well as other challenges that LLDCs are facing today. Questions were raised to the panellists about how to better position LLDC issues in the work of the Regional Commissions and ECOSOC; and how the synergies that are being built along all the different processes can be made to beneficial to the LLDCs?

The meeting highlighted that mobilization of domestic resources still remains a challenge and that political will is needed at the national level to make resources available for implementation. Several participants from LLDCs that are also LDCs, like Nepal, Niger and Laos, expressed their intention to graduate from the LDC category. They highlighted the difficulty of integrating all the different frameworks into national development plans and developing coherent monitoring mechanisms. It was stressed that all categories can be overcome, except being landlocked which is permanent. The Permanent Representative of Lao shared with the meeting that his country is at the end of the current national development plan, giving an opportunity for the VPoA and Agenda 2030 to be mainstreamed into the next stage of national planning. Human capacity was highlighted as key to national development plan creation and implementation.

The participants stressed that to implement and monitor all the global agendas, it is important to gather and have available the necessary data. The relevance of the UN system agencies and other partners to contribute to developing capacity of national statistical offices for data collection was highlighted. A question was posed with regards to the different kinds of data requested from the national level, but with different interpretations and different reporting and monitoring systems and how to coordinate data governance issues and synchronize and harmonize data?

Regional integration and connectivity was one of the areas where the participants shared their experiences, including being part of regional agreements such as ASEAN or COMESA. Participants also noted with regards to intra-regional trade in Africa, the tariff is much higher than selling overseas and enquired what could be done to facilitate trade within the continent. Another challenge that was mentioned was the rapidly increasing cost of insurance for transportation due to high transportation risk. In this regards, it was mentioned that peace and security have to be also taken into account as they can derail all development efforts. Some participants called for greater leadership in the respective regions to address the LLDCs challenges, as well as challenges of countries coming out of conflict.

Participants were invited to consider the potential of Eurasian Economic Union, as providing best opportunity to connect markets from South-East Asia, Europe, Middle East and parts of Africa. Participants stressed that elimination of tariff barriers in particular at the regional level, is necessary. The meeting noted that support from transit countries is critical in this regards and they need to be informed more about the challenges of the LLDCs.
Infrastructure, transport and trade facilitation were highlighted as key for boosting integration of LLDCs into the global system, together with lowering of tariffs. On infrastructure, participants noted the importance of better infrastructure that more easily supports industrialization and value addition. Participants were encouraged to pay attention to the ECOSOC Infrastructure Forum, and make their contribution. Participants inquired about the possibility of institutions such as UNCTAD and World Bank to have a special window mechanism for the LLDCs group to boost infrastructure development and facilitate trade facilitation; and requested the World Bank to work on mobilizing the private sector to contribute to infrastructure development.

On trade facilitation, the WTO Trade Facilitation Agreement was mentioned as having the potential to lower the cost of trade by 15%, which helps to improve competitiveness, in addition to a number of useful provisions for LLDCs.

Bringing down the costs and procedures of customs was also highlighted as a chance to eradicate corruption. Furthermore, the role of technology, in particular ICT was stressed in terms of soft infrastructure. In order to address the issues of LLDCs, the importance of cooperation with transit countries and servicing of transit corridors was stressed, including for example establishment of one stop border post (OSBP).

Questions from the participants included should we aim for zero hour delay at borders and how do we get there?; why are average transport cost in Africa twice the world average and what can we do about it?; how can non-tariff barriers be reduced in order to facilitate more integration?; how to reach zero tariff?; how is UNCTAD working on the issue of barriers, such as subsidies?; what can be done to improve market access and quota-free market access for LLDCs’ products?; since most LLDCs are single commodity dependent, what can be done to broaden the base of the economies of the LLDCs to ensure that they move up value chains and enhance their integration to the global economy?

Question from participants to UNIDO specifically inquired on what is the difference of their new partnership country programmes. Participants inquired about the most important reforms that UNDP is planning to adapt to the challenges of LDCs and LLDCs in view of the 2030 Agenda and the criteria and procedures for participating in the Tax Inspectors Without Border initiative.

The participants also stressed the challenge of climate change for LLDCs, highlighting for example issues such as desertification and drought citing drought in Southern Africa brought by El Nino, the fact that 70% of areas of Mongolia is affected by desertification and Zimbabwe and Zambia experiencing negative effects of limited water on electricity production. The participants highlighted the need for climate funding and welcomed the event being organized by Sweden on climate finance.

Participants showed interest in the International Think Tank on LLDCs and inquired an update on its operations and how it would cooperate with the Friends of the LLDCs. LLDCs were called on to ratify the agreement on the establishment of the Think Tank.
which can provide impetus to the operationalization of the Think Tank and the implementation of the VPoA.

Mr. Igor Runov, IRU, informed the meeting that two months ago the resolution on multi-modal transit corridors, which was initiated by Turkmenistan and supported by 25 countries, was adopted. He noted that it provides important political guidelines for inland as well as global corridors, which is very different from the previous approach. As a step towards implementation, he noted that IRU and Global Compact initiated at the Vienna Conference the creation of global partnerships for sustainable transport, which was launched on 26 September 2016 and will be inaugurated later this year during the November/December Global Transport Conference.

The panellists then answered the questions from the audience. Mr. Neil Pierre, ECOSOC answered the questions on how to build synergies of different processes, especially with the focus on LLDCs’ issues or concerns and the questions of how coherence could be forged with all of these processes. He explained that the 2030 agenda builds on the mandates of existing architecture. He urged LLDCs to advocate for the integration of their specific interests and concerns within every part of the architecture, in keeping with its mandate. For example, LLDCs should engage in the statistical commission, as well as the special bodies of the regional commissions. He noted that most of the forums serve as dialogue platforms and that LLDCs need to make sure that their issues are placed as part of that dialogue.

On the question of data governance and coordination, Mr. Pierre indicated that Member States have an important role to play in each of the levels of implementation, review, and follow-up, national, regional or global. He informed the meeting that ECOSOC has been spearheading the dialogue on reposition of the UN system in view of the new global agendas, which will conclude in June 2016 and subsequently feed into the Quadrennial Comprehensive Policy Review (QCPR) process. He said that at the national level, UN Country Teams are playing an enhanced role in helping Governments with data collection and analysis. At the global level, DESA is involved in developing the SDG indicators. He said that the UN system is also implementing a development account project to provide capacity building support.

Mr. Baher El-Hifnawi, World Bank, indicated that the World Bank has a global solutions group that deals with the private sector. He explained that there are different aspects along corridors that delay transit and that while 6 hour delay at borders is far from optimal, it will improve over time. He noted that transport costs in Africa are probably more than twice the world average, but this cost is not pure cost, but also exacerbated by inefficiencies in the system, on which more analysis needs to be done. He informed that if there is political will, then a trust fund can be created to also conduct some of the analytical work to show the gains to transit countries from helping LLDCs. At the project level, he highlighted that it is more effective when the World Bank, European Bank for Reconstruction and Development and European Investment Bank talk to the countries in one unified voice.
Dr. Chantal Line Carpentier, UNCTAD pointed out that based on the UNCTAD case studies, key areas of action for LLDCs are trade facilitation, infrastructure development including energy, trade, investment policies, productive capacity development, human capital development, private sector development, capacity development for moving up the value chain, and institutions. For example, Botswana started to invest in those areas simultaneously which led to job creation. The studies also indicate that best practices include allowing electronic submission processing, creating single windows, use of risk based inspections, improving regional cooperation, sparking competition and improving transparency to minimizing cost. She called on Member States to consider ratifying the TFA, so as to have it enter into force and be implemented as soon as possible providing support to LLDCs.

Dr. Carpentier noted that a cluster on trade and productive capacity was created by UN CEB about ten years ago that includes several agencies and the regional commissions to help countries at the country implement and there is potential to collaborate with the World Bank and the dedicated LLDC Trust Fund to better finance these activities. To respond to Burkina Faso, she said that UNCTAD and World Bank have database on non-tariff measures and also work on harmonization, including across regions. She informed that UNCTAD opened an office in Addis Ababa last year to better support our regional work in Africa. She urged countries, if they think that UNCTAD needs to do more, to voice their concerns during the preparation and UNCTAD XIV.

Mr. Paul Maseli, UNIDO mentioned that in terms of manufacturing value added, which shows industrialization level, there is no difference between LDCs and LLDCs. He called for national leadership in order to achieve effective implementation. He explained that UNIDO’s new approach is more holistic and comprehensive, including institutional and capacity building and investment promotion. He said that this approach also solves the coordination problem for the Government as it includes all the different actors. In addition, The Programme for Country Partnership (PCP) also has a robust review and monitoring system as UNIDO conducts monthly reviews and other various reviews, produces reports and is member of the steering committee of the projects.

Ms. Gail Hurley, UNDP, explained that if there is interest at the country level to implement the Tax Inspectors without Borders, OECD, UNDP and UN Country Teams will work with the national tax administrations to define what the country needs, including support to articulate the needs into a request and then engage the experts. She noted that it is time a consuming process, but UNDP aims to support all countries interested and urged interested countries to approach UNDP. She informed the participants that they are in the process of developing online knowledge platform providing all the information and showcasing results. She noted that the challenge is that sometimes governments do not feel like they have the leverage to deal with large enterprises.

On private sector, she mentioned that UNDP has a couple of initiatives, including inclusive business imitative and is working to engage philanthropists. On coordination, she pointed out many initiatives on SDGs, many of which are in partnership with other
agencies. She highlighted that UNDP is already a key focal point in many countries for coordination amongst donors to ensure coherence and avoid duplication, but the results depend on donors, other agencies and national governments working together.

Mr. Acharya closed the session by highlighting that coherence among sectors should also be ensured, including ODA, trade and investment and that international support has to look at implementation in a holistic way. He noted that coherence within country and national leadership are critical and dedicated national level programmes and resources need to be in place.

**D. Coherence in the indicators for monitoring the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, Addis Ababa Action Agenda and the Vienna Programme of Action**

In this session chaired by Dr. Mwaba Patricia Kasese-Bota, Ms. Francesca Perucci, UN DESA and Ms. Gladys Mutangadura, UN-OHRLLS, gave presentations to introduce indicators for monitoring agendas.

Dr. Mwaba Patricia Kasese-Bota, Chair of the LLDCs mentioned the importance of robust indicators to monitor the SDGs. She indicated that Member States had received some initial communication from the statistical commission and UN DESA which provided a draft set of indicators that had been proposed. She noted that it is important that the LLDCs’ indicators can be mainstreamed into the global development indicators so that the global indicators can speak to both the 2030 agenda as well as the VPoA. She stressed the need for the session to discuss how to build coherence into the development programs, find some challenges involved and discuss possible solutions to support the group of LLDCs.

In her presentation, Ms. Francesca Perucci, Chief of Statistical Services Branch, Statistics Division, UN DESA, gave a brief update via skype on where the process was with regards to the preparation of the SDG indicators. She indicated the Inter-agency and Expert Group on SDG Indicators (IAEG-SDGs), composed of Member States and including regional and international agencies as observer were preparing input on indicators to be considered by the Statistical Commission in its upcoming meeting in March. She mentioned that there is a document prepared by the group which provides a description of the work done over the last couple of months. She noted that the IAEG-SDGs will meet in Mexico at the end of March, to establish procedures for the methodological review of indicators, assess development of global reporting mechanisms, including identifying entities responsible for compiling data for global reporting on individual indicators and discussing data flow from the national to the global level and establish of a tier system for indicators.

Ms. Perucci informed participants about the development account project to support strengthening of national statistical systems. She indicated that UN DESA launched the project with other agencies and donors to facilitate communication within national statistical systems so as to promote exchange of data and experiences. She also noted that
there is the idea of organizing a UN world data forum which can bring together all the relevant stakeholders and enhance partnerships.

In her presentation, Ms. Gladys Mutangadura, Senior Economic Affairs Officer, UN-OHRLLS focused on synergies between the SDGs and VPoA indicators, noted that the SDGs’ indicators will help in monitoring the overall progress of the LLDCs towards achieving the overarching goal of the VPoA which is to address the special needs and challenges of LLDCs. She noted that some of the proposed SDG indicators can be used to track progress in some of the priority areas of the VPoA that include Priority area 2 on infrastructure development and maintenance, Priority area 3 on international trade, Priority area 5 on structural economic transformation, and Priority area 6 on Means of implementation. She pointed out that the VPoA priority areas that cannot be monitored using the currently proposed SDG indicators include Priority 1 on transit policy issues and Priority 4 on regional integration and cooperation. She concluded by indicating the need to build coherence in monitoring the implementation of the VPoA and the SDGs.

Dr. Mwaba Patricia Kasese-Bota concluded that most of LLDCs are resource constrained, and that they need support to help them develop robust methods of data monitoring and reporting. Participants stressed the urgent need to translate the commitments to support the LLDCs into reality on the ground and the need for stronger partnerships and collective efforts to address the problem.

E. Promoting the Legal Framework for Transit Cooperation

In this session that was chaired by Mr. Gyan Chandra Acharya, presentations were made by IRU and OLA. Introducing the session, Mr. Acharya highlighted that in international, bilateral and multilateral relations, we have to look at the value of becoming party to legal instruments as a form of collaboration. In LLDCs, transit policy plays a critical role in the overarching goal of protecting people from poverty, as showcased in it being the first priority of the VPoA.

In his presentation, Mr. William Petty, Head of IRU Regional Committee for Africa, introduced the IRU as the organization representing the trucking sector and how to move goods across borders, connect LLDCs with ports and facilitating access to external markets is at the core of IRU business. Mr. Petty informed the meeting that efficient road transport requires good infrastructure, harmonised legislative frameworks to facilitate trade and international road transport and service excellence. In this regard, implementation of global transit frameworks is the key, with accession being the first step.

He introduced some of the key legal frameworks for LLDCs, including the WTO TFA which includes Article 11 on freedom of transit; the WCO Revised Kyoto Convention for simplified, harmonised customs procedures which also includes a number of aspects relating to transit; the UN Harmonisation Convention which includes a number of articles on harmonization of control procedures, control of vehicles and vehicle inspection, and international vehicle weight certificate. Mr. Petty also highlighted the UN TIR
Convention, indicating that IRU runs the day to day operations of the TIR system which enables goods to move in transit through any contracting party, on the basis of a single customs document, the TIR Carnet. He stressed that the TIR Convention is a best practice and it has been a proven solution in Europe and Asia and is applicable to other regions including Africa.

Mr. Petty noted that although all of the above legal frameworks include transit as a key component, there are many different ways to implement transit, with differing results. For instance, in West Africa, a legal framework for transit has existed since 1982, but still does not function at all. And in East Africa, Mr Petty cited a particular scenario where it would cost around $1320 in transit fees to move a container from Mombasa to Kigali using national transit bonds; if a regional transit system was implemented by COMESA the cost would fall to $720; and if TIR was implemented the cost would fall to around $100. He also noted that some goods are particularly vulnerable to excessive controls, such as dangerous goods and perishable goods, and therefore the implementation of harmonised legal frameworks, such as the ADR and ATP Agreements can be very beneficial. Furthermore, on service excellence, Mr Petty mentioned various studies which indicate that if drivers are trained to drive economically, they can improve fuel efficiency by 5-20%, which is something that IRU is also focusing on. He stressed that such small practical things can make a big difference, as for example in Rwanda which has 500 trucks, the annual saving could be $600,000. He concluded that IRU remains committed to supporting LLDCs and their transit neighbours in acceding to and implementing the conventions.

In his presentation, Mr. Santiago Villalpando, Chief of the Treaty Section, UN OLA, addressed the legal requirements and practical arrangements for states to participate in the multilateral legal framework. He stressed that while relatively straightforward, the failure to meet the legal requirements or omission of formal element in the process may cause problems and delays of weeks, months, or even years. He informed the meeting that transit treaties appoint the Secretary-General as the depositary, and the treaty section of OLA is the sole office responsible for the discharge of the depositary functions of the SG. The depositary is custodian of the original of the treaty and a gate keeper to the treaty regime, with the SG being a depositary of more than 560 treaties, including Law of the Sea Convention and Paris Agreement and he has the authoritative force to say who is a party to the treaty, adopt text of the treaty and determine when treaty enters into force. He highlighted some of the conventions relevant to the LLDCs, including the Multilateral Agreement on the Establishment of the International Think Tank for LLDCs which is not yet in force as it needs 5 more accessions. He said that all information on accession, ratification, etc. is available on the website https://treaties.un.org/.

With regards to the process of becoming party to a treat, Mr. Villalpando explained the steps. First a country participates in the negotiations of the treaty which then leads to adoption of the text of the treaty. But this does not imply yet any obligations for the country. The signing of the treaty also does not, in most cases, express the consent to be bound by the treaty, with the TIR and the Harmonisations convention being the exceptions. The next step is for countries to accede to the treaty, with the domestic
process depending on the legislation of each country. He noted that there is a difference between the domestic ratification of the treaty and the expression of consent to be bound by the treaty at the international level. For the latter, the next step is deposit of the instrument of accession or ratification acceptance. This instrument of deposit needs to bear the title of treaty, full name and title of the person who signed the instrument and unambiguous expression of the intent of the state to consider itself bound by the treaty. He informed that two important requirements often cause problems: one is signature which needs to be either of the Head of State, Head of Government or Minister for Foreign Affairs, and the other is that to effect the deposit, the instrument needs to be submitted to the Treaty Section exclusively and no other offices in the system. For example, UN ECE may be the face of the treaty, but it has to be submitted to OLA.

For the deposit, he explained that there are two options: it can be sent to the Treaty Section by mail or courier, alternatively submission of copy can be accepted, provided that it is copy of signed instrument and subject to later receipt of the original. The other option is ceremony of the deposit of the instrument, providing photo opportunity and inviting witnesses to be present on the location of signing. He noted that a special occasion for ceremonies is the annual treaty event, organized every year with a junction of General Debate of General Assembly.

Mr. Villalpando explained that the treaty does not enter into force immediately, with different treaties having different timelines for entry into force. He also noted that deposit does not end the process, as becoming a party to the treaty implies need for implementation and other commitments, but this is where the substantive secretariat takes over from OLA. He urged Member States to keep up to date on what is happening to the treaties, such as other states not acceding to the treaty or having reservations.

**Discussion**

Mr. Acharya, in opening the discussion, highlighted the importance for LLDCs of acceding to legal conventions related to transit in order to reap the benefits of harmonization and noted that OHRLLS is writing to Member States to participate in the Treaty Event.

The participants highlighted some of their experiences and challenges with acceding to and implementing legal frameworks. One of the main issues mentioned was that LLDCs face problems especially with implementation of the conventions. It was also highlighted that only a few LLDCs joined the TIR convention and that there is a need to understand the TIR Convention more in order to increase the engagement of LLDCs. In addition, participants noted that the TIR Convention needs to be implemented by both, LLDCs and transit countries, to be effective and fully operationalized at the regional level.

For example, it was noted that while the ECOWAS has a system for free circulation of goods and persons, the reality on the ground is that additional fees are charged. Therefore, the participants highlighted that implementation is key in order to see actual results on the ground.
Other challenges mentioned by the participants included the challenges for resource rich LLDCs to diversify their economies, attracting foreign investments, the issue of tariffs and transit rules and procedures for LLDCs when exporting to or through transit neighbours, and inefficient road infrastructure. On diversification and structural transformation of LLDC economies, the participants heard that it is important to think innovatively and focus on services such as tourism and other sectors of the economy other than raw commodities. Climate change and desertification were also mentioned as challenges for some of the LLDCs.

Several participants talked about the relationship between road transport and other modes of transport. The example of Austria, as a landlocked and mountainous country was used to illustrate how to bring transportation from the road to the rails. It was highlighted that railway does not need to be state-owned or that private companies can use state owned railways. It was also mentioned that in Europe there exists the principle of unbundling, meaning that the owner of pipelines does not have ownership and authority over what comes through pipelines.

The Permanent Representative of Mongolia informed the meeting on the International Think Tank for LLDCs which was launched by the government of Mongolia in 2009. Its goal is to carry out research and undertake advocacy efforts to build capacity of LLDCs. Mongolia is the single country financing the Think Tank. He urged the Member States to ratify the Agreement on the Establishment of the Think Tank, since ratification by ten LLDCs will allow for the Think Tank to receive more support from the international community. The Deputy Permanent Representative of Sweden, as a co-chair of the Group of Friends of LLDCs mentioned that the co-chairs of the Group are planning to invite the Executive Director of the Think Tank to come to New York to brief the Member States.

Several participants inquired about what is the IRU mechanism for training drivers, calling for resources, donors and organizations to help LLDCs to ensure trucks and drivers who meet international standards; how is IRU working with regional and sub-regional organizations; what are the reasons for the low accession of LLDCs to the TIR convention; whether the TIR Convention responds to transit security issues; with regards to weigh bridges, how can Member States be assured that the weight of containers is not tampered with while in transit; whether transit countries are also acceding to the TIR convention; and how can government representative be of assistance to IRU in terms of spreading the word about acceding to the TIR Convention.

Other questions from the participants included what is the relationship between legal frameworks relating to transit and the provisions of the Convention on the Law of the Sea; whether power of attorney would be enough for signature of conventions and how can OLA effectively function as the gatekeeper to more than 560 treaties.

Mr. Sandagdorj Erdenebileg, Chief, OHRLLS, noted that the legal framework is a very important issue for the LLDCs. He mentioned that there are more than 50 international conventions on trade, transit and transport. He informed the meeting that an expert group
meeting held in December 2015 considered those conventions and selected five which are the most important for the LLDCs. The USG is making a suggestion to include these five in the list of conventions for the Treaty Event, subsequent of which the USG will write to Member States appealing for them to take active participation in the event. He also informed that OHRLLS will organize, in consultation with ECE, IRU and OLA, seminars for LLDCs and transit countries in Addis Ababa in March 2016, in New York in May 2016 and in Geneva in June 2016 on the benefits of conventions and how to accede. He stressed that the aim for this year is to have a number of member states accede to the important conventions.

Mr. William Petty, IRU addressed the questions from participants, first highlighting that one of the advantages of implementing a transit system within the framework of a UN Convention is that if there are issues to be discussed between contracting parties, there is a clear framework to do so at the UN level. On driver training, he explained that IRU has the IRU academy, its training arm, which develops training capacity through national sustainable solutions, by training trainers and helping instructors develop curriculum for training courses.

He explained that the TIR is not costly, since IT systems exist already and implementation is simple and very low cost. On weight certification, he noted that the basis of TIR is that the moment goods leave, the truck is sealed and thus there would be no goods added or taken out of the truck. He mentioned that the TIR convention is about customs duties on the goods, but that there is a security element since trucks receive a seal that is not to be broken in transit. He cautioned that the gross weight does not change in transit, but a lot of regulations are based on axle weight which can change on road. He noted that there are over 50 instruments within the ECE related to transit and transport and that implementation of some of them can be challenge at the regional level since some of the conventions can be costly for transporters to implement.

He also explained that the Law of the Sea Convention and other transit agreements are complementary, as the former is about maritime transport, but the other agreements are about the goods themselves and the customs. He concluded by saying that the political framework in terms of the VPoA and the SDGs and the legal frameworks is in place, and urged Member States to get the message across to capitals.

Mr. Santiago Villalpando, OLA, answered the questions targeted to him. He informed the participants that OLA is depository of a lot of treaties, except for some such as for example the TFA which sits with WTO and the Kyoto Convention which sits with WCO. He explained that gate keeping means that OLA is mandated to implement the final clauses such as not allowing those who cannot accede to the treaty to sign. He said that in terms of depositing ratifications, the permanent missions are the counterpart in New York. He also answered that with the power of attorney the deposit of the instrument is admissible from other people than the Head of State, Head of Government or Minister for Foreign Affairs.
On the treaty event, he noted that the choice by OHRLLS to highlight just a few conventions was correct in order to increase accession, but stressed that during the event governments can act on any treaty deposited with the SG. On the Paris Agreement, he highlighted that the next step in the process is the signature, and that opening for signature is on April 22 but that this is not the acceptance of the agreement, rather just a signal to wish to ratify it in the future.

**F. Way forward and Closing**

In the closing statement, Mr. Gyan Chandra Acharya and Dr. Mwaba Patricia Kasese-Bota summarized and wrapped up the meeting.

In his closing remarks, Mr. Acharya thanked the participants for their comprehensive and valuable contributions to the discussions. He indicated that the meeting had discussed the recent developments in the global development arena and how these relate to the special needs of the LLDCs and analyzed the linkages. He underscored that the speakers had presented some of the follow-up processes to the global development frameworks and what their organizations are doing. He indicated that the discussions had identified areas that LLDCs should focus on in order to explore and foster synergies in the implementation of the different agendas.

He highlighted the following as some of the main points that arose from the discussions which are important to take forward:

- The LLDCs should continue to take lead in implementing the VPoA and in building synergy and coherence with the global development agenda. Thus the active participation of the LLDCs is required in the United Nations meetings including ECOSOC, HLPF, the General Assembly and beyond. The LLDCs should be part of the international events that will take place this year and in the future.
- OHRLLS should intensify its advocacy and coordination and support for the LLDCs.
- The UN agencies should provide more support and other development partners should focus their efforts and support to LLDCs in implementing the VPoA and in building synergies at all levels.
- Particular efforts should be made to address those LLDC issues that are not included in the 2030 Agenda. OHRLLS in particular will continue to look at the issue of transit in a much closer way as it is very important to create a win-win situation in the legal framework and implementation which is based on best practices and successful experiences.

In closing, the Under-Secretary General reiterated that the VPoA is integral to the implementation of the 2030 Agenda. He underscored that the implementation of the 2030 Agenda and the VPoA are mutually reinforcing and have to be undertaken together. He encouraged all the participants to make the new development agenda for the LLDCs a success so that they can benefit in terms of structural transformation of their economies.
In her closing remarks, Dr. Kasese-Bota indicated that the LLDCs have the primary responsibility of implementing the VPoA. She encouraged the LLDCs that were present to advance national efforts in implementing the VPoA, Agenda 2030, and Addis Ababa Action Agenda. She emphasized that the key to successful implementation is mainstreaming of the development blueprints into the national development and sectoral plans.

Ambassador Kasese-Bota called upon the LLDCs to utilize the available UN system’s support to accelerate implementation. In particular she asked the LLDCs to tap on the following forms of available technical assistance:

- OHRLLS’ to assist in national level mainstreaming and implementation of the VPoA;
- UNDP efforts to assist in the implementation of Agenda 2030 in particular through the MAPS (Mainstreaming, Acceleration and Policy Support) programme;
- UNCTAD’s technical assistance in the areas of investment promotion and diversification;
- UNIDO’s technical assistance on industrialisation and energy.
- With the World Bank to continue dialogue on the establishment and operationalisation of the trust fund for the LLDCs.

Ambassador Kasese-Bota noted that it is important to advance implementation of both the VPoA and 2030 Agenda including through intense advocacy. She also stressed that it is very important for the LLDCs to ratify the WTO Trade Facilitation Agreement as it is important for improving the trade potential of the LLDCs.

She urged the LLDC Group to strive to ensure that the issues of the LLDCs remain high in these follow-up processes in the General Assembly, ECOSOC and in other fora. She called upon the members to attend all the relevant meetings and to act together.

She presented the following list of activities based on the discussions held in the retreat and encouraged all participants to attend the meetings.

- 23-24 June 2016 in Geneva, Fifth Meeting of LLDCs Ministers of Trade – supported financially by the Government of the Netherlands.
- 24-25 October 2016 in Vienna, Austria, Senior Officials Meeting on Promoting Sustainable Energy for all in the LLDCs.
- November 2016, Transport Ministers Meeting in Bolivia.
- 17 March 2016 in New York, Meeting on Climate Finance by Sweden

She indicated that a comprehensive list with all the relevant events will be circulated to the LLDC Group members.
Ambassador Kasese-Bota also noted that the activities of the Group of Friends of LLDCs need to be defined and shared with the LLDC Group. In concluding her remarks she stressed the importance of partnerships and the need to follow-up with the Group of Friends of LLDCs and other partners.

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56. Ms. Gladys Mutangadura, Senior Economic Affairs Officer, OHRLLS, mutangadura@un.org
57. Ms. Dagmar Hertova, Economic Affairs Officer, OHRLLS, hertova@un.org
58. Ms. Aranya Amaritnant, Administrative Assistant, OHRLLS, amaritnant@un.org
59. Ms. Songyi Paik, Intern, OHRLLS, songyipaik@gmail.com

World Bank
60. Mr. Baher El-Hifnawi, Global Lead, Development Corridors and Regional Integration, World Bank, melhifnawi@worldbank.org
ANNEX 2 – Programme of Retreat of the LLDCs Group: The Implications of the New Global Development Agenda for the LLDCs and the Way Forward held at Glen Cove Mansion Hotel and Conference Center, 200 Dosoris Lane, Glen Cove, New York

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Monday, 29 February 2016</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>20:00</td>
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<td>Welcome remarks to the retreat by Mr. Gyan Chandra Acharya Under Secretary-General and High Representative</td>
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<th>Tuesday, 1 March 2016</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>09:00 - 09:50</td>
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<tr>
<td>1. Remarks by Mr. Gyan Chandra Acharya, Under Secretary-General and High Representative</td>
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<td>2. Remarks by H.E. Dr. Mwaba Patricia Kasese-Bota, Permanent Representative of Zambia to the United Nations and the Chair of the global coordination bureau of LLDCs</td>
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<td>3. Remarks by H.E. Mr. Jan Kickert, Permanent Representative of Austria to the United Nations, host of the Second United Nations Conference on LLDCs and Co-Chair of the Group of Friends of LLDCs</td>
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<td>4. Remarks by H.E. Mr. Per Thöresson, Deputy Permanent Representative of Sweden to the United Nations and Co-Chair of the Group of Friends of LLDCs</td>
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<tr>
<td>5. Remarks by Mr. Wu Hongbo, Under-Secretary-General for Economic and Social Affairs, delivered by Mr. Lenni Montiel, Assistant Secretary-General for Economic Development, UN DESA</td>
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| 09:50 – 10:50 | Session 1. Follow-up processes, implementation and coherence between the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, the Addis Ababa Action Agenda and the Vienna Programme of Action |
| Chair: Mr. Gyan Chandra Acharya, Under Secretary-General and High Representative - Introduction of the agenda |
| Mr. Neil Pierre, Chief of Policy Coordination Branch, Office of ECOSOC Support and Coordination, UN DESA |
| Mr. Baher El-Hifnawi, Global Lead on Development Corridors and... |
Regional Integration, World Bank
- Dr. Chantal Line Carpentier, Chief of the UNCTAD New York Office
- Mr. Paul Maseli, Director of UNIDO New York Office and Representative to the UN and other international organizations
- Ms. Gail Hurley, Policy Specialist on Development Finance, UNDP
*Followed by interactive discussion*

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Session/Activity</th>
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<tr>
<td>10:50 – 11:00</td>
<td>COFFEE BREAK</td>
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<tr>
<td>11:00 – 13:00</td>
<td>Session 1. Continued</td>
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<tr>
<td>13:00 – 14:30</td>
<td>LUNCH BREAK</td>
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</table>
| 14:30 – 15:30| **Session 2. Coherence in the indicators for monitoring the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, Addis Ababa Action Agenda and the Vienna Programme of Action**
|              | Chair: H.E. Dr. Mwaba Patricia Kasese-Bota, Chair of the global coordination bureau of LLDCs - *Introduction of the agenda*
|              | - Mr. Lenni Montiel, Assistant Secretary-General for Economic Development, UN DESA
|              | - Ms. Francesca Perucci, Chief of Statistical Services Branch, Statistics Division, UN DESA (via skype)
|              | - Ms. Gladys Mutangadura, Senior Economic Affairs Officer, UN-OHRLLS
|              | *Followed by interactive discussion*                                  |
| 15:30 – 15:45| COFFEE BREAK                                                          |
| 15:45 – 16:30| **Session 3. Legal Framework for Transit Cooperation - Presentations on how Member States can become party to the important legal instruments**
|              | Chair: Mr. Gyan Chandra Acharya, Under Secretary-General and High Representative - *Introduction of the agenda*
|              | - Mr. William Petty, Head of IRU Regional Committee for Africa
|              | - Mr. Santiago Villalpando, Chief of the Treaty Section, UN Office of Legal Affairs (OLA)
|              | *Followed by interactive discussion*                                   |
| 16:30 – 17:15| **Way forward and Closing**                                           |
|              | - Mr. Gyan Chandra Acharya, Under-Secretary-General and High Representative
|              | - H.E. Dr. Mwaba Patricia Kasese-Bota, Chair of the global coordination bureau of LLDCs
| 17:30        | Departure to New York                                                 |