



UN-OHRLLS

Statement by

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

at the meeting of the LLDC Group to handover the LLDC Chairmanship

27 December 2017, 3:00PM

Conference Room 11

Your Excellency, Ambassador Lazarous Kapambwe, Permanent Representative of Zambia,

Your Excellency, Ambassador Julio Cesar Arriola Ramirez, Permanent Representative of Paraguay,

Excellencies, distinguished delegates.

Ladies and gentlemen,

First of all, I would like to thank you for the invitation to this handover meeting. It is my pleasure and honour to be here with you to welcome and to offer our warmest congratulations on the appointment of the new Chair of the LLDC Group.

Paraguay has a long-standing commitment to the LLDC cause, having previously served as the Chair of the Group as well as Bureau member here in New York. Paraguay has also been coordinating the Group on trade issues in Geneva, and we have recently collaborated in organising the LLDC Ministerial Meeting in Argentina during the margins of MC11. I am therefore confident that the Government of Paraguay will successfully carry forward the LLDC agenda, as will Ambassador Arriola Ramirez here in New York.

Allow me to express my sincere appreciation to the Government of Zambia for your strong leadership of the LLDC Group for the past four years and the direction that you have provided for the Group. Zambia has relentlessly advocated for the special needs of the LLDCs. My appreciation also goes to Ambassador Kapambwe for guiding the group here in New York in recent months, and to his predecessor Ambassador Kasese-Bota.

Much has been achieved under Zambia's strong and able leadership. I may have taken up my function only this year, but I am aware of all the efforts that have been made in the lead up to the Second UN Conference on LLDCs and in order to realize a truly comprehensive new agenda for the LLDCs.

A lot of efforts went into spurring and renewing the support of the international community to the LLDC cause and promoting the Vienna Programme of Action that reflects the true priorities of the LLDCs. We are now already almost in the fourth year of the Vienna Programme of Action and we have already seen some good progress achieved in its implementation.

One of the major achievements in recent years, since the Vienna Programme of Action, is that the needs and priorities of the LLDCs have been more clearly and more strongly reflected and incorporated into various international agendas. The recognition of the LLDCs as a group and of your challenges and needs at the international level has been greatly enhanced.

A number of international agendas in recent years have also acknowledged the special circumstances of LLDCs or provide concrete measures that are of critical importance to LLDCs, including the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the Addis Ababa Action Agenda and their follow-up processes, the Paris Agreement, the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk

Reduction, the WTO Trade Facilitation Agreement, the Global Infrastructure Forum, to name a few.

One of the recent notable achievements that I am happy to see is also the entry into force of the Multilateral Agreement for the Establishment of the International Think Tank for LLDCs on the 6th October. This agreement represents a milestone achievement by the LLDCs to advance the implementation of the Vienna Programme of Action.

UN-OHRLLS has been supporting the efforts and work of the Group, at the global, regional and national levels. My Office, often times in collaboration with other UN system and other international organizations, has organized each year numerous events to sensitize the LLDCs and the wider international community on key developmental issues of critical importance to LLDCs.

There is too many to name them all, but the key issues included infrastructure development, transport, trade and trade facilitation, transit issues, structural transformation, aviation development, sustainable energy, regional integration and connectivity, role of the private sector, climate change, land degradation, development assistance and financing, implementation of the SDGs, including SDG 14, as well as national workshops on implementation of the VPoA. We supported the various Ministerial Meetings of the Group in the past four years, including the Annual Foreign Ministers meetings, and Meetings of Ministers of Trade and Transport.

OHRLLS has also continued to coordinate the UN system's engagement through the inter-agency consultative group, through regular meetings. The inter-agency group developed a comprehensive set of indicators that is now used to monitor the progress in the implementation of the Vienna Programme of Action.

At the inter-governmental level, OHRLLS has substantively supported the Group in negotiations of the annual resolution on the landlocked developing countries. We have also provided support for the engagement of the group in inter-governmental fora such as ECOSOC, the General Assembly, the HLPF process and others.

Going forward, I would like to highlight some of the priorities that I see for OHRLLS in terms of supporting the advancement of the LLDC agenda in the coming year.

An important issue that I would like to strongly support your Group in is outlining the special needs of the LLDCs in different global fora, in particular the 2030 Agenda follow-up processes.

It is critical to mainstream your concerns into major United Nations processes in particular the HLPF, Financing for Development Follow-up, as well as the Global Infrastructure Forum, WTO negotiations, South-South Cooperation meetings and others. This will help in getting the necessary support that can help your countries to overcome the challenges that you face.

The HLPF will continue to be an important forum for the LLDCs to bring up your special needs and my office will continue to support you in this endeavour.

The global infrastructure forum is another follow-up process that has great relevance to the Group. It is important that the Forum takes into account the special needs of the LLDCs.

I wish to assure you that the effective implementation of the Vienna Programme of Action is a top priority of our work. OHRLLS continues to be committed to provide substantive support to LLDCs in the implementation of the Vienna Programme of Action and foster coherence with the follow-up and monitoring processes of the 2030 Agenda, Addis Ababa Action Agenda and other global agreements including the Paris Agreement, the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction, the WTO Trade Facilitation Agreement and others.

You may be aware that the mid-term review of the Vienna Programme of Action is coming up. The recently adopted resolution on the implementation of the VPoA has decided to convene the mid-term review no later than December 2019. As designated by the General Assembly, OHRLLS will coordinate the preparatory process, which will include regional preparatory meetings as well as other preparatory events.

The review will be a forum to share best practices, identify obstacles and new challenges encountered and put forward actions needed to overcome them, in order to further accelerate the implementation of the Vienna Programme of Action.

I hope to count on your active engagement and participation in the preparatory process, which will be key to having your concerns heard.

Another issue that I believe is critical and one which I have been actively promoting is the localization of the internationally agreed global frameworks, such as the SDGs and the VPoA. It is my view that having all the relevant stakeholders at national and regional levels to be fully engaged in the implementation of SDGs and the Vienna Programme of Action is key to their successful implementation.

An important element for such effective implementation at national level is mainstreaming of the Programme into national development plans and into the work programmes of the international, regional and sub-regional organizations. I consistently hear about the great need for mainstreaming, especially at the national level.

I cannot stress enough how important it is in LLDC settings to translate global agreements and mechanisms to the realities of your national context. This is the only way that clear outcomes can be achieved on the ground.

OHRLLS stands ready to continue to facilitate these efforts, in particular through joining hands with other parts of the UN system, to translate the Vienna Programme of Action into tangible results at the regional and national levels.

We are fully aware that implementing the 2030 Agenda will require us to redouble our efforts. It is in this regard that the Secretary-General saw it vital to undertake reforms and reposition the UN to be able to deliver on the SDGs including the development, peace and security pillars. The reform measures proposed by the Secretary-General seek to increase efficiency and effectiveness of the UN. It will remain key for LLDCs to remain fully engaged in those

discussions to ensure that UN system is positioned to effectively serve the Members States, especially the most vulnerable group of countries including the LLDCs.

I want to assure you of the UN's support to galvanize international support towards the development of the LLDCs in the coming year.

I would like to further reaffirm my personal commitment and the commitment of OHRLLS to diligently continue to support the Chair and the Group, provide you with relevant substantive support, leverage the combined UN system capacities and knowledge and push for the effective and efficient implementation of the Vienna Programme of Action, in coherence with the 2030 Agenda, the Addis Ababa Action Agenda and other global agreements guiding us. I will pursue strong advocacy and outreach activities to generate the necessary awareness and leverage wider and deeper global partnerships in favour of LLDCs.

I also plan to hold regular consultations maybe three to four times a year with the Bureau, in addition to any LLDC Group engagement. I recall also during my first meeting with the group that I had raised the initiative of appointing "national focal points" from capitals, which has been firmly and successfully being in place for the LDC Group. Formal communication have also been made on this subject matter with the SIDs Group. We will closely follow this matter in the next few months.

If we want to live up to leaving no one behind, if we want to live up to the promise of the SDGs, if we want to leave no place behind, then we must ensure the effective implementation of the Vienna Programme.

My office stands ready to continue to support you in your efforts to achieve sustainable development.

Thank you for your attention.