

**REMARKS BY
H.E.MR.D.TSOGTBAATAR, MINISTER FOR FOREIGN AFFAIRS OF MONGOLIA
AT THE CLOSING OF THE INAUGURAL MEETING OF THE ITT FOR LLDCS**

Ulaanbaatar, June 12, 2018

Excellencies,
Distinguished delegates,
Ladies and gentlemen,

Let me begin by expressing my sincere gratitude to all of you for your active participation and valuable inputs to deliberations at this Inaugural Meeting. As the Secretary-General of the United Nations stressed in his message to this meeting “the establishment of the Think Tank as the first intergovernmental body dedicated to landlocked developing countries is a milestone in efforts to address their special needs”. This is, indeed, a remarkable achievement for the entire family of LLDCs. The full operationalization of the Think Tank is a realization of our common vision to build a platform which generates knowledge and develops analytical tools to overcome our common challenge – landlockedness.

As many of you highlighted the Think Tank is being operationalized at a critical juncture when the international community is set to embrace the implementation of the 2030 Sustainable Development Agenda along with the Paris Agreement, Financing for Development, the Vienna Program of Action and other internationally agreed development goals.

Let me share with you some of my thoughts on the ITT and other issues related to LLDCs.

First, on the International Think Tank. In order to turn the ITT into a centre of excellence for research and policy advice we as owners of the Think Tank need to support it, both politically and financially. In this regard, we fully endorse the appeal to all Member States, including LLDCs, transit countries and development partners, UN system organizations and other stakeholders to provide voluntary contributions to the ITT. As for Mongolia, as a host country we have contributed US\$ 2 mln since 2012, and we will continue our support.

Many important ideas on future research topics and networking opportunities have been voiced at the meeting. I trust that the Executive Director and the Secretariat took note of those observations and would take a follow-up action on them.

Aligning the ITT's research agenda with priority themes at the annual High-level political Forum and other inter-governmental bodies is important in providing timely policy advice to LLDCs.

Undertaking joint research projects with the Office of the High Representative, UNCTAD, UNDP, WTO and other relevant international organizations and research institutions and think tanks on priority areas of the Vienna Program of Action is critical.

Second, there is also a need to identify and disseminate best practices from within the LLDC group, as each member state has its own advantages, good experience and lessons learnt.

For example, my Ministry has recently come up with a travel facilitation initiative with a view to creating an enabling environment for increased trade, investment, connectivity and economic cooperation. It covers countries along the Belt and Road Initiative, i.e around 70 countries in Asia and the Pacific, Africa and Europe, accounting for 65% of the world's population and 30% of its economic output. Within this initiative we have taken the following measures:

- A fast-track lane specifically dedicated to the "Belt and Road – Travel facilitation initiative" at Chinggis Khaan international airport in Ulaanbaatar
- On-arrival visas may be issued to government delegates and business people provided that prior notifications are given to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Mongolia
- Multiple-entry visas may be issued to frequent business travelers with an expedited procedure at Mongolian diplomatic missions located around the world.

Another initiative my Ministry is undertaking is creation of digital Embassies. Seizing the opportunity provided by ICT, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs has started a research on opening the first digital embassy. It is called "e-chambessy", since we are collaborating on the project with the Mongolian National Chamber of Commerce. It will be have a true digital Ambassador and true digital trade attachés to interact with the internet community to attract investors to Mongolia.

We hope that the experience of Mongolia in travel facilitation and creating digital Embassies could be of interest to our fellow landlocked developing countries.

In conclusion, may I express my Government's full endorsement of the Ulaanbaatar Declaration of the Inaugural Meeting of the International Think Tank for LLDCs and its resolve to work together with fellow members towards its speedy implementation.

Thank you for your attention.