



Inaugural meeting of International Think Tank for Landlocked Developing Countries takes place in Mongolia

Press release

Ulaanbaatar, 11 June 2018 – A new centre of excellence for high quality research and policy advice for landlocked developing countries has held its first meeting in Ulaanbaatar, Mongolia today. The International Think Tank for landlocked developing countries, the first intergovernmental body of this group of countries, will strengthen the analytical capacities of the world's 32 poorest landlocked nations in economic growth and poverty reduction. The centre aims to amplify their collective voice and defend the interests of landlocked developing countries at the global level and in the UN.

The two-day inaugural meeting from 11 – 12 June 2018, is being attended by Government representatives, the UN system, representatives from international organisations and the private sector, who will share information and experiences from landlocked developing countries. These include the role of foreign direct investment, economic diversification, information and communications technology, connectivity trade and transport.

“At today's Inaugural Meeting we have witnessed the birth of the very first intergovernmental international organization of the LLDCs' Group with its headquarters in Ulaanbaatar, Mongolia,” said H. E. Mr. Damdin Tsogbaatar, Minister of Foreign Affairs of Mongolia.

During the two days, the establishment of efficient transport and transit infrastructure will be discussed, a crucial issue for landlocked developing countries to reduce high transport costs, enhance competitiveness and integrate into global trading systems. The inaugural meeting will also highlight the importance of building physical infrastructure and the need to ratify and effectively implement conventions and other legal instruments related to trade and transport facilitation, including the WTO Trade Facilitation Agreement. The event will also stress the importance of diversification of economies and exports, which can help landlocked developing countries to effectively integrate into global and regional supply chains, attract foreign investment, create meaningful decent jobs and become more resilient to negative impacts of landlockedness and external shocks.

The event, organized by the International Think Tank for landlocked developing countries, the Government of Mongolia and the United Nations Office of the High Representative for Least Developed Countries, Landlocked Developing Countries and Small Island Developing States (UN-OHRLLS), will discuss future collaborations and to conclude with the adoption of the

Ulaanbaatar Declaration, which will outline the intended ways forward for the Think Tank and make specific calls for action.

“The knowledge generated by this Think Tank will help inform the formulation and monitoring of policies aimed at accelerating the implementation of the 2030 Agenda and the Vienna Programme of Action for landlocked developing countries,” said Ms. Fekita ‘Utoikamanu, High Representative for Least Developed Countries, Landlocked Developing Countries and Small Island Developing States. “I have no doubt that this new centre will further strengthen the capacities of landlocked developing countries and complement the work of the UN in supporting these nations, including at the mid-term review of the Vienna Programme of Action next year.”

The Think Tank was proposed by the Government of Mongolia with the support of the group of landlocked developing countries and is hosted by the Government of Mongolia in Ulaanbaatar, Mongolia. A Multilateral Agreement for the Establishment of an International Think Tank entered into force on 6 October 2017. To date, 12 landlocked developing countries have ratified the Agreement and are members of the Think Tank: Afghanistan, Armenia, Bhutan, Burkina Faso, Ethiopia, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Lao PDR, Mongolia, Nepal, Paraguay, Tajikistan.

Landlocked developing countries are categorised by their lack of direct access to the sea and remoteness from major markets. They also face high transport costs, structural challenges, infrastructure deficiencies, cumbersome border crossings and productivity constraints. The international community adopted the Vienna Programme of Action for the Landlocked Developing Countries to address the special needs of the LLDCs. A comprehensive high-level midterm review on the implementation of the Vienna Programme of Action will take place in 2019.

Further Information:

Think Tank for landlocked developing countries - <http://land-locked.org/>

UN-OHRLLS: www.unohrlls.org

Contact: Louise Stoddard: stoddard@un.org & Gladys Mutangadura: mutangadura@un.org