

**Statement**  
**by H.E. Mr. Yerzhan Ashikbayev,**  
**Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Kazakhstan**  
**at the Inaugural Conference of the International Think Tank for Landlocked**  
**Developing Countries**  
(Ulaanbaatar, 11-12 June 2018)

**Your Excellency Deputy Prime-Minister of Mongolia Mr. Enkhtuvshin,**  
**Your Excellency Under-Secretary-General Mrs. Utoikamanu,**  
**Distinguished Ministers, Excellencies, Delegates,**

On behalf of the Republic of Kazakhstan I would like to congratulate the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Mongolia as well as the Secretariat of the UN Office of the High Representative for the Least Developed Countries, Landlocked Developing Countries and Small Island Developing States on the occasion of this first inaugural Conference which celebrates the opening of the International Think Tank for LLDCs aimed to help our countries to transcend their impediments on the way to sustainable development.

The Government of Mongolia has set up a high benchmark for all of us establishing such an important international institute and contributing financially to make it possible to launch the LLDCs ITT today. In this regard let me wish every success to Executive Director of the LLDCs ITT Ambassador Odbayar Erdenetsogt in making the work of this newly created center efficient and fruitful.

Tackling the challenges of LLDCs continues to be my country's active priority since we first hosted the Ministerial Conference of LLDCs, Transit Developing Countries and Development Partners in 2003. The historic Almaty Programme of Action (APoA) aimed to provide the impetus to LLDCs to seek new opportunities and cooperate to launch numerous projects to achieve their development goals. Many collective strides were made. Today we inaugurate the LLDCs ITT first launched by our Mongolian friends in 2007. A decade later the Vienna Programme of Action (VPoA) was adopted with its eight strategic target areas to build upon the roadmap conceived in Almaty.

At the global level, it is important to continue to foster coherence in the follow-up and monitoring processes of the VPoA and the 2030 Agenda and the Addis Ababa Action Agenda, such as the Financing for Development follow-up and the High-Level Political Forum, as well as other global agreements and processes such as WTO negotiations.

That is why, we see the establishment of the LLDCs ITT today as quite an important part of the way forward to address the special development needs of those countries facing geographical constraints as well as economic barriers. We strongly believe that this Center will help to elaborate collectively on some best practices via

formulating new assessments to share the best experience on a way to sustainable development and, thus, to overcome these special impediments.

Just a month ago we convened the Ministerial Meeting of LLDCs on Trade and Transport in Astana on 16-17 May back to back with the Astana Economic Forum to address these important issues and to kick off the thematic preparations for the above mentioned Midterm Review of the VPoA. The outcome of the meeting, the Astana Ministerial Declaration, represents the first substantive inputs into the preparations for the Mid-term Review.

We expect that the ITT, which has already set up a high benchmark, will augment the analytical capabilities of LLDCs, especially, in the six specific areas of the VPoA ((1) fundamental transit policy, (2) infrastructural development, (3) international trade and trade facilitation, (4) regional integration and cooperation; (5) structural economic transformation and (6) means of implementation). Thus, better prepare LLDCs community for the High-Level Comprehensive Mid-term Review of the Vienna Programme of Action in 2019.

Being the biggest LLDC in the world and one of the most active supporters, Kazakhstan is well aware of the challenges that LLDCs face on the way to get sustainable prosperity.

I would like to underline that the Agenda of the ITT remains to be quite vital for the countries of the LLDCs region.

**Dear friends,**

At the end, I reaffirm the commitment of my country to cooperate with its international partners in overcoming the economic impediments, which LLDCs face on their way to sustainable development and integration into the global economy.

I am convinced that the opening of such an important international institute as the LLDCs Think Tank is a significant step towards enhancing greater visibility for the Landlocked Developing Countries on the international stage and mobilizing global support for our efforts.

In its turn, Kazakhstan is ready to broadly cooperate including the use of its national expertise and practices as well as to participate in the multistakeholders projects within the LLDCs sustainable development agenda including the LLDCs International Think Tank.

Thank you for attention.