

**Statement by Hon. Pradeep Kumar Gyawali, Minister for Foreign Affairs of
Nepal
at the inaugural Ministerial Conference of the International Think Tank for the
Landlocked Developing Countries
Ulaanbaatar, Mongolia (11-12 June 2018)**

**Mr. Chairman,
Honourable Ministers,
Excellencies,
Distinguished delegates,
Ladies and gentlemen.**

First of all, I congratulate you all on the happy occasion of the inaugural conference of the International Think Tank for the Landlocked Developing Countries (ITT-LLDCs), which we are concluding today, and express my best wishes for the success of the Think Tank.

I would like to thank and appreciate the Government of Mongolia for hosting this inaugural conference of the Think Tank and for the warm hospitality and excellent arrangements made for the Conference.

I commend Mongolia for the leadership and important role it has played over the years towards establishing the Think Tank. I also recognize the role played by all Member States of the Think Tank that helped to bring this important achievement in the form of international think tank for Land-locked developing countries.

I also take this opportunity to thank all the members of the Governing Board for their substantive work during their session last month. I believe this conference has been able to guide the process of the ITT-LLDC in a more firm footing.

Nepal attaches great importance to this organization. This has created an enormous hope among the land-locked developing countries. In fact, we are happy that Nepal's accession, as the 10th member, triggered the entry into force of the Multilateral Agreement for the Establishment of the Think Tank in October 2017.

The establishment of the Think Tank is a milestone achievement for the LLDCs. We believe that the organization like ITT should have been established long ago but it

is never late to start a good thing. ITT represents this good beginning for our collective good. We believe that the Think Tank can and should play a critical role in promoting the interests of LLDCs.

Mr. Chairman,

LLDCs have special development needs and challenges arising from their landlockedness, remoteness and geographical constraints. Addressing these challenges is key to their inclusive growth, which in turn will contribute to raising human development and reducing poverty in these countries. This is also the overarching goal of the Vienna Programme of Action (VPOA) with a focus on all six priority areas.

Nepal considers that the VPOA should be mainstreamed in our national development policies and plans as well as that of transit countries. The work programmes of United Nations and other international organizations designed to support the LLDCs should also be aligned with the objectives and goals of the VPOA in a coherent manner.

We should also be able to harness full potentials of science, technology and innovations, including the use of artificial intelligence (AI) and space technologies to overcome the constraints to the development of LLDCs. Technological innovations do have potentials to reduce the burden of landlockedness and open up the vistas of opportunities. We heard a good deal of insights in this regards yesterday.

As we are preparing for the Mid-Term Review of the implementation of VPOA in 2019, we acknowledge that the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development should be in tandem with the VPOA for the much-needed synergy to achieve results on the ground.

As the first ever intergovernmental body of the LLDC group, the Think Tank has an important responsibility. It should be fully operationalized so that it can contribute, through top-quality research and advocacy, towards improving the ability of landlocked developing countries to build capacity for benefiting from the international trade. Focus in this regard should be to carry out in-depth research on converting “landlockedness” into “landlinkedness” and on various ways and

options the LLDCs can diversify their economies. It is also important that ITT should focus on attracting more FDI by conducting more research on building capacities, raising confidence of investors through minimizing risks and creating more conducive domestic environment. Similarly, ITT also needs to focus its studies and research on smoothening transit facilities and associated issues.

ITT's role in equipping and preparing our representatives and diplomats in international trade negotiations can be crucial. In this regard, we thank the ITT for bringing out the useful Handbook for Practitioners. Backed with quality inputs and support, LLDCs will be in better position to contribute to and benefit from such processes.

Mr. Chairman,

It is important to ensure adequate resources required for effective operationalization of the Think Tank. In this regard, Nepal is ready to contribute what it can, and for now pledges to make **a modest one-time contribution of USD 30,000** for the Think Tank.

Support from all sides will be important. We need to expand our outreach to encourage all fellow LLDCs to join the Think Tank. I also call upon all the developed land-locked countries as well as transit countries, development partners and international organizations to continue their solidarity for LLDCs and support the Think Tank.

I conclude, Mr. Chairman, by highlighting one fact that the success of the Think Tank is also the success of LLDCs. So, we should join our hands for developing the Think Tank into a credible, respected and useful international organization.

I thank you for your attention.