REMARKS BY HON. BRIAN C. MUSHIMBA, MP, MINISTER OF TRANSPORT AND COMMUNICATIONS AT THE INAUGURAL INTERGOVERNMENTAL MEETING OF THE INTERNATIONAL THINK TANK FOR LANDLOCKED DEVELOPING COUNTRIES (LLDCs).

Ulaambaatar, Mongolia
12th June, 2018
Mr. Davaasuren, State Secretary of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs,

Honourable Ministers present from LLDCs,

Your Excellency, Ms. Fekitamoela Katoa ‘Utoikamanu, Under Secretary General and High Representative for LLDCs, LLDCs and SIDs,

Your Excellencies, Ambassadors from LLDCs,

Senior Government Officials from LLDCs,

Your Excellency Ms. Battsetseng, Chairperson of the Board of the International Think Tank for LLDCs,

Mr. Odbayar, Executive Director, ITT for LLDCs,

Representatives of the United Nations Agencies, Universities and other Institutions,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

I am happy and feel greatly privileged to be with you in Ulaambaatar as we extend our heartfelt congratulations to the Government of Mongolia on this momentous occasion – the inaugural meeting of the International Think Tank for Landlocked Developing Countries.

My sincere apologies for missing some sessions of this meeting. This is due to poor air connectivity among our countries as LLDCs. I left Zambia on Saturday and only managed to arrive in Ulaambaatar on Monday night. However, the will for our common good prevailed over all odds encountered and here I am.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

The establishment of the International Think Tank for LLDCs is a major achievement for all of us, as LLDCs as it brings into being our first ever intergovernmental body specifically dedicated to the cause of our countries.

In this regard, I wish to commend Mongolia, Lao PDR, Armenia, Afghanistan, Kazakhstan, Burkina Faso, Paraguay, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Nepal, Ethiopia and
Bhutan for ratifying the Multilateral Agreement establishing the International Think Tank for Landlocked Developing Countries.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

As immediate past Chair of the LLDCs, Zambia is in the process of acceding to the Multilateral Agreement establishing the International Think Tank for the LLDCs. The delay has been due to a change in our Constitution which has brought in changes with regard to the procedure for the ratification or accession to multilateral agreements. Nonetheless, I am confident that we will soon meet these requirements and be part of the International Think Tank (ITT) for LLDCs.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

In the meantime, I wish to appreciate the work already being carried out by the ITT. I also wish to echo what others have pointed out with regard to the promotion of country specific research, bringing on board transit countries as well as the fact that the ITT should complement the work of other United Nations Agencies, especially the Office of the High Representative for LDCs, LLDCs and SIDs.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Being centrally and strategically located in south central Africa, Zambia is positioning itself to be a transport, logistics and communications hub. We have realised that being landlocked, after all can be used to our advantage as we transform ourselves into being land-linked with all our eight neighbouring countries.

We, therefore, look forward to a lot of research, learning and adopting of best practices from others. The International Think Tank is therefore, poised to offer informed solutions and aid us in the implementation of the Vienna Programme of Action and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. I look forward to working and collaborating with the ITT in the near future.

I thank you.