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**UN-OHRLLS**

**Closing Statement by**

**Ms. Fekitamoeloa Katoa ‘Utoikamanu,  
Under-Secretary-General and High Representative  
for the Least Developed Countries, Landlocked Developing Countries and  
Small Island Developing States**

**at the Inaugural Meeting of the International Think Tank for LLDCs**

**12 June 2018**

**Ulaanbaatar, Mongolia**

Your Excellency Mr. Damdin Tsogtbaatar, Minister for Foreign Affairs of Mongolia  
Honourable Ministers

Your Excellency Mr. Raul Silvero, Ambassador of Paraguay to Mongolia, and Global Chair of  
the Group of LLDCs

Excellencies

Distinguished Ladies and gentlemen,

I am pleased to address this closing session of the Inaugural Meeting of the  
International Think Tank for LLDCs.

This has been a unique and momentous occasion of celebrating the full operationalization of the  
International Think Tank for landlocked developing countries and it has set us on a new  
journey. I wish to extend my warmest congratulations to all of you.

I also wish to reiterate the words of the Secretary General that “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”.

I wish to recognize and thank the Government of Mongolia for its commitment to continue to  
support the International Think Tank.

Our intense discussions and productive work yesterday revealed the need to address the special  
development challenges of the landlocked developing countries which are now heightened by  
climate change and the changing global economic and political environment. It is vital for the  
LLDC policymakers to be well-informed by a Think Tank that has dedicated efforts to  
undertake comprehensive research and is able to give impartial advice and analysis. It is very  
important that the International Think Tank for LLDCs links up and works closely with the  
national Think Tanks in the LLDCs in order to ensure strong homegrown solutions. Many of the  
recommendations that will be made by the Think Tank will help to accelerate the  
implementation of the Vienna Programme of Action and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable  
Development.

Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen,

This meeting has also discussed what the Think Tank could work on. I am very encouraged by  
the many concrete proposals and areas that were suggested. We also discussed the important  
role of foreign direct investment, economic diversification, information and communications  
technology, transport connectivity, and trade facilitation and suggested recommendations.

I also commend you for adopting the Ulaanbaatar Declaration. This declaration provides a firm  
foundation for the role of the Think Tank. It is now our responsibility to build on it. I appeal to  
everyone to help us take our Think Tank initiative to the next stage through increased support to  
its operations through financial or in-kind contributions.

For my part, let me reassure you of UN-OHRLLS’ full commitment and support to the Think  
Tank. We plan to undertake joint research and other substantive work together.

Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen,

I would now like to express my deep appreciation to the Government of Mongolia, the International Think Tank for Landlocked Developing Countries and the people of Mongolia. Your generous hospitality and the excellent arrangements that you provided have made this Meeting a true pleasure to attend and a memorable experience for all of us.

I wish to also thank Honourable Ministers and all the participants for the dedication and for your active participation and contribution to the success of the meeting.

I wish to also recognize Paraguay for their leadership role as the Global Chair of the Group of Landlocked Developing Countries and coordinator of the LLDC Group on matters related to trade and development in Geneva.

Looking ahead, I would like to reiterate the importance of the preparatory process of the comprehensive midterm review of the Vienna Programme of Action. The Ministerial meeting that we held in Astana, Kazakhstan kicked off the preparatory process and I thank the Government of Kazakhstan for their support in hosting that meeting.

OHRLLS is working closely with the regional commissions to organize the regional review meetings for Euro-Asia; Africa; and Latin America regions that we hope to hold by mid next year. We also hope to organize other thematic and pre-conference events and undertake substantive work before the comprehensive high-level meeting itself that will be held no later than December 2019. I look forward to continue collaborating closely with you in this preparatory process.

I wish all of you returning home a safe journey.

I thank you for your kind attention.