Statement by H.E. Mr. Yerzhan Ashikbayev, Deputy Foreign Minister of the Republic of Kazakhstan at the Annual Ministerial Meeting of the Group of Landlocked Developing Countries (New York, 28 September 2018, C-5, 10:00-13:00)

Madame President (Maria Fernanda Espinosa Garces), Under-Secretary-General Madame Utoikamanu, Excellencies, Distinguished ladies and gentlemen,

As the world’s largest landlocked country, Kazakhstan has always been at the forefront to address the issues of geographical disadvantages faced by our moderate and credible group.

Many of these issues as well as guidelines to advance the development goals (MDGs) were reflected in the historic Almaty Platform of Action (APoA), adopted in 2003 at the first Ministerial Conference of LLDCs and Transit Developing Countries and Development Partners.

The Platform has galvanized international solidarity for LLDCs to integrate into the international trading system and establish trading networks. Considerable efforts were made to lay foundation for the adoption, a decade later, of the Vienna Platform of Action, with its eight strategic target areas.

Both documents help us to ensure connectivity, turning our “landlockedness” into “landlinkedness”, while jointly pursuing specific goals like enhancing infrastructure, boosting trade and transit, tackling challenges of climate change, and improving energy efficiency.

Today we continue to demonstrate our strong commitment to fulfilling the above-mentioned guidelines. That was why Kazakhstan together with the UN Office of High Representative for LLDCs hosted in Astana Ministerial Meeting of LLDCs on improving transport
connectivity and trade facilitation on 16-17 May 2018. The Conference increased the visibility for the needs of LLDCs on international stage and mobilized global support for our efforts in implementing the program.

The Conference outcome Declaration focuses on further development of transit infrastructure, promoting structural transformation and diversification, enhancing transport connectivity.

To keep our pace in tackling the issues our Group faces, Kazakhstan expresses its interest in serving at the Bureau of LLDC from Asia-Pacific regional group for 2020-2021.

Besides, our capital Astana was unanimously chosen as the venue for the World Trade Organization 12th Ministerial Conference in 2020. This has become yet one more confirmation of Kazakhstan’s commitment to the values and principles of the multilateral trading system, involving all states on a non-discriminatory basis.

**Ladies and gentlemen,**

Kazakhstan’s strategic goal is to develop its transit and transportation potential and connecting to the intercontinental Eurasian transport system. Today, several transcontinental corridors run through Kazakhstan.

Consistent with the VPoA is the construction of the Eurasian multimodal transit-transport hub. The massive infrastructure project, “Nurly Zhol”, will strengthen our country’s Eurasian integration and connect with China’s Belt and Road Initiative.

We are also implementing the Intelligent Transport System based on the large-scale introduction of digital technologies for on-line tracking of movement of goods providing unimpeded transit and simplified customs procedures.
Over the last decade, investments in the development of the transport and logistics system of Kazakhstan amounted to 30 billion US dollars.

Enhancing transport infrastructure has a multiplier effect for a competitively growing economy, which gives impetus to the trade flows of the revived Silk Road and countries along it. This expands cooperation, promoting the economic advancement of the region.

Energy is another important area which has a potential to boost the development of LLDCs. That is why we hosted the exhibition, “EXPO-2017, on the theme “Energy of the Future” in Astana last year. It demonstrated rapid progress in the sphere of alternative “clean” energy and provided an impetus to develop a “green” economy in the country and other regions.

We would also like to commend Government of Mongolia for hosting first ever International Think Tank for LLDCs. I am confident that we need to fully avail its capacity to render analytical and scientific support to development strategies at the national, regional and global levels in all relevant areas.

**Ladies and gentlemen,**

To succeed, LLDCs must diversify their economies and ensure that Vienna Program of Actions and Agenda 2030 go hand in hand with the New Agenda for Peace and the new reforms of the Secretary-General, so that LLDCs advance not economically but tread the path of peace and stability.

Finally, we will work with others, on the basis of fair and equal partnerships, following the ethical principle that “no one is left behind”.

**Thank you.**