STATEMENT BY AMBASSADOR F. M. M. SHAVA AT THE 2019 HLPF SIDE EVENT ON PARTNERSHIPS FOR ACCELERATED SUSTAINABLE ENERGY DEVELOPMENT AND ENHANCED RESILIENCE BUILDING TO CLIMATE CHANGE IN LLDCS

Good afternoon to you all,

1. Let me express my gratitude to the Permanent Missions of Paraguay and Austria, UNIDO and the UN OHRLLS for the excellent organisation of this side event.

2. The subject under discussion at this side event “Partnerships for Accelerated Sustainable Energy Development and Enhanced Resilience Building to Climate Change in LLDCs” is an intriguing one as it gives us an opportunity to interrogate and reflect on challenges we face as LLDCs as the world continue to be inter-connected whilst the LLDCs remain marginalized. As clearly articulated in the presentations by the Panelists, our countries are still faced with challenges emanating from landlockedness. The situation is compounded by vulnerability to climate change and climate variability, and these are undermining the economic potential of many LLDCs.

3. The development of resilient infrastructure is essential to mitigate the challenges of the LLDCs and to connect them to global markets. Zimbabwe has undertaken, and continues to make efforts to address these challenges to move from being landlocked to landlinked.

4. Ladies and Gentlemen, allow me to share Zimbabwe’s national efforts aimed at improving clean energy development, and national adaptation plans for climate change. At the forefront of the national development priorities is inclusive growth and economic resilience, economic diversification, employment creation and poverty alleviation. Zimbabwe is actively pursuing policies and programmes to achieve these objectives.

5. Energy plays a pivotal role in the development of LLDCs. As alluded to in the discussions, not only do LLDCs have the highest proportion of poor households, we also have the highest proportion of households that directly depend on traditional biomass to meet their energy requirements. This has exerted immense pressure on forest resources leading to extensive deforestation, further land degradation and desertification. In Zimbabwe, we are working to ensure that ensure our people have access to modern energy services which are affordable, efficient, sustainable and renewable, at the same time addressing the issue of poverty.

6. Zimbabwe heavily relies on hydro-electricity, which is under threat due to drying rivers, as the climate gets warmer. While hydro-electricity is a clean and renewable
source of energy, the increasingly irregular rainfall patterns have rendered river water an unsustainable source of energy. Zimbabwe is already feeling the heat as generation capacity at the Lake Kariba hydro power station has been seriously affected due to the low water levels in the lake. This is despite the country's recent investment of US$533 million into the Kariba South Power Station Extension Project.

7. Together with Zambia, Zimbabwe has also embarked on the US$4.5 billion Batoka Gorge power project on the Zambezi River which is expected to generate 2,400 megawatts (MW) of electricity. The project is just one way in which partnerships by African states are emerging in the renewables space. But again the low generation capacity being experienced at the Kariba power station due to low water levels in the same Zambezi river have renewed concerns about the effects of climate change on this mega project.

8. Indeed hydropower is the most dominant renewable and low carbon energy source generating slightly above 15% of the total world electrical energy. However, from our experience in Zimbabwe, any change in the natural water cycle caused by the climate change has serious implications on power generation. It is clear that even the most promising energy generation sources that are essentially without emissions are typically climate dependent, which is especially the case for renewable energy resources including wind and solar. This means that the mitigation of potential climate change while sustaining energy resources requires global attention through partnerships and cooperation.

9. True, solar and wind are available, but the technology is not sufficient in LLDCs. As LLDCs, and countries with special needs, the support of development partners remains important to address the persistent challenges of inadequate resilient infrastructure including transport, Information, Communication and Technology, as well as strong technological and research base. These initiatives require huge financial investment as well as legal, regulatory and administrative reforms.

10. As I conclude, I therefore call upon development partners, the UN system and multilateral and regional development banks to provide increased, predictable support towards our efforts in the implementation of the priorities outlined in Vienna Programme of Action which we are going to review in December 2019.

I thank you for your attention.