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**Statement by Mr. Gyan Chandra Acharya, Under-Secretary-
General, and High Representative, for the Least Developed
Countries, Landlocked Developing Countries
and Small Island Developing States**

at the

**Fourth Inter-Agency Consultative Group Meeting on the
Preparatory Process for the Second UN Conference on LLDCs**

**Room XXVII, Palais des Nations, Geneva
20 February 2014**

Good Morning Excellences

Good morning distinguished colleagues representing different institutions in the UN

Ambassador Thongphane Savanphet, Permanent Representative of the Lao People's Democratic Republic to the United Nations in Geneva, and Global Chair of the LLDC Group

Ambassador Juan Esteban Aguirre Martinez, Permanent Representative of Paraguay to the United Nations in Geneva, and LLDC Group Coordinator on Trade and Development

Dear colleagues and friends,

It is my pleasure to welcome you today to the Fourth Inter Agency Consultative Meeting on the preparations of the Second UN Conference on LLDCs. I would like to express my appreciation to Ambassadors for joining me here to participate in this opening session despite their busy schedules.

My special appreciation goes to you all - those sitting in this room and those joining us via video-link - for the great importance that you and your organizations attach to the development concerns of the LLDCs. I commend you for your dedication towards the successful preparations for the Second United Nations Conference on the landlocked developing countries and your contribution thus far is highly acknowledged.

The preparations for the Conference so far are going on very well. This Inter-Agency Group under its preparatory track has successfully organized 14 thematic pre-conference events and a few more are still on the way. The outcomes of these events form important substantive input to the preparation of the draft outcome document. Preparatory activities under the private sector track are also proceeding well and we will have a briefing on that later.

Under the intergovernmental track, all the regional review meetings were successfully held in collaboration with ESCAP, ECE, ECA as well as ECLAC for all the three regions. The aim of the reviews was to assess the implementation of the Almaty Programme of Action at the regional level and distil priorities to capture into the global review process. We have also received some reports from many LLDCs on the implementation of the Almaty Programme of Action at national level to help enrich the regional and global discussions.

It is our pleasure to inform you that the Government of Austria has now offered to host the Conference in Vienna. A modalities resolution that is currently under negotiations for adoption by the General Assembly, proposes to hold the Conference from 3 to 5 November 2014, preceded by two sessions of the intergovernmental preparatory committee being proposed to be held, in June, and September.

We are now only a few months away from the conference and we therefore need to heighten our efforts to support the development of an international framework that can deliver a new and transformative agenda for the LLDCs. The LLDCs you are all aware are confronted with structural challenges that are directly related to their geography and which

predisposes them to perform less than other developing countries that have easier access to the global markets. This agenda is not only a moral imperative it is based on principles of justice and dignity for all.

That brings me to the issue of how we are going to go further. We have already had many pre-conferences events and meetings in the preparatory process. Now is the time to identify the real deliverables. We are now looking for your support to find the deliverables that will really transform the LLDCs. That is the expectation of all LLDCs. In all the preparatory events that we have held, they are all asking for key deliverables in basically 5 areas.

The first one is trade. In what way can we help them increase their share of international trade? We are glad that in the last 10 years their share has increased by almost double. But when you do the disaggregate analysis of this trade figure only three or four countries are the ones that are taking the lead. The rest are almost stagnating. The global agenda that we talk about in the UN is one that is inclusive, meaning that all the countries should be able to take due part in the international trade. This is because there are a lot of opportunities for them to transform their economies, to deal with their fundamental structural issues, and to ensure sustainable development - through trade promotion.

The second issue is that transit still remains a big challenge despite all the progress that has taken place in the harmonization of customs and transparency. It is the actual implementation on the ground of both the hard and soft transit infrastructure that needs to be addressed. At the border controls the processes are still cumbersome. There is a heavy price paid because of the lack of facilitation and the greater flow of trade and we have

seen that even if you have the best of the facilitation. We have done some analysis that we presented to you that shows that they are already disadvantaged because of the longer duration of time that they take at the ports, in transportation to the border and at the border crossing itself.

So we really need to know the transit policies, the best practices that are there and mechanisms that are available to ensure that they are fully implemented on the ground. There is a role for everyone. Of course the larger role is that of the country in transit. We also need to see the international practices, international support mechanisms and international processes that can help generate that type of interest and commitment from all the transit countries - of course with the facilitation of the LLDCs. This is the issue that we would like to see coming out of our meeting. What exactly are the deliverables that we are seeking on the issue of transit? People are asking this question every time.

The third is infrastructure – both the soft and hard. What are the mechanisms and the investment plans that we can think of in order to really make progress in this area? We already have very good plans on paper and wonderful norms that we have set, but what are the ways to really leverage that investment. How can we mobilize resources from the multilateral partners, the donors, as well as the domestic sources? And how can we make sure that it is at the standards that we are all seeking?

The fourth point is linked to the fact that these meetings on the LLDCs are taking place during the time that we are preparing for the Post 2015 development agenda, to what extent can we integrate the issues into the Post 2015? We have had a lot of consultations at the global level and in different capitals and have read reports including that of the Open Working

Group, that of the Secretary General, the High Level Panel, the UNDG, and Global Compact and we also have held consultations at the regional and national levels some of which are still ongoing.

When it comes to the overall picture, we are quite clear, but when we come to specifics, how do we really make sure that the concerns of the LLDCs can be taken forward through the sustainable development goals? How do we really get the correct goals and indicators? For example if we are trying to improve economic growth through their structural transformation. How can we capture this well – should we use infrastructure, rate of productivity, share of international trade? How do we make sure that it is adequately captured in the sustainable development goal in a manner that is measurable and that we can use to follow-up with an implementation mechanism? I hope that the conference in Austria since it will be taking place a year before the Post 2015 development agenda, it can come up with some concrete deliverables that can contribute to the negotiations of into the Post 2015 in New York.

Fifth, related to the Post 2015 development agenda is the sustainable development agenda. Economic growth has to have linkages with inclusiveness and environmental sustainability. It therefore needs to deal with poverty eradication and equity. We are really looking at what the Secretary General, says, *ensuring a life of dignity and justice for all*. This includes many LLDCs that have high levels of poverty and are trapped in low equilibrium. We therefore would like to see that this is taken into account.

When we look at the LLDC conference to be held in Austria, the post 2015 development process and the WTO trade facilitation agreement, we see

that somehow the stars now have a line. Now is the time for operationalization and implementation of what has been agreed in the trade facilitation agreement. When we look at the main issues in the trade facilitation agreement - the importance of transparency, facilitation of customs procedure, that the cost involved should be commensurate with the services rendered and the transit rights, how do we really ensure that they are taken together in a manner that one reinforces the other which will take us towards the Post 2015 as well as the next ten-year programme of action.

This brings me to the fundamental challenges of the economic structure of the LLDCs. We still need to deal with the issues of market access, product and market diversification, increased connectivity - the ICTs, improved services sector, and integration into the global value chains. How do we really move their economies forward and ensure that they are part of the higher global value chains? Now what we are looking for - are and focused deliverables that can really change the structure of the economy.

Finally regional integration and cooperation is where we see a lot of value - whether it is value chain, market development or standard upgrading. This is something that we will like to see enhanced, how the landlocked country can become a land-linked one. This came out very well from all the 3 regional reviews held in Laos, Ethiopia, and Paraguay. We hear it all the time that all the LLDCs would like to become land-linked. This is a real challenge for us and we need to deliver on it. Can we look at all the regional or sub-regional angles and make sure that there is a push for regional integration? And how do we do that?

So we hope that today's meeting will not only be an update of the status of the preparations but we would like to see the key elements of the outcome document based on the key deliverables that we can come out with from the Conference in Austria and also the side events. The language that we have in New York says the conference will be attended at the highest level possible. We have already heard from LLDCs that they will come at a fairly high level either the Presidents, Prime Ministers or very senior ministerial level. The transit countries and development partners will also come at that high level. We need to make sure that while we have this high level of participation, we organize concrete side events at the conference. I would like to urge all of you to help us organise side events during the conference to address thematic or specific issues.

We have received a very strong collaboration in the past from all of you and based on that I am confident that we will continue to have this good cooperation. I hope that this meeting will generate your specific contributions in order to make the conference a success. We will convene another inter-agency meeting in New York closer to the time of the Conference.

Thank you very much for participating in this meeting.

I hope that we will have a lively dialogue today.