

Statement by  
H.E. Mr. Saleumxay Kommasith,  
Permanent Representative of the Lao People's Democratic Republic  
to the United Nations in New York, Chairperson of the Group of LLDCs  
at the Opening Session of the African Regional Review Meeting on the Implementation of the  
Almaty Programme of Action, 16 July 2013, Addis Ababa, Ethiopia

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- H.E. Mr. Ahmed Shide, State Minister of Finance and Economic Development, Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia
- H.E. Mr. Carlos Lopes, Under-Secretary-General of the United Nations and Executive Secretary of ECA
- H.E. Dr. Anthony Mothae Maruping, the Commissioner for Economic Affairs at the African Union Commission.
- H.E. Mr. Gyan Chandra Archarya, Under-Secretary-General and High Representative for the Least Developed Countries, Landlocked Developing Countries and Small Island Developing States, Secretary-General of the ten-year Review Conference on the Implementation of the Almaty Programme of Action,
- Distinguished Delegates,
- Ladies and Gentlemen,

At the outset, on behalf of the Group of LLDCs, I would like to express our sincere appreciation to the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa (ECA) and Office of the High Representative for the Least Developed Countries, Landlocked Developing Countries and Small Island Developing States (OHRLLS) for jointly organizing this final regional review meeting on the implementation of the Almaty Programme of Action in African LLDCs in an efficient manner.

It is indeed my great pleasure and privilege to attend this important meeting in my capacity as Chair of the LLDCs Group. This meeting, as many has highlighted, would provide significant substantive contributions to the global appraisal of the implementation of the Almaty Program of Action over the past decade.

Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen,

The Group of Landlocked Developing countries is consisted of 31 countries from four continents of which 15 are in Africa. It constitutes an institutional mechanism to coordinate at the global level, promotes and advocates the cause of, as well as represents the common position and interests of LLDCs on various international issues particularly those related to our special needs and problems.

Over the past years, the Group of LLDCs has been engaging itself actively in various international forums and processes in order to ensure that the special needs and challenges of LLDCs are adequately addressed at all levels, including in the negotiations on the outcome of the Rio+20 Conference "The Future We Want" and in other relevant processes. One important

achievement of the Group was to secure a decision by the UN General Assembly to convene a Ten-Year Review Conference on the implementation of Almaty Program of Action in 2014, for which this regional review meeting is preparing regional inputs.

In addition, the Group has regular meetings at different levels, annual ministerial meetings on the sidelines of the UNGA and a biannual meeting of Minister for Trade. Such coordination mechanism provides opportunities for LLDCs to review their activities and strategize their actions on issues pertaining to the pride of LLDCs.

Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen,

The 2014 review conference provides a unique opportunity for the landlocked and transit developing countries, the development partners, international financial and development institutions and other relevant stakeholders to comprehensively review the implementation of the Almaty Programme of Action, identify best practices and constraints as well as to adopt effective policies, support measures and the means to address the critical gaps at all levels. Equally important is to reaffirm the commitment of the international community to help LLDCs overcome their specific development challenges in light of the emerging global crisis by adopting a renewed development partnership framework for the next decade.

Today, we are in amid of an ongoing process on post-2015 development agenda at the United Nations, which would have direct impact on the LLDCs as a whole and particularly on the outcome of our Ten-Year Review Conference. In this context, the Group of LLDCs would continue to play an active role in various processes in order to safeguard the interests of LLDCs.

I would also like to reiterate that raising awareness about the special needs and problems of LLDCs and how they can be overcome remains crucial for LLDCs and the international community as a whole. In this regard, the International Think Tank for Landlocked Developing Countries can play a significant role, particularly in identifying and studying concrete challenges and action needed to address them. However, for this Think Tank to be operational it requires that the Multilateral Agreement for the Establishment of an International Think Tank for Landlocked Developing Countries becomes effective. However, we are still short of ratification. Let me take this opportunity to encourage those LLDCs who have not done so to take necessary steps to become party to this Agreement so that the Think Tank could be fully operationalized in the near future.

Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen,

As part of preparations for the 2014 review conference, I wish to inform the meeting that given the final stage of the implementation of the Almaty Programme of Action, the LLDCs Group is planning to convene its 12th Annual Ministerial Meeting during the general debate of the 68th session of the General Assembly in September, which aims to further demonstrate our resolve and commitment to our Ten-Year review conference. The meeting will also include an Open-ended interactive discussion that involves high-level representative of all stakeholders such as transit countries, development partners, international institutions, academia and private sector.

All would be invited to attend and formal invitation from our Deputy-Prime Minister, Minister of Foreign Affairs, Chairman of the Group of LLDCs would be sent in due course.

I look forward to constructive deliberations and substantive inputs and contributions taking into account regional particularities during this meeting which will feed into the global preparations for and outcome document of the 2014 review conference in order to help support LLDCs' efforts to promote long term sustainable development. On this note, let me wish our review meeting a great success and crowned with a fruitful outcome.

Thank you.