



**United Nations Office of the High Representative for the Least
Developed Countries, Landlocked Developing Countries and
Small Island Developing States (UN-OHRLLS)**

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 First session of the Intergovernmental Preparatory
Committee for the Second United Nations Conference on
Landlocked Developing Countries**

Conference Room 3, New York, 12 June 2014

- Distinguished Co-Chairs,
- Excellences,
- Ladies and Gentlemen,

I have the pleasure now to provide you with the outlines of the activities that we have undertaken in preparation for the Second United Nations Conference on the LLDCs. Let me begin by expressing our sincere appreciation for the able leadership that Zambian Ambassador Patricia Mwaba Kasese-Bota and the Bureau of LLDCs have provided to enhance the interests and the aspiration of LLDCs. I would also like to recognize today the distinguished presence and the delivery of the statement by the Minister of Transport of Zambia. I think it was a clear reflection of a very strong sense of ownership of the LLDC group as well as priorities for the outcome document for the Second LLDC Conference.

As you are all aware, the LLDCs are confronted with structural challenges that are directly related to their geography and location which predisposes them to perform less than other developing countries that have easier access to the global markets. The Almaty Programme of Action was adopted in 2003 as the United Nations response to the growing need to address the special development challenges faced by the LLDCs in a collective and focused manner.

Since the adoption of the Almaty Programme of Action, LLDCs have recorded increased growth of GDP and FDI in the past ten years collectively. Several LLDCs have improved their ability to participate in international trade. Exports have soared substantially in the last ten years though it is distributed unevenly. The awareness of the challenges faced by LLDCs has increased globally. There has been increased visibility and

recognition of the LLDCs and their special needs on the international level and in the United Nations. As such LLDC issues have found special reference in the outcome documents of the 2005 and 2010 World Summits on the MDGs, and in the outcome document “The Future We Want” of the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development held in Rio de Janeiro in June 2012.

Furthermore last December in Bali, the Ninth WTO Ministerial Conference reached an agreement on the so-called Bali package that includes an agreement on trade facilitation. This Trade Facilitation Agreement when it is fully implemented has the potential to address some of the fundamental transit policy issues that affect LLDC exports and will bring concrete benefits to these countries in terms of easier and faster cross-border trade.

There has been progress in implementing all the priority areas of the Almaty Programme of Action: fundamental transit policy issues, infrastructure development, international trade and international support measures. Agreements on regional highway and railway networks have enhanced better prospect for smooth transport facilities. There has also been some progress in harmonizing transit and transport policies, streamlining of border procedures with supportive mechanisms between landlocked and transit developing countries.

The Almaty Programme has been therefore successful in organizing global support for LLDCs in the areas of financial and technical assistance as well as macroeconomic policy development. However, disaggregated analysis gives us a different picture: progress is uneven, sustainability of progress is not clear. Almaty Programme still remains an unfinished business as the LLDCs have still a long way to go to fully benefit from globalization,

achieve effective and cost-efficient transit-transport, sustained and inclusive economic growth, poverty alleviation and structural transformation. Progressive efforts have been made to develop and upgrade road and railway infrastructure and foster and maintain such infrastructure. Dry ports are being established in all regions.

Yet they still face high trading costs and continue to have challenges in improving their competitiveness and they have to deal with the structural constraints such as lack of productive capacities and high commodity dependence together with the impact of the economic and financial crisis. This is having a negative impact on their ability to achieve the internationally agreed development goals including the MDGs. OHRLLS estimated that the development of LLDCs is on average 20% lower than what it would have been were the countries not landlocked. And you are all aware that academics like Paul Collier and Jeffrey Sachs have written extensively on the impacts of landlockedness and development challenges. Similarly, UN and other international organizations have also come out with various analyses that depict specific challenges of LLDCs in terms of constraints in integration into global value chains and global markets.

There is therefore urgent need for a holistic and result-oriented outcome that has a new generation of improved and innovative support measures and mechanisms to assist the LLDCs. The Conference should be a guide post to help geographically handicapped and vulnerable countries to move into a self-sustained growth trajectory with beneficial integration to the global economy and inclusive and sustainable development.

The decision of the General Assembly in its resolution 66/214 to convene the Ten year comprehensive review of the Almaty Programme of Action

represents the will of the international community to continue to place on the international agenda support for the 32 landlocked developing countries that face special challenges due to their geography. We have genuine expectations for the Conference to come out with the Programme of Action that can address the LLDCs' development needs and challenges rooted in the realities of their challenges and strongly supported by the international community. National leadership, regional collaboration and global partnerships should help to create a win-win situation for all.

Distinguished Co-Chairs, Excellences, Ladies and Gentlemen,

The preparations for the Second United Nations Conference on the LLDCs are proceeding very well under the three tracks that the preparatory process is following: intergovernmental, inter-agency, and private sector.

Under the intergovernmental track, the LLDCs prepared and submitted national reports on the implementation of the Almaty Programme of Action. Regional reviews were successfully held in 2013 in Vientiane, Laos, in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia and in Asuncion, Paraguay. These events have provided substantive inputs to be used for developing the draft outcome document for the LLDCs. The outcomes of the regional meetings were already circulated as UN documents.

In January 2014, the Government of the Republic of Austria expressed its desire to host the Second UN Conference on LLDCs in Vienna. I would like to express our sincere appreciation to the Government of Austria for their generous offer to host the conference. The General Assembly adopted resolution 68/270 in which it set the dates for the Conference to be held in Vienna, Austria to be from 3 to 5 November 2014. The Conference is being

preceded by this Intergovernmental Preparatory Committee meeting and another one to be held from 2 to 3 October 2014. The sessions of the intergovernmental preparatory committee will help to prepare the outcome document of the conference.

Under the UN inter-agency track, the Inter-Agency Consultative Group, comprised of key UN system, international, regional and other organizations have held a series of meetings to consult on the substantive and organizational preparations for the Conference.

Seventeen pre-conference events have been successfully organized focused on the key developmental issues of crucial importance to the LLDCs. They include, for example, international trade, trade facilitation and aid for trade, road and rail financing, the role of services, transport development, impacts of climate change, desertification, land degradation and drought, ICT development and connectivity, a brainstorming meeting on the priorities for a new development agenda for the LLDCs, vulnerability of the LLDCs to external shocks, a retreat of New York Ambassadors and WTO trade facilitation agreement to the LLDCs. These are pre-conference events which provide inputs for your kind consideration and deliberation.

Under the private sector track, a Steering Committee was established, which has held regular consultations to build a common position and prepare substantive inputs for the success of the Conference. The private sector has also participated actively in all the preparatory events. The private sector track is also organising side events during the sessions of the intergovernmental preparatory committee and a high-level private sector forum to be held in the side-lines of the conference in Vienna.

Distinguished Co-Chairs, Excellences, Ladies and Gentlemen,

Two years ago at Rio+20, the world stressed that sustainable development can only be achieved with a broad alliance of people, governments, civil society and academia and the private sector, all working together to secure the future we want for present and future generations. Many of the pre-conference events similarly call for enhanced and strengthened partnership and support for LLDCs from all the stakeholders. The need to mobilize all the stakeholders in support of the development agenda of the LLDCs would be critical during the PrepComs as well as at the Conference in Vienna. The Vienna Conference should serve as springboard for increased cooperation and effective follow-up in addressing the needs and aspirations of the LLDCs.

This meeting has to lay the groundwork for a successful conference. The Vienna Conference is also being held before the Post 2015 development agenda. It should be able to help integrate the development issues of the LLDCs into the Post 2015 development agenda. I hope that the alignment of LLDC issues with the global processes will ensure necessary attention and the international support for LLDCs.

The mandate of this intergovernmental preparatory meeting is clearly to contribute to the organisational and substantive aspects of the conference including the outcome document of the conference. I wish you a most productive session and I would like to assure you of my personal support and that of my Secretariat in this noble endeavour.

I thank you for your kind attention.