

**Second United Nations
Conference on Landlocked developing Countries**
Vienna 3-5 November 2014

Statement of the Italian Permanent Representative to the UN in
Vienna

H. E. Ambassador Filippo Formica

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Mr. Chairman,

At the outset, let me express the deepest condolences to the Zambian people for the recent loss of the late President, Michael Zata.

I wish to take this opportunity to express our sincere appreciation to the host country, Austria, for the organization of such an important Conference and to the OHRLLS for the effective and continuous cooperation.

As many distinguished delegates have already highlighted, Italy too regards this second Conference of Landlocked Developing Countries as a valuable opportunity to reaffirm the international commitment to support LLDCs in their development efforts and to strengthen their 'call to action'. The timing of this Conference could not be more favorable as the International Community undertakes the important task of defining the post-2015 development agenda, where the recognition of the specific needs and problems of the Countries in Special Situations, among which the LLDCs, has to find its own place.

Due to their unique geographical constraints, LLDCs are by nature confronted to major challenges when it comes to exploiting the opportunities offered by global markets. This links up to their limited integration into the world economy compared to the average of other developing countries. Therefore, it does not come as a surprise that 17 out of the 32 LLDCs are classified as Least Developed Countries (LDCs). Most of LLDCs are affected by external imbalances reflected in current account deficits, capital flight and rising levels of public and

external debt.

Not only. Landlockedness implies trade and growth constraints and it affects many factors enabling development, including ICT, energy infrastructure and human development.

Mr. Chairman,

Italy strongly believes that the obstacles to LLDCs development can and must be overcome. During the past decade there has been significant progress among most LLDCs in the field of human and social development and economic growth. More specifically, there is evidence of a reduction in the general level of poverty in many LLDCs. Some of them have made impressive progress towards the achievement of specific MDGs related to child and maternal mortality, education, gender empowerment and sanitation.

Development is firstly a national responsibility. The positive progress I just mentioned is strongly interlinked to domestic efforts and reforms aimed at reducing the limits of landlocked countries.

Mr. Chairman,

The Almaty Programme of Action, adopted in 2003, has enormously contributed to this progress. Still, many LLDCs suffer from low productivity, low income levels, low social, environmental and human development indicators. Therefore the elaboration and implementation of an international cooperation framework aimed at addressing the obstacles facing their economies is crucial.

There is not a "silver bullet" winning strategy. Just focusing on one specific sector cannot solve all problems. Instead we must deal with the multidimensionality of development. Aid, trade and investment should work together in addressing the needs of LLDCs.

Italy is strongly convinced of the crucial importance of regional integration and economic communities schemes which are particularly relevant in the regions where the LLDCs are located: advancing regional integration processes must remain a cornerstone of international strategy for LLDCs.

Not only neighboring countries are transit countries for LLDCs export, but they should also represent key potential end-markets. Regional integration processes may expand the potential market of LLDCs production, by improving the quality and cost-effectiveness of transport infrastructures, trade facilities and market integration.

Second, in the LLDCs case, development-oriented foreign direct investment needs to be encouraged as it fosters the domestic private sector and brings in technology stimulating further investment.

Third, access to technology and know-how to turn raw materials into added-value products is crucial. Human capital is an additional important factor of production as well as the physical and natural capital. The provision of training and capacity building is as important as granting access to technologies.

Fourth, actions to support the LLDCs should be aimed at establishing a favorable environment for the private sector development. Property rights and the rule of law are key aspects that need to be positively addressed in order to involve the private sector in a development partnership, at local, national and international level.

Lastly, but not less important, a greater focus should be given to the cross-border local dimension and the opportunities it can offer for an innovative and sustainable development of the LLDCs. Many of these countries are characterized by an high level of seasonal cross-border mobility of permanent and temporary migrants with neighboring countries that could represent an important factor enabling development.

Mr. Chairman,
the Italian cooperation is actively engaged in 14 LLDCs while 6 LLDCs are listed amongst the 20 top priority countries for our international development strategy. I would like to reaffirm here my country's long-term commitment as a partner for development also within the EU. It is our intent to continue allocating aid resources taking into account poverty and development indicators as well as to keep high on our agenda the special needs of LLDCs ensuring that they will be duly addressed in the new development frameworks.

