



## **Intervention of the Kingdom of the Netherlands**

**Ambassador Bahia Tahzib-Lie – Foreign Minister Koenders' Special Envoy for UN Affairs**

Excellencies,  
Distinguished Delegates,  
Ladies and Gentlemen,

It is an honor for me to address this unique grouping of nations. Let me start by thanking the host country Austria for organizing this important Second UN Conference on Landlocked Developing Countries in the presence of UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon. Let me also thank Under-Secretary General and High Representative for the Least Developed Countries, Landlocked Developing Countries and Small Island Developing States, Gyan Chandra Acharya, for being a leading global voice and for his advocacy for landlocked developing countries.

Mr. Chairman,

For the last few years I have worked in the field of inclusive finance for development. I have personally seen some inspiring examples of individuals and communities around the world who – with a little help – have created their own economic security. The development of LLDCs can be catalyzed in a similar fashion.

Some of you may wonder why the Kingdom of the Netherlands is taking part in a Conference on Landlocked Developing Countries. After all it is largely surrounded by water. The Netherlands is a river delta country where more than half of the population lives below sea level. And across the Atlantic, Aruba, Curaçao and St Maarten are small island developing states (SIDS). We are here because we treasure our partnerships with landlocked developing countries.

A good example to start with is our partnerships in the important fields of transport and logistics. In many landlocked developing countries, especially in remote rural areas, there is a lack of good physical infrastructure and communication facilities. This is a major obstacle to the development of the viable and reliable transport links needed for sustainable and inclusive economic growth. We need to support the transformation of landlocked countries into land-linked countries. Connectivity is key.





The Netherlands is a gateway to Europe and to the world. We are happy to share our knowledge and expertise with other transit countries. And Dutch companies stand ready to provide knowhow on physical infrastructure planning and development.

Our transport infrastructure serves as your hub for transport to Europe and the rest of the world — by sea, air, waterways, rail and road. We can help LLDCs connect with and gain access to markets. We provide a gateway to millions of companies and consumers all over the world. Amsterdam Schiphol Airport is among the top airports in the world. And the port of Rotterdam is the biggest seaport in Europe, a leading sustainable energy port, and one of Europe's largest logistic and industrial hubs. Our diplomatic and consular networks in LLDCs stand ready to facilitate in this regard.

At the United Nations in New York, the Kingdom of the Netherlands chairs the Group of Friends for Sustainable Transport. We actively raise awareness of the importance of sustainable transport as an integral part of the broader development agenda. The next meeting on 12 November will address sustainable transport for the economic development of LLDCs.

We are privileged to be your partner. On a yearly basis, trade between the Kingdom of the Netherlands and LLDCs amounts to 3.5 billion euros. Many of our development cooperation partner countries are LLDCs. In 2014 we spent more than 400 million euros in official development assistance in these countries. Part of these efforts aim at empowering LLDCs and making them less vulnerable.

We all know that respect and mutual understanding are the basis of a successful partnership. We see the challenges, but we also see the opportunities. This is why our country is at this Conference: to listen to your needs and to learn more about how we can deepen our ties with LLDCs. Also in the context of our campaign for a seat on the UN Security Council for 2017-2018, we take the interests of LLDCs very seriously. You can count on us as your partner.

Much has been accomplished since the establishment of the Almaty Program of Action in 2003. We have seen tangible progress by landlocked and transit developing countries, as well as by partner countries and regional and international institutions.

Let me share two thoughts on how we hope to advance our partnerships with you.

First, in the coming year the global community will need to make a concerted effort to achieve all the millennium development goals and agree on an ambitious post-2015 development agenda. In this context, the Kingdom of the Netherlands will emphasize the specific conditions of vulnerable countries and the needs of the more than 440 million people living in LLDCs.





Second, this year we launched the revolving Dutch Good Growth Fund of 700 million euros. This fund provides local SMEs with the financing they need to grow. SMEs are local engines of job creation and economic growth. The Dutch Good Growth Fund also supports small and medium-sized enterprises, SMEs, that export and invest in your countries. These companies contribute to local employment opportunities, local production capacity and local infrastructure development.

Mr. Chairman,

We consider this timely conference to be a crucial step to an ambitious, comprehensive and action-oriented partnership. The Kingdom of the Netherlands sees great opportunities to deepen and expand partnerships with the countries represented here. We are here to listen to you, to learn from you and to engage with you. It is our profound wish to serve as your partner for peace, justice and development.

Thank you.

