

Intervention by H.E. Mr. M. Shameem Ahsan, Ambassador & Permanent Representative of Bangladesh at the Second United Nations Conference on Landlocked Developing Countries, Vienna, Austria, 3 – 5 November 2014

Thank you, Mr. Chair, for giving me the floor.

Allow me to congratulate you on becoming the Chair of this very important conference. We are confident that with your able stewardship, the meeting will reach the successful and ambitious result that we have been striving for. Bangladesh assures of its full support in your efforts for achieving that target.

2. At this point, my delegation would also like to align itself with the interventions by Bolivia on behalf of the Group of 77 & China, and by Benin on behalf of the Least Developed Countries.

Mr. Chair,

3. Landlocked Developing Countries face great socio-economic difficulties because of their distance from the sea ports. Their geographical remoteness poses great challenge on their international trade scenarios. Of the 31 LLDCs, 16 are Least Developed Countries, or LDCs. These 16 countries are in even greater difficulties, because of their vulnerabilities in terms poverty, weak human resources, and lack of productive capacity.

4. It is important to provide appropriate and demand driven support to the LLDCs, particularly the least developed ones among them, for strengthening their productive capacity. The first step for helping the LLDCs should be to ensure that their domestic economic activities, reflected by their industrial strength, employment rate in the formal sectors, contribution of manufacturing sector and service sector into the GDP, are put on a strong base. Targeted technical assistance aimed at building and strengthening productive capacity, effective foreign direct investment, and trade facilitation are some of the key components of the required steps.

5. LLDCs are also victims to climate degradation, that pose challenge to all the humanity. The rapid loss of glaciers because of the alarming increase in global temperature result in draughts in some LLDCs, and flash floods in some other LLDCs because of the glacial lake outburst floods, or GLOFs. The people of these countries are forced to change their living patterns of hundreds or thousands of years because of the climate change, creating even greater instability in the societies. It is imperative that the global community takes urgent actions to halt and reverse the climate change phenomenon. The developed countries have the major role to play in this regard.

6. As I mentioned earlier, half of the LLDCs are least developed countries, who need even more active support by the development partners. Many of the developed countries committed to provide 0.15 to 0.20 per cent of their Gross National Income or GNI as Official Development Assistance to LDCs in Monterrey and later in Doha. Unfortunately, we are yet to see fulfillment of that commitment. Although ODA to LDCs have increased in 2013 relative to 2012, further analysis shows that development assistance actually decreased in real terms for the Sub-Saharan

LDCs, most of them landlocked. This dismal scenario needs to improve by the next Financing For Development Conference that will be held in Addis Ababa in 2015, so that we can further work on ODA on a stronger base.

7. Trade facilitation is of key importance for LLDCs, and also their transit developing country neighbours, in particular the least developed countries. Aid for Trade for least developed countries has to be effective and meaningful. The Enhanced Integrated Framework or EIF needs to be strengthened to ensure that landlocked least developed countries, and their neighbouring transit least developed countries can have a useful and efficient network of infrastructure that is mutually beneficial.

8. It is important that least developed landlocked countries have access to the global markets. They already suffer from high transportation cost, and they should not have to suffer from high tariff and non-tariff barriers when their products finally reach the destination markets. The Bali WTO Ministerial decision regarding duty-free and quota-free market access to all products from all least developed countries need to be implemented without delay, as that will go a long way in helping the landlocked least developed countries to merge into the global trade path.

10. Finally, Mr. Chair, Bangladesh being a least developed country, and a transit country for least developed landlocked countries in the region, fully realizes the challenges of both the LLDCs and transit countries. We believe that with mutual understanding of the difficulties, and with partnership among the development partners, landlocked developing countries, and the transit countries, many of whom of course are LDCs, it is indeed possible to find the win-win scenario where we can ensure mainstreaming of the LLDCs into the globalized world. Almaty showed us the vision, and Vienna must show us the path.

I thank you, Mr. Chair.
