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Программа Организации Объединенных Наций по окружающей среде برنامج الأمم المتحدة للبيئة

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Remarks made at the Second United Nations Conference on Landlocked Developing Countries (LLDCs) on behalf of the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP)

Vienna, Austria, 5 November 2014

H.E. Mr. Ban Ki-moon, Secretary-General of the United Nations

H.E. Mr. Heinz Fischer, President of Austria

H.E. Mr. Sam Kutesa, President of the General Assembly

H.E. Mr. Martin Sajdik, President of ECOSOC

H.E. Mr. Gyan Chandra Acharya, Secretary-General of the Conference

Distinguished Ministers, Vice-Ministers and Heads of Delegations,

Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen,

On behalf of the United Nations Environment Programme, I am deeply honoured to address this distinguished gathering as we prepare to reaffirm the global commitment to address the special needs of landlocked developing countries, and to advance their sustainable development.

I would like to offer my sincere condolences to the Government and the people of Zambia for the loss of their President.

I would like to pay special thanks to the Government of Austria for hosting us in the charming city of Vienna.

I would also like to extend my gratitude to the United Nations Secretary General, Ban Ki-moon, Ministers and Vice-ministers gathered here, and to my colleague, Mr. Gyan Chandra Acharya, Under-Secretary-General and High Representative for the Least Developed Countries, Landlocked Developing Countries and Small Island Developing States, for making this critical meeting possible.

Excellencies, Ladies and Gentleman,

As part of the United Nations, and in support of the work carried out by The United Nations Office of the High Representative for the Least Developed Countries, Landlocked Developing Countries and the Small Island Developing States, let me reaffirm UNEP's commitment to work closely with all of you to shape the new development agenda for landlocked developing countries for the next decade, to which environmental sustainability is so important.

As we are aware, one of the biggest challenges to sustainable development and poverty eradication in landlocked developing countries is their geography, which can stifle economic growth by hampering access to regional and global markets.

The Almaty Declaration and Programme of Action is an important mechanism through which the special needs of landlocked developing countries – and in particular those needs that relate to infrastructure development, and transit and trade policy frameworks – can be met so that landlocked developing countries can participate more fully in global trade.

Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen,

Energy is at the heart of most critical economic, environmental and social issues facing the world today. Clean, efficient, affordable and reliable energy services are indispensable for global prosperity and can also lead to a sustainable future for all with multiple benefits for development, human well-being, environmental and climate change.

The decisions we take today on how we produce, consume, and distribute energy will profoundly influence our ability to eradicate poverty, support sustainable development and respond effectively to climate change. Addressing these challenges is beyond the sole reach of governments, it will take the active engagement of all sectors of society, including local communities, civil society and the private sector.

Ensuring access to energy is arguably one of the major challenges LLDCs face today. For those living in extreme poverty, a lack of access to energy services dramatically affects and undermines health, limits opportunities for education and development, and can reduce a family's potential to rise up out of poverty.

Many LLDCs are either very reliant on energy imports, or on energy exports. In either case, the inability to easily export and/or import due to poor infrastructure, the high cost of transport and complex transit systems – infrastructure, legal frameworks, institutions, and procedures serving trade corridors – limit the competitiveness of LLDCs and can result in a lack of enough energy for local use, manufacturing and services.

Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen,

Renewable Energy

The Green Economy is our opportunity - your opportunity - to sustainably diversify your export markets, reduce your exposure to market instability and to build the economic resilience of your countries.

The Green Economy is underpinned by access to clean, efficient, affordable and reliable energy. By developing the renewable energy sector of LLDCs, the dependence on energy imports will be reduced. In addition, with investment in renewables on the rise, this market promises attractive growth opportunities.

The time is right for LLDCs to put their rich stock of natural resources into the development of sustainable, renewable, and clean energy, which will derive for them many benefits beyond economic growth, to include climate change mitigation, job creation and ecological conservation.

In many LLDCs, export markets are largely dependent on the products of agricultural and extractive industries, such as commodities and minerals, leaving LLDCs highly vulnerable to market forces and dependent on often finite or resource intensive industries to support their economies.

The Green Economy offers an opportunity for LLDCs to build their economic resilience while safeguarding their natural resource base upon which their economies are so heavily dependent.

As transport and transit systems in landlocked developing countries are improved through the effective implementation of the provisions of the Almaty Declaration and Programme of Action, LLDCs will be ideally placed to build economic resilience in different sectors, including energy.

Excellencies, Ladies and gentlemen,

The Green Economy

While in recent years LLDCs' share of global trade has increased, it remains modest. According to a 2013 World Development Indicators report, the sum total of global trade for 32 LLDCs and 360 million people is just 1.1 per cent, and the range of goods for export has seen little diversification since the Almaty Programme of Action was adopted.

UNEP is working with LLDCs to change this, by providing demand-driven policy advice, technical assistance and capacity-building to achieve sustainable development through a green economy transition. We have, for example, worked with stakeholders through national consultations to assess the opportunities and challenges in organic agriculture, which is considered to be one of the significant sectors in LLDCs.

Based on the trends of last few years, the role of the organic agriculture sector in Moldova's economy, for example, is expected to grow from the current figure of less than two to five per cent in the next 10 years. All of this while leaving a positive impact on job opportunities and poverty reduction, both directly and indirectly.

As these examples make clear, the Green Economy transition opens up new opportunities for regional and global trade in LLDCs. For example, the global market in low-carbon and energy efficient technologies is projected to nearly triple to US \$2.2 trillion by 2020.

The Partnership for Action on a Green Economy, which held its first global conference in Dubai in March this year aims to green 30 developing economies – some of them LLDCs – by 2020.

Many LLDCs are well positioned to gain from mainstreaming sustainability considerations in their trade-driven growth strategies, including through the export of certified commodities in the fisheries, forests or agriculture sectors.

Key to supporting countries to successfully address diverse environmental sustainability challenges, are enhanced partnerships with stakeholders across multiple sectors of government, to enable the sustainable management of the environment, and to support a green economy transition for sustainable development and poverty eradication.

Excellencies, Ladies and gentlemen,

UNEP stands ready to continue supporting LLDCs achieve sustainable development, balancing the integration of social, economic and environmental objectives.

Thank You