

Second UN-Conference on landlocked developing countries (LLDC)
Opening Speech by Sebastian Kurz
Minister for Europe, Integration and Foreign Affairs

Secretary General,
Distinguished Heads of State, Government and Ministers,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

Thank you for electing me as President of the Conference.

It is a great pleasure for me to welcome you all here in Vienna
to the second United Nations Conference on Landlocked Developing Countries.

There is one thing I personally share with 50% of the people living in landlocked developing countries:
We are all under 30 years of age!

But while Austrians of my age can look at a bright future full of opportunities,
most of the young people in landlocked developing countries
don't have the chance to follow their aspirations in life.

I hope that this conference can be a boost for landlocked developing countries
and I am happy that we can host it in Vienna, because:

- Austria is a landlocked country itself.
- Half of our partner countries for development cooperation are landlocked.
We therefore know their problems well.
- And finally: as host of one of the United Nations headquarters we are always glad to be able to
welcome the UN-family here in Vienna.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

As a landlocked country we know about the impact this particular geographic situation has on trade
and business development.

We have learned that especially for landlocked countries it is important to seek close and sustainable
relations with their neighbours.

Therefore regional integration has been for us a cornerstone for our foreign and economic policy in the
past decades.

And joining the European Union has provided us with enormous economic opportunities for the private
sector and for our citizens.

But we wouldn't have been able to profit from integration in trade, transit and infrastructure had it not
been for the full participation of a strong private sector.

To use the words of the Secretary General: "business needs the space to do what it does best: create
jobs and innovate".

Therefore I am particularly looking forward to tomorrow's Business and Investment Forum, where business leaders meet government officials from the LLDC group to discuss possible partnerships and strategies.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

10 years have passed since the adoption of the Almaty Programme of Action.

In some areas concrete progress has been achieved.
But enormous challenges still lie ahead.

- In 2010, the trade volume of landlocked developing countries was just 61% of the trade volume of coastal countries.
- But the transport costs of landlocked developing countries were 45% higher than those of a seaborne economy.

It is therefore important that we not only restate our commitment to help the world's 32 landlocked developing countries.

Our aim should be to adopt here in Vienna a new Programme of Action with clear priorities and a concrete timeframe, which places the interests of the most vulnerable economies at the centre of international attention and action!

Ladies and gentlemen,

The preparation for this conference has been very intensive.

I would therefore like to take this opportunity to thank Under-Secretary-General *Ascharia* and his team for all their efforts.

I wish you and all of us a successful conference.

Thank you.