

## 2<sup>nd</sup> LLDC Conference, 3-5 November 2014, Vienna, Austria

### WTO/UNCTAD side-event on “Harvesting the benefits of Trade Facilitation for LLDCs”

#### Brief summary

**Chair:** H.E. Juan Esteban Aguirre, Ambassador, Permanent Representative Paraguay to the UN Office and other International Organizations in Geneva

The Chair opened the event by stressing that the objective for LLDCs was to achieve a holistic approach of the Vienna Programme of Action focusing on creating predictability and simplification in trade, focusing on regional integration issues, including the consolidation of the issue of Freedom of Transit.

- Mr. Raul Torres, Counsellor, WTO

Mr. Torres presented the main aspects of the WTO Trade Facilitation Agreement, underlining that the Agreement addresses many of the main barriers to trade. In particular, the presentation focused on Article 11 of the Agreement, Freedom of Transit, highlighting the particular positive impact for LLDCs of the clarification of a number of transit issues.

- Mr. Poul Hansen, Economic Affairs Officer, UNCTAD

The representative of UNCTAD, in his presentation focused on the benefits of trade facilitation for LLDCs, such as reducing the cost of trade implementing trade facilitation reforms: ensuring better control compliance, e.g. in revenue collection: reducing corruption and improving transparency as well as a number of general development benefits following in the wake of trade facilitation reform.

- Mr. Erdenetsogt Odbayar, Interim Director of the International Think Tank for LLDCs, Mongolia, representing the LLDC community

The representative of the ITT presented the situation of Mongolia with regard to trade facilitation and transit, especially stressing the positive development

of increased access to Chinese ports for Mongolian trade and the recent developments regarding the Trilateral Agreement on Transit between China, Mongolia and Russian Federation. He also presented the lessons learned from the Transit Mongolia initiative, in particular stressing the need for better coordination and collaboration between the trade facilitation stakeholders, both public and private.

- Mr. Rabson Wanjala, Counsellor, Mission of Kenya, Geneva, representing the transit country community

In this presentation Counsellor Wanjala focused on the progress made in Kenya in relation to import, export and transit procedures, especially in a regional EAC context benefiting neighboring LLDCs such as Burundi, Rwanda and Uganda, amongst others realized due to the EAC Customs Union and the Single Window for Transit Transport from the Port of Mombassa to neighboring LLDCs. However, Mr. Wanjala raised a number of challenges still causing challenges for trade and transit, in particular the issue of lack of upgraded infrastructure, including at borders, although EAC is focusing on One-Stop border stations.

- Mr. Igor Runov, Under-Secretary-General, IRU, representing the private sector

Mr. Runov stressed that as it has been shown with the APoA the issue most important for the transport industry is not so much the grand declarations but the implementation of the commitments, such as for instance Freedom of Transit by countries. Policy commitments must be translated in action. The fight against corruption must be continued and infrastructure development should be a focus of attention: especially a borders and regional wide infrastructure coordination and collaboration.

- H.E. Mr. Damba Gankhuyag, Deputy-Foreign-Minister, Mongolia

Launch event of the Joint Publication by UN-OHRLLS and the International Think Tank for LLDCs on the WTO Trade Facilitation Agreement and the Implications for LLDCs.