

**13<sup>th</sup> ANNUAL MINISTERIAL MEETING  
OF THE MINISTERS OF LANDLOCKED DEVELOPING COUNTRIES (LLDCS)  
ON THE SIDELINES OF 69<sup>TH</sup> UNGA  
3 – 6 PM, 25<sup>th</sup> Sep 2014, UN**

STATEMENT BY H.E. LYONPO DAMCHO DORJI  
MINISTER OF HOME AND CULTURAL AFFAIRS, LEADER OF BHUTANESE DELEGATION

**Mr. Chairman,  
Under Secretary-General,  
Excellencies,  
Distinguished delegates**

1. Let me start by thanking His Excellency Hon. Kalaba, Foreign Minister of Zambia for convening this annual ministerial meeting of Landlocked Developing Countries on the sidelines of the 69<sup>th</sup> GA.
2. I wish to take this opportunity to also express our deep appreciation to our Chair, the delegation of Zambia for their leadership, commitment and hard work in advancing the cause of Landlocked Developing Countries at the UN. In this regard, I wish to particularly acknowledge the efforts made by Her Excellency Ambassador Dr Mwaba P. Kasese-Bota, Permanent Representative of Zambia and her team, especially as they spearhead our efforts in negotiating the outcome document of the upcoming Second UN Conference in Austria. We count on Zambia's leadership and assure you of our full support and cooperation.
3. I would also like to thank Under-Secretary General, Ambassador Gyan Chandra Acharya not only for his useful briefing on the implementation of the Almaty Programme of Action and the update on the preparations of the Conference in Austria but for his continued efforts in championing the cause of our group ever since he assumed this high position.

**Mr. Chairman,**

4. The 13<sup>th</sup> Annual Ministerial Meeting of our Group comes at a crucial time. At the Conference in Austria, which is just a month from now, we will adopt a new programme of action for LLDCs for the next ten years. Then there are the negotiations on the Post-2015 development agenda. We must seize these opportunities to adequately highlight the special needs and challenges of LLDCs.

5. We commend your choice of the theme for this meeting, *“Forging Partnerships for Enhanced Trade Competitiveness and Capacity Building of LLDCs in 2015 and beyond”*, which is both timely and appropriate. Building on this theme, the Ministerial Communiqué succinctly captures the issues and challenges of LLDCs and highlights the essential ingredients that should feature in the new programme of action.
6. Further, the Zero draft of the Outcome Document of the Vienna Conference has taken on board most, if not all of these elements, and provides a good template for a new programme of action for LLDCs for the next decade. In our view, this template not only seeks to maintain continued focus on the priority areas of the APOA, but also seeks to address broader issues of pursuing robust and sustained economic growth. Such an approach, we believe, is consistent with our experiences from the last decade of implementing the Almaty Programme of Action and the recommendations emerging from various reviews and consultations. We, therefore, remain fully supportive of the key priority areas that have been identified for the new programme of action.

**Mr. Chairman,**

7. The theme for our meeting today contains three critically important issues which must form an integral part of a holistic programme of action for landlocked developing countries: boosting trade competitiveness and capacity building underpinned by strengthened partnerships. These issues, in essence, capture our aspirations and expectations out of the second review conference.
8. Enhancing trade competitiveness is extremely critical to enable landlocked developing countries to pursue sustainable and equitable economic growth and ensure the prosperity of our peoples. Enhancing trade competitiveness calls for building productive capacity, diversifying our economies, strengthening the private sector and improvement in trade related infrastructure – issues that are so critical to addressing the challenges of LLDCs. This is a theme that resonates well with our experiences, as I am sure with all other LLDCs. In working towards economic diversification, we are of the view that service sectors, especially such as promoting sustainable tourism and information and communication technology services hold great promise and potential.
9. In this connection, I cannot overemphasize the importance of developing efficient, modern and reliable infrastructure, including ICT and energy infrastructure. Weak and underdeveloped infrastructure continues to pose a major challenge for us. Recognizing its critical importance, we have adopted

the development of strategic infrastructure as a key priority in our national plans and remain firm in our belief that this should form one of the main elements of the new programme of action as it was in the APOA.

10. From our experience, lack of capacity is a major issue constraining our development efforts as it cuts across a whole range of areas, at the policy to actual implementation of various infrastructure projects. The new programme of action for LLDCs would fall short if it does not provide for adequate support for capacity building of Landlocked Developing countries. For instance, Bhutan is currently in the process of acceding to the WTO for which capacity building support would be of great benefit to help us move forward.

**Mr. Chairman,**

11. You have rightly chosen “forging partnerships” as a binding theme on issues surrounding enhancing trade competitiveness and building capacity. If there is one group of countries that need to forge strong partnerships, it is us, the group of Landlocked Developing Countries. We need to build partnership with a whole range of actors: with transit countries, development partners, international organizations and the private sector. And for some landlocked developing countries that are also least developed, partnerships remain indispensable for their economic growth as well as in addressing the specific challenges of being landlocked. Strengthened partnerships at all levels must continue to be the lynchpin on which the other priority areas can be launched to bring about shared prosperity and benefits as we embark on a new programme of action.

**Mr. Chairman,**

12. We are today, at a critical juncture, where a template for a new programme of action has been presented through the draft Outcome Document of the Second UN Conference of Landlocked Developing Countries. Informal consultations on the draft outcome document are underway with only few weeks at our disposal to finalize it. It is imperative that we stay together as a group and work collectively to retain the good elements contained in the draft outcome document that are beneficial for the LLDCs in the new programme of action. We remain confident of your leadership to steer us through this process and assure you of our full support and cooperation as we work towards ensuring that we have a new programme of action that comprehensive and effectively addresses the special needs and challenges of the Landlocked Developing Countries for the next decade.

13. I thank you!