

# **Ulaanbaatar Declaration of the Inaugural Conference of the International Think Tank for LLDCs**

**June 11-12, 2018  
Ulaanbaatar, Mongolia**

---

We, the Ministers of the Landlocked Developing Countries (LLDCs), having met for the Inaugural Conference of the International Think Tank for LLDCs in Ulaanbaatar, Mongolia, on 11 and 12 June 2018:

Recalling and emphasizing the importance of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, the Vienna Programme of Action for Landlocked Developing Countries for the Decade 2014-2024, the Addis Ababa Action Agenda, and the UN General Assembly resolution 72/232 that convenes a high-level comprehensive midterm review of the Vienna Programme of Action,

Reaffirming the overarching goal of the Vienna Programme of Action of addressing the special development needs and challenges of LLDCs arising from their landlockedness, remoteness and geographical constraints in a more coherent manner and thus contributing to an enhanced rate of sustainable and inclusive growth, which can contribute to the eradication of poverty in all its forms and dimensions, including extreme poverty,

Taking note of the Astana Declaration adopted at the Ministerial Meeting of LLDCs on Trade and Transport held in Astana, Kazakhstan on 16 and 17 May 2018.

## **Have adopted the following:**

1. We recognize that the lack of territorial access to the sea, aggravated by remoteness from world markets and by high transit costs and risks, imposes constraints on the export earnings, private capital inflow and domestic resource mobilization of LLDCs and therefore adversely affects their overall growth and socioeconomic development;
2. We emphasize that the establishment and maintenance of secure, reliable, efficient and quality infrastructure and transit transport systems remains critical for LLDCs to enable them to reduce transport and trading costs, enhance their competitiveness and become fully integrated in regional and global markets;
3. We stress the importance of building infrastructure that is resilient to natural disasters and strengthening of infrastructure sharing between transport, energy and ICT sectors, to leverage synergies;
4. We emphasize that trade facilitation is critical to address the high trade costs faced by the LLDCs, and call for a rapid ratification and implementation of the WTO Agreement on Trade Facilitation, where applicable. We encourage the LLDCs and transit countries that have not yet notified their category C measures and their capacity needs to do so to take advantage of the

technical assistance opportunities. We urge members to continue to provide technical, financial and capacity-building assistance to LLDCs, on a sustainable basis, for the effective implementation of the Agreement;

5. We invite the LLDCs that have not done so to accede to and ratify, as appropriate, relevant international, regional and sub-regional conventions and other legal instruments related to trade facilitation and ensure their effective implementation, with a view to reducing trade costs and delays for the LLDCs<sup>1</sup>;

6. We reaffirm our commitment to intensify our efforts to build productive capacities, pursue structural economic transformation, encourage export diversification and integrate into the global and regional value chains. In doing so, we will lay the foundations for poverty eradication, employment generation and inclusive economic growth;

7. We stress the need for renewed and strengthened partnerships for development to support LLDCs in diversifying their economic base and enhancing value addition to their exports through the development of productive capacities, including through private sector involvement, and the development of small and medium-sized enterprises;

8. We underline the prominent role that foreign direct investment plays in accelerating development and poverty reduction through employment, the transfer of managerial and technological know-how, on mutually agreed terms, and non-debt-creating flows of capital and call upon LLDCs to promote an enabling environment to attract foreign direct investment and private sector involvement;

9. We recognize the opportunities provided by digital technologies, including space technology in facilitating trade, regional and global integration including through the use of electronic commerce and call on development partners, and multilateral development banks to enhance financial and technical assistance to the LLDCs in order to develop the necessary hard and soft ICT infrastructure as well as the necessary legal framework and policies;

10. We welcome the inauguration of the International Think Tank for LLDCs on 11 June 2018. The International Think Tank will enhance the analytical capabilities of the LLDCs, provide home-grown research to cater for their specific needs, promote the interests of the LLDCs as well as strengthen their collective voice at global level including at the UN;

11. We encourage the International Think Tank for LLDCs to undertake research and capacity development for the LLDCs and to strengthen research collaboration with relevant international organizations including UN-OHRLLS, UNCTAD, UNDP, WTO and others, and with research institutions, think tanks, and other stakeholders in all the 6 priority areas of the Vienna Programme of Action including: fundamental transit policy issues, infrastructural development and

---

<sup>1</sup> Including the Customs Convention on Containers (Geneva, 2 December 1972), the Customs Convention on the Temporary Importation of Commercial Road Vehicles (Geneva, 18 May 1956), the Customs Convention on the International Transport of Goods under Cover of TIR Carnets (Geneva, 14 November 1975), the International Convention on the Harmonization of Frontier Controls of Goods (Geneva, 21 October 1982) and the World Trade Organization Agreement on Trade Facilitation (2013).

maintenance, international trade and trade facilitation, regional integration and cooperation, structural economic transformation, and means of implementation and foster coherence in the implementation of the Vienna Programme of Action with the Sustainable Development Goals;

12. We further encourage the International Think Tank for LLDCs to undertake research in areas that are of key importance to the LLDCs including climate change, desertification, agriculture, digital economy and others;

13. We call upon all the Member States, including LLDCs, transit countries and development partners, United Nations system organizations and other stakeholders including the private sector and foundations to provide voluntary contributions to the International Think Tank;

14. We urge all LLDCs that have not yet ratified the Multilateral Agreement for the Establishment of an International Think Tank for LLDCs to do so at their earliest convenience;

15. We call for the successful preparation of the comprehensive high-level midterm review of the implementation of the Vienna Programme of Action for LLDCs in accordance with the General Assembly resolution 72/232;

### **Acknowledgements**

16. We thank the Government of Mongolia for its generous financial support and for hosting this Conference, in collaboration with the International Think Tank for LLDCs, and for its hospitality extended to us during our stay in Ulaanbaatar;

17. We express our sincere appreciation for the efforts undertaken by Paraguay in its capacity as the Global Chair of the Group of LLDCs and in its capacity as Coordinator for trade and development issues of the Group of LLDCs in Geneva;

18. We express our gratitude for the substantive support and financial contribution of the UN Office of the High Representative for LDCs, LLDCs and SIDS (UN-OHRLLS) to the organization of this Conference;

19. We also express our appreciation to the active participation and substantive contributions of the development partners, UN system organizations, international and regional organizations, the private sector, civil society and other stakeholders.