

**GENEVA MINISTERIAL DECLARATION
ADOPTED AT
THE FIFTH MEETING OF TRADE MINISTERS OF LANDLOCKED DEVELOPING COUNTRIES,
HELD IN GENEVA, 24 JUNE 2016**

We, the Ministers and officials responsible for trade of the Landlocked Developing Countries (LLDCs), have met in Geneva, Switzerland on 23 and 24 June 2016 and have held our deliberations under the theme - Harnessing the trade potential of the LLDCs to accelerate the implementation of the Vienna Programme of Action and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development,

Recognizing that the lack of territorial access to the sea, aggravated by remoteness from world markets and high transit costs and risks, impose constraints on export earnings, private capital inflow and domestic resource mobilization of landlocked developing countries and therefore adversely affects their overall growth and socioeconomic development,

Emphasizing the potential benefits of a fair and balanced multilateral trading system for achieving a rules-based, open, predictable, inclusive, non-discriminatory and equitable trade environment, which would provide every country, regardless of its territorial size, population, or level of development the opportunity to effectively and beneficially participate in global trade;

Underlining the importance of addressing the trade-related challenges of the LLDCs that includes reducing trade costs at the border, between borders and behind borders, and addressing other supply-side constraints in order to increase the LLDCs' trade competitiveness; improving the market access for their products; and enhancing structural transformation in order to help diversify their product and markets.

Underlining the need to adopt general and specific support measures for LLDCs in the WTO, as well as in other relevant trade fora, taking into account the particular needs and special problems of these countries, and stressing that full attention should be given to the interests of Landlocked developing countries on the remaining Doha issues.

Recalling the Vienna Programme of Action for Landlocked Developing Countries for the Decade 2014-2024, adopted in November 2014, which provides a comprehensive plan of action for the next decade to address the special challenges and needs of landlocked developing countries,

Recalling the Livingstone Call for Action for the Accelerated Implementation of the Vienna Programme of Action adopted at the High-Level Follow-up Ministerial Meeting to the Vienna Conference held in Livingstone, Zambia, in June 2015 that highlights key measures and initiatives required to accelerate implementation of the Vienna Programme of Action,

Underlining the thrust and the momentum created by the United Nations outcome document of the Post-2015 Development adopted on 25 September 2015, entitled "Transforming our world: the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development",

Recalling also the Addis Ababa Action Agenda of the Third International Conference on Financing for Development, that is an integral part of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development,

Recalling also the Paris Agreement arising from the twenty-first session of the Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC),

Recalling further the Ministerial Meetings of the Group of LLDCs at the margins of the 10th Ministerial Conference of the WTO held in Nairobi, Kenya on 19 December 2015 and 9th Ministerial Conference held in Bali, Indonesia, on 6 December 2013, in which LLDC's Ministers adopted Ministerial Communiqués that raised outstanding issues concerning the participation of LLDCs in the multilateral trading system,

Have adopted the following Ministerial Declaration:

Development Objectives

1. The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development acknowledges that international trade is an engine for inclusive economic growth and poverty reduction, and contributes to the promotion of sustainable development for countries. The structural transformation, including modernization and specialization of the productive sectors and improving physical infrastructure has to be done in order to harness the potential of international trade, to support national development objectives and to achieve United Nations Sustainable Development Goals.
2. We stress that the implementation of The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development through the revitalized Global Partnerships based on a spirit of strengthened global solidarity, focused in particular on the vulnerabilities and special needs and challenges facing landlocked developing countries. Thus we urge international community to facilitate an intensive global engagement in support of implementation of the sustainable development goals and targets, mobilizing all available resources to that end.
3. We recognize that the increased frequency and intensity of disasters generated by climate change is exacerbating the economic and social vulnerability of LLDCs and jeopardizing the achievement of sustainable development by severely disrupting trade and investment, as main engines of growth and development. We call for more coherence with the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction adopted at the Third UN World Conference on Disaster Risk Reduction (May 2015, Sendai, Japan) that urges Governments to integrate disaster risk reduction into national policies and programmes as a key tool to ensure the sustainability of development gains and the achievement of resilience, and to enhance LLDCs' implementation capacity and capability through the mobilization of support and international cooperation based on their national priorities; with the same goal we also call governments for the compliance of the principles and provisions of the UNFCCC.
4. Comprehensive, coherent and coordinated policies are needed at all levels in the areas of investment, infrastructure (production, transport, telecommunications and energy), logistics (transport and trade facilitation), technology, to support efforts of LLDCs towards mitigating the adverse development impact of landlockedness,
5. We call upon the international community to assist with the design and development of studies and indicators on the impact of landlockedness and vulnerability of landlocked countries that would serve as early warning mechanism to assess external shock vulnerability.
6. There is a need for concerted measures and actions to support LLDCs' efforts to reduce commodity dependence, including through the diversification of their export base, and enhanced processing of the commodities. We call upon the international community to enhance efforts to support LLDCs including through the EIF and other programs, in diversifying their exports, through - *inter alia* - the transfer of relevant technologies, support to developing and strengthen their productive capacities, and capacity building in developing relevant policies;
7. We underline that the development and maintenance of transit transport and information and communications technology infrastructure are crucial for landlocked developing countries in order to reduce high trading costs, improve their competitiveness and become fully integrated in the global market;
8. We emphasize that a strong energy infrastructure in LLDCs is needed to advance the development of domestic productive capacity and to better connect to the regional and international markets. We call on the international community to enhance its support to create such infrastructure in our countries. In this context, we also reemphasize that resources should be mobilized for the production, distribution and marketing of clean energy;
9. We stress that the magnitude of the resources required to invest in infrastructure development and maintenance remains a major challenge and requires forging international,

regional, subregional and bilateral cooperation on infrastructure projects, allocating more from national budgets, effectively deploying international development assistance and multilateral financing in the development and maintenance of infrastructure and strengthening the role of an accountable private sector, Public-Private Partnerships as well as other innovative means of finance;

10. We welcome the launch of the Global Infrastructure Forum, led by the multilateral development banks (MDBs), on 16 April 2016 in Washington, DC. We stress that the Forum should address the infrastructure needs of the landlocked developing countries in a focused manner;

11. We welcome the fact that the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the Addis Ababa Action Agenda recognize the special needs of the landlocked developing countries and emphasize the importance of strong synergy in their implementation and the Vienna Programme of Action and encourage coordination and coherence in the follow-up of their implementation;

World Trade Organization

12. We call upon the WTO membership to continue to strengthen the negotiation function of WTO to make it more transparent, inclusive, and participatory, in order to deliver meaningful outcomes for landlocked developing countries. We insist that the post Nairobi work should be fair, balanced and development-centered.

13. We call for a rapid ratification and implementation of the Trade Facilitation Agreement. 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. We also call for the constructive cooperation of transit countries for the effective and early application of disciplines that contribute to reducing transit time and costs, simplifying procedures and enhancing certainty in trans-border trade.

14. We call upon international organizations to establish special facilities and dedicated programmes, with predictable resources, for the LLDCs, such as the WTO's Trade Facilitation Agreement Facility, to assist LLDCs in scaling-up trade facilitation initiatives and implementing the Trade Facilitation Agreement and other important international conventions and regional agreements;

15. We emphasize the critical importance of Agriculture to the LLDCs economies. In this context, we attach importance to the continuation of the reform process in order to promote market access, and reduce or eliminate all distortive domestic support measures. We reiterate the importance of the decision of the WTO Nairobi Ministerial Conference on Export Competition and we call upon for its rapid implementation.

16. We reiterate our support to the Sectorial Initiative in favour of Cotton (C4) that calls for the ambitious reduction of the agricultural domestic support which distorts the international cotton market. We urge Members to implement the Ministerial Decisions on Cotton in all its aspects: Market Access, Domestic Support, Export Competition, and Development.

17. We recognize the growing role of the services sector in modern economies, in particular, the importance of the tourism sector, finance and ICT, and that an efficient and productive services industry will contribute significantly to productivity growth and for the overall competitiveness of landlocked developing countries' economies. In that regard, we affirm our commitment to develop the service sector and call on Members and international organizations to support landlocked developing countries' to develop their services sectors. Also, special attention should be given to the development of the manufacturing sector as a critical catalyst for technological change and structural transformation of LLDCs economies.

18. We believe that the principle of Special and Differential (S&D) treatment represents one of the cornerstones of the WTO Agreements and that the reaffirmation of this principle should be an integral part of WTO's work, as well as, any future agreements and decisions.

19. Aid for Trade, including EIF, is essential for our countries to meaningfully benefit from the multilateral trading system. We reiterate our request that development assistance provided in the context of the Aid for Trade initiative should consider the special needs and requirements of LLDCs, including capacity-building for the formulation of trade policies, participation in trade negotiations and implementation of trade facilitation measures, development of trade-related infrastructure as well as the diversification of export products and strengthening of productive capacities with a view to increasing the competitiveness of LLDCs' products in export markets;

20. We also urge Members to take into account the special needs and problems caused by the geographical disadvantage of being landlocked that during the accession process of LLDCs to the WTO. As such, the accession process for LLDCs should be further simplified and these countries should be provided with adequate technical and financial assistance.

21. We recognize the significant contribution to the strengthening of the multilateral trading system of the LLDCs that acceded under Article XII of the Marrakesh Agreement Establishing the WTO. For a balanced outcome of trade liberalization negotiations, we stress the need to take into account the extensive commitments undertaken by the Article XII Members upon their accession to the WTO.

Partnership and International Support

22. Partnership between landlocked developing countries and transit countries is mutually beneficial for the improvement and constant maintenance of their multi-modal transport infrastructure connectivity and of technical and administrative arrangements in their transport, customs and logistic systems. Collaboration must be promoted on the basis of the mutual interests of both landlocked and transit countries. We underscore the importance that transit countries guarantee free and unrestricted transit through their territories for landlocked developing countries allowing the enjoyment of a free and direct access to high seas.

23. Efficient transit transport systems, strong collaborative efforts in infrastructure development and interlinkage, the promotion of an enabling legal environment and institutional arrangements, and strong national leadership on cooperative arrangements between landlocked developing countries and transit countries are also crucial for achieving structural transformation and sustainable economic growth and development.

24. We call upon our bilateral and multilateral partners to increase their technical and financial assistance to LLDCs to support their efforts to overcome the obstacles imposed by geography and to integrate them into the multilateral trading system. Official Development Assistance remains the main source of international financing for many landlocked developing countries as a catalyst for development, facilitating the achievement of national development objectives, including achieving sustainable development goals and the objectives of the Vienna Programme of Action; This assistance should complement our national efforts aimed at diversifying the domestic production structure and ensure a better integration into the global economy with competitive goods and services that minimize transaction costs related to the specific geographical situation of LLDCs.

25. We emphasize the complementary and catalytic role played by long-term international capital flows, particularly, foreign direct investment. We commit to continue promoting conducive policies to attract foreign direct investment that leads to promote trade as well as sustainable development of LLDCs;

26. We invite developing countries, guided by the spirit of solidarity and consistent with their capabilities, and developed countries to further strengthen partnerships in mutually agreed areas of cooperation within the framework of North-South, South-South and triangular cooperation to enhance diversified trade opportunities, increase foreign direct investment flows that contribute to the sustainable development of LLDCs, as well as increased transfer of appropriate technology;

27. We express our appreciation to the cooperation provided by the organizations of the United Nations system, in particular UNCTAD, UN-OHRLLS, UNDP, UNIDO, UNISDR, UNCITRAL the UN

Regional Economic Commissions and other international organizations, especially WTO, WCO, CFC, IRU, ITC, the World Bank and the regional development banks, regional organization, regional economic communities. We appeal further for synergetic approach on the part of all stakeholders and partners.

The Way Forward

28. We emphasize the need to strengthen the participation of LLDCs in the WTO, giving particular attention to the future work programme of LLDCs as well as in the negotiation to eliminate trade distorting measures, increase market access with particular emphasis on our development needs and supporting the accession process of the landlocked acceding countries.

29. We stress the importance to have a specific Work Programme for LLDCs by the 11th Ministerial Conference. This Work Programme will address the special needs, challenges and vulnerabilities of LLDCs in order to increase their participation in the Multilateral Trading System. Key areas of work are Trade Facilitation, Agriculture, Aid for Trade, Services, Accession, among others.

30. We recognize that LLDCs, including through their Missions in Geneva, need to strengthen their substantive cooperation with UNCTAD on matters of particular interest to LLDCs, including trade, development and interrelated issues in the areas of finance, technology, investment and sustainable and inclusive development.

31. We urge those LLDCs, which have not done so, to ratify the Multilateral Agreement on the establishment of the International Think Tank for the LLDCs in order to bring the Think Tank to full operation, and invite the Office of the High Representative and relevant organizations of the United Nations system, Member States, including development partners, and relevant international and regional organizations to support the think tank, as it will play an important role in enhancing the analytical capability of LLDCs and provide home-grown research to cater for our specific needs.

32. We request the relevant United Nations Organizations, particularly UNCTAD, UN-OHRLLS, UNDP, UNIDO, UNISDR, UNCITRAL, the UN Regional Economic Commissions, other international organizations, especially, WTO, WCO, CFC, IRU, ITC, the World Bank, regional development banks, regional organizations, regional economic communities, national parliaments, the private sector, the civil society and other stakeholders to support the implementation of the VPoA;

33. We stress that in accordance with the mandate given by the General Assembly, the Office of the High Representative for the Least Developed Countries, Landlocked Developing Countries and Small Island Developing States should ensure coordinated follow-up to and effective monitoring of and reporting on the implementation of the Vienna Programme of Action, and to undertake advocacy efforts at the national, regional and global levels and we also stress that the Office, in collaboration with other relevant stakeholders, should work on developing relevant indicators for measuring the progress on implementing the Programme of Action in landlocked developing countries, within their existing mandates.

34. We invite partner countries and the international financial and development institutions to make voluntary contributions to the Trust Fund established by the Secretary- General to support the activities related to the follow-up to the implementation of the VPoA.

Acknowledgment

We express our sincere appreciation for the efforts undertaken by Paraguay in its capacity of Coordinator for trade and development issues of the Group of Landlocked Developing Countries in Geneva, and by Zambia in its capacity as the Global Chair of the Group of LLDCs in New York.

We express our gratitude to the Government of the Kingdom of the Netherlands for its generous contribution to the successful organization of the High Level Meeting.

We express our gratitude to the substantive support and financial contribution of the World Trade Organization Secretariat and the Office of the High Representative for LDCs, LLDCs and SIDS to the Meeting.

We also express our appreciation to the Plurinational State of Bolivia that is going to organize the next meeting of ministers of transport of LLDCs in September 2016.

We also note with appreciation the active participation and substantive contributions of other development partners, UN system organizations, other international organizations, the Private Sector, Civil Society, and other stakeholders.

Geneva, 24 June 2016