

3 November 2014

**Statement of H.E. Mr. Sam Kahamba Kutesa,
President of the 69th Session of the General Assembly,
at the Opening of the Second UN Conference on Landlocked
Developing Countries**

**Your Excellency Heinz Fischer, Federal President of the Republic of Austria,
Your Excellency Sebastian Kurz, Federal Minister for Europe, Integration and Foreign Affairs
of Austria and President of the Conference,
Your Excellency Martin Sajdik, President of ECOSOC,
Mr. Secretary-General,
Ambassador Gyan Acharya, Secretary-General of the Conference,
Excellencies,
Distinguished Delegates,
Ladies and Gentlemen,**

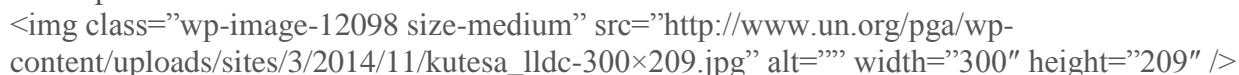
I am pleased to address this Second United Nations Conference on Landlocked Developing Countries. I would like to thank President Fischer, as well as the Government and people of Austria for hosting us.

Eleven years ago in Almaty, a Programme of Action was adopted to address the special needs of landlocked developing countries, including the high transport costs and related bottlenecks that make it difficult for LLDCs to integrate into global markets. Coming from a landlocked developing country myself, I know these challenges all too well.

In the Programme of Action, we acknowledged and set out to address the major challenges hindering the development of LLDCs due to their lack of territorial access to the sea. We agreed, inter alia, to:

enhance bilateral and regional cooperation to secure access to the sea
reduce production costs to increase export competitiveness
reduce import-related transport costs and non-tariff barriers along trade routes
improve commerce and trade-facilitating infrastructure, such as roads, railways and ports and
address all fundamental transit policy issues.

This conference provides us an opportunity to take stock of the progress made since Almaty and develop a vision for the future.



President Kutesa delivered a speech at the Opening of the Second UN Conference on Landlocked Developing Countries in Vienna.

Excellencies,

We should feel heartened by the notable progress that has been made in several key areas outlined in the Programme of Action, including: the harmonization of transport and transit policies and procedures with transit countries the development of transport infrastructure and the expansion of trade. There has also been increasing bilateral, regional and multilateral cooperation, especially with regard to production and trade-facilitating infrastructure.

Nevertheless, deep-rooted and multifaceted structural challenges still remain. Export volumes, compared to imports, are still low, and are predominantly raw materials and commodity based. Critical physical infrastructure, such as roads, railways and energy is either lacking or inadequate. Energy, a basic requirement for industrialisation and production, including the facilitation of ICT-based infrastructure, remains inadequate and expensive.

The Secretary-General's Report provides a sobering assessment of the task at hand. It points out, and I quote: "In 2012, the trade volume of 'LLDCs' was 61% that of coastal countries... the World Bank estimated that the basic import and export costs of 'LLDCs' were nearly twice those of their transit neighbours. LLDCs spent, on average, \$3,204 to export a standardized container of cargo, whereas transit countries spent \$1,268. Furthermore, while it cost LLDCs \$3,884 to import a container of merchandise, their coastal neighbours incurred a cost of just \$1,434 for the same", end quote.

With such statistics, it may be an understatement to say that LLDCs are swimming against the tide. And while LLDCs have the primary responsibility for their own development, even with their best efforts, they cannot meet their development objectives on their own.

LLDCs need sustained and unwavering cooperation from transit countries financial and technical support from bilateral and multilateral partners and firm commitments from the international community. Engagement with the private sector is also essential, including through foreign direct investment and public-private partnerships.

In terms of trade, goods originating from LLDCs must have greater market access, at the regional and international levels. In this context, the need for a fair trading regime must be addressed. This should go hand in hand with technical support to help LLDCs meet market standards. Emphasis must be given to deepening regional cooperation and promoting inter and intra-regional trade. Above all, there must be renewed political will to address transit limitations and other challenges.

Building on the foundation laid by Almaty, the outcome document from this conference will provide renewed impetus and additional solutions to address the challenges LLDCs face. The outcome document takes a holistic approach, with a view to addressing existing and emerging issues affecting the growth and development of LLDCs. Infrastructure development, industrialisation, agro-processing and value addition are important strategic areas for the development of LLDCs.

Excellencies,

As we begin formulating the post-2015 development agenda, we must ensure that it is transformative and produces tangible benefits and improved livelihoods for all. In this regard, it will be essential that the international community pays greater attention to addressing the needs of countries facing unique development challenges, such as LLDCs, Least Developed Countries and Small Island Developing States.

The new Programme of Action to be adopted here in Vienna should support LLDCs to enhance their competitiveness, stimulate productive capacities, diversify exports, strengthen their resilience to external and internal shocks, and most importantly, ensure a better future for their 450 million citizens.

Going forward, the efforts of LLDCs, transit countries, development partners, the UN system, and the international community should be focused on ensuring effective implementation of the Programme of Action.

I thank you for your attention.