

4 November 2014

**Remarks of H.E. Mr. Sam Kahamba Kutesa,
President of the 69th Session of the General Assembly,
on the priorities for landlocked developing countries in the Post-2015
Development Agenda**

**Excellencies,
Distinguished Participants,
Ladies and Gentlemen,**

It is my pleasure to address you today as we consider this important theme: The Priorities of Landlocked Developing Countries (LLDCs) in the post-2015 development agenda.

Over the past decade, LLDCs have made considerable economic and social progress. The implementation of the Almaty Programme of Action and efforts towards achieving the Millennium Development Goals were critical in this regard. Each played distinct, yet reinforcing roles in support of the LLDCs. In particular, the Almaty Programme of Action created and strengthened partnerships between LLDCs, transit developing countries, and development partners.

The laudable efforts by many LLDCs towards improving transport infrastructure are particularly noteworthy. Essential policy reforms have also been made to remove many physical and non-physical challenges of transit transport. In this context, regional trade agreements, free trade areas and customs unions continue to play an integral role.

However, much more remains to be done. While the 32 LLDCs doubled their global share of merchandise trade over the last decade, the total amount traded still remains negligible at 1.2 percent. In 2013, this amounted to a mere \$228 billion US dollars.

In spite of some progress in social development, half of the LLDCs are still ranked in the lowest category of the human development index. These countries continue to grapple with persistent poverty, food insecurity, high child and maternal mortality rates and poor sanitation.

It is indeed opportune that the new Programme of Action for the LLDCs is being adopted at the same time as the formulation of the post-2015 development agenda is getting underway. This provides the international community with a unique occasion to ensure that the needs and priorities of LLDCs are effectively integrated into the new development agenda.

Collectively, we must formulate an ambitious and transformative development agenda, underpinned by a renewed and strengthened global partnership for development. Support for countries in special situations such as LLDCs must be integrated into this development framework to help them transform their economies, eradicate poverty and achieve sustainable development.

Distinguished participants,

In my view, the following five priorities are of particular importance for LLDCs in the post-2015 development agenda.

First, developing and expanding efficient transport infrastructure and transit systems remains critical to enhancing the competitiveness of LLDCs. There is urgent need to improve road and railway transport networks, inland waterways, pipelines, and air transport.

Given the magnitude of resources required, fostering international, regional, sub-regional and bilateral cooperation on infrastructure projects is essential. LLDCs themselves should also allocate more funds for infrastructure in their national budgets, and incentivise the private sector to invest in projects through public-private partnerships.

Secondly, strengthening cooperation on fundamental transit policies, laws and regulations between LLDCs and their transit neighbours is crucial.

In this regard, harmonizing, simplifying and standardizing rules and documentation should be promoted through the implementation of international conventions on transport and transit, as well as bilateral, regional and sub-regional arrangements.

Third, greater efforts by LLDCs and their development partners should be directed towards the structural transformation of economies through diversification, industrialization, increased productive capacities, the promotion of tourism and the strengthening of the service sectors. It is also essential to enhance LLDCs' value addition in agriculture, minerals and other natural resources, as well as to increase foreign direct investment.

In the long-term, this approach will result in a more sustainable way of eradicating poverty, creating jobs, achieving inclusive and sustainable growth and development. Increasing access to reliable and cost-effective energy, as well as improving ICT connectivity should be a critical component of these efforts.

Fourth, more attention should be given to the integration of LLDCs into international trade and global value chains. Harnessing the full potential of international trade will contribute to inclusive economic growth and sustainable development in LLDCs. In this regard, bringing the Doha Round to a successful conclusion will ensure that developing countries, especially LLDCs, get a fair share in world trade.

Fifth, promoting regional cooperation and integration will significantly improve transit transport connectivity and increase intra-regional trade. It will also facilitate the harmonization of regulatory policies and customs procedures, thereby enhancing the free movement of goods, services and persons.

The transformative impact of regional cooperation and integration can be seen in my own region, the East African Community, which has been able to make great strides through such cooperative efforts.

By way of example, we have been able to reduce the time it takes to transport a container from the port of Mombasa to Kampala from about 17 to 4 days by simply removing unnecessary bureaucratic delays.

Excellencies,

While it is important that both the Programme of Action for the LLDCs and the post-2015 development agenda are transformative and ambitious, without ensuring that adequate means for implementation are mobilized, the job will not be done. Achieving our development goals will require scaled-up resources in terms of finances, technology development and transfer, as well as capacity building.

We must ensure that LLDCs continue to be supported by the international community; including development partners, the United Nations system, and international financial institutions.

In this context, fulfilling ODA commitments remains vital. Aid for Trade is another element of support for LLDCs; as are effective trade policies and facilitation measures, and development of trade-related infrastructure. North-South, South-South and triangular cooperation must also be enhanced to ensure LLDCs are able to fulfil their post-2015 development goals.

Thank you for your attention.