

28 September 2015

**Statement by H.E. Mr. Mogens Lykketoft,  
President of the 70<sup>th</sup> Session of the General Assembly,  
at the High-Level Forum for the Land-Locked Developing Countries**

President Chagwa, Honourable Ministers, Excellencies, ladies and gentlemen, good afternoon.

I would like, first of all, to thank His Excellency Mr. Edgar Chagwa, President of Zambia, Chair of the Landlocked Developed Countries (LLDCs), for convening this High-Level Forum. Let me also commend Ambassador Kasese-Bota, PR of Zambia, and Under-Secretary General Acharya and his team for their relentless work and commitment.

Ladies and Gentlemen, I would like to begin by congratulating you all, for helping to create and for committing to a new Agenda for people and planet less than a week ago. In a world of conflict, violence and a heart-breaking refugee crisis, the new Agenda brings us hope and focus for the months and years ahead.

In many ways, last October in Vienna, the UN laid the foundation for that agreement as it relates to land-locked developing countries, with a programme of action that will guide your development efforts over the next decade.

Since the Almaty Program of Action was launched, much progress has taken place in LLDCs. GDP growth rates have increased; policy reforms have been undertaken; transit and transport infrastructures have been developed and upgraded, and cooperation with development partners and transit developing countries has been intensified.

Being landlocked, however, is a structural condition from which countries cannot “graduate”. It exposes your countries to greater external vulnerabilities impacting on logistics costs, investment potential and productive integration opportunities.

Notwithstanding the importance of trade, these barriers cannot be overcome by trade facilitation measures alone. Broader issues need to be addressed, particularly structural economic transformation, establishing a basis for sustained productivity gains and economic growth that promotes value-addition and diversification.

The development of energy and ICT infrastructure is also crucial – providing the material basis for manufacturing and industrial growth and as catalysts to disseminate knowledge, skills and best practices.

These are all issues which are at the core of the Vienna Plan of Action and indeed the 2030 Agenda. The challenge now however, is to push for urgent and rapid implementation of both. For this, we need all countries and all actors to deliver on their commitments.

The Addis Ababa Agenda establishes that national governments will continue to have the primary responsibility for financing and managing their own development. In this regard, better policies, better governance and higher domestic resource mobilisation will be critical.

But, however critical domestic resource mobilization will be, this will not be enough, particularly for countries like LLDCs. Strengthened international cooperation – north-south, south-south and triangular – will also be crucial. This includes cooperation to combat corruption and illicit financial flows, as well as ensure that large companies and wealthy individuals pay their taxes where they earn their money. And it means that rich countries must meet their commitments to provide Official Development Assistance, including to LDCs, LLDCs and SIDS.

In addition, we need requires action and change beyond governments. Civil society, academia, foundations and private business must all examine how they conform with the SDG's objectives and must all contribute to their implementation. The private sector, in particular, will be required to play a much more prominent role. We governments, including LLDCs, must create a legal framework that encourages sustainable investment and makes it obvious that green investment is the best investment – for the common good and for capital investors here and now.

But words, debates and speeches will never equal action. And what's needed over the next year is awareness, partnership and action. Poor countries, poor people and our planet cannot wait fifteen years.

To maintain momentum, I will convene a High Level Thematic Debate next April aimed at demonstrating where implementation of the SDGs is happening; how partners can work together; and how to keep the ball rolling. I look forward to your participation and encourage the you all to consider what progress you can make between now and then.

You can count on my presidency to continue working with LLDCS, including towards our shared goal of sustainable development.

Thank you.