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Ministry Of Transport and Logistics

Talking Points For Use During Session 1 On Lessons Learned On Transport Connectivity During The Implementation Of The Vienna Programme Of Action At The Ministerial Meeting Of Landlocked Developing Countries (LLDCs) In Yerevan, Armenia

BY

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**H.E. Mr. Narayan Prakash Saud, Minister of Foreign Affairs of
Nepal;**

The Keynote Speaker;

Fellow Panelists;

Ladies and Gentlemen.

Thank you for giving me the floor.

Zambia played a significant role in the negotiations leading to the VPoA in its capacity at the time as Chair of the Group of LLDCs. As such, Zambia was fully engaged and committed to the implementation of the VPoA. The VPoA came into being under the leadership of the Patriotic Front Government. The New Dawn Administration under the United Party for National Development took over power through the General Elections of 2021 through a peaceful transition and continued with the implementation of the VPoA with the vision of wanting to transform Zambia into a land-linked country.

In this regard, I am happy to share with you some key achievements and best practices experienced in the implementation of the VPoA in the area of transit transport connectivity.

As you may be aware, Zambia is centrally located in South Central Africa and is surrounded by eight (8) neighbouring countries, namely Angola, Botswana, DRC, Malawi, Mozambique, Namibia, Tanzania and Zimbabwe. We also believe that we have a ninth neighbour, Burundi as what separates us is an expanse of water, the Lake Tanganyika.

In order to achieve transit transport connectivity, Zambia has had to develop Transport Corridors to all Sea Ports in the Southern Africa Development Community (SADC) region, thereby allowing for the efficient movement of goods, services and people resulting in increased trade as well as regional integration through enhanced regional value chains and investments. Zambia subscribes to seven (9)

Corridors with about five (5) of them traversing the country. These Corridors are at different levels of development and are as follows:

1. North-South Corridor to Durban via Johannesburg South Africa via Zimbabwe (road or rail) or Botswana (road) and connecting Zambia to the DRC with a spur to Malawi;
2. Maputo Corridor – rail and road from Johannesburg to Maputo Port in Mozambique;
3. Walvis Bay – Ndola – Lubumbashi Corridor linking the Port of Walvis Bay in Namibia to Zambia and the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC);
4. Beira Corridor: Road to Harare or rail to Bulawayo in Zimbabwe then rail via Mutare to Beira, Mozambique;
5. Nacala Corridor linking Zambia and Malawi to the Nacala Port in Mozambique which is the deepest port in SADC;
6. TAZARA Corridor: road or rail via Kapiri Mposhi to Dar-es-Salaam in Tanzania;
7. The Lobito Corridor connecting Zambia to the DRC and Angola to the Lobito Bay Port;
8. The Lake Tanganyika Corridor connecting Zambia to the Great Lakes Region; and
9. The Central Corridor.

Some of the key achievements have been the construction of such infrastructure as roads, One Stop Border Posts (OSBPs), Bridges, Weigh bridges and Ports, and the planned construction and rehabilitation of railway lines.

Among the best practices experienced are for Zambia to maintain good neighbourliness with all her neighbours as well as for us to enter into Agreements with these countries on a bilateral, tripartite or regional basis, along with our development partners to ensure the smooth development and operationalisation of Transport Corridors.

Another major success recorded has been in the harmonisation of policies, legislation, rules, standards and procedures as well as in the reduction of delays at border points through the establishment of OSBPs. An additional achievement was the adoption of the Zambia/Zimbabwe Model Law for the Chirundu OSBP by other countries in the region.

In the recent past, we have observed the setting up of permanent institutions/secretariats to operationalise the transport corridors which is a plus as this will enhance the pace at which these corridors will develop and spur economic activities.

CHALLENGES

Notwithstanding the achievements recorded, there are still a number of challenges encountered, especially pertaining to gaps in Transport Infrastructure as there are many missing links due to shortfalls in financing for infrastructure development. Further, Zambia is highly indebted and reached agreement on debt relief with multilateral and bilateral creditors recently and modalities are still being negotiated.

Further, inadequate financial resources coupled with the high number of corridors has resulted in high transaction costs for a country like Zambia due to heavy traffic volumes leading to rapid deterioration of road infrastructure leading to high maintenance costs.

Furthermore, the COVID 19 pandemic exposed us to more vulnerabilities, although goods and services still had to move across borders. To avoid prolonged delays and cumbersome procedures at the borders, the SADC Ministers of Foreign Affairs, Transport and Health came up with Guidelines to facilitate the movement of goods, especially the essential medicines and services in the region. In addition, the use of ICTs was enhanced and the Private Sector were encouraged to use ICTs for tracking goods as well as for pre-clearance of goods for Customs.

MEASURES/INITIATIVES TO ACCELERATE PROGRESS IN THE FIELDS OF TRANSIT TRANSPORT AND CONNECTIVITY IN LLDCs IN THE CONTEXT OF THE NEXT TEN YEARS

Based on the lessons learnt, the following could help accelerate progress for LLDCs in transit transport connectivity in the next 10 years:

1. There is need for enhanced financial support to the LLDCs for transport infrastructure support at concessional rates;
2. This financial support is especially needed for the construction and rehabilitation of railways for the movement of bulk cargo as this will help to prolong the lifespan of roads;
3. There is need for capacity building for technocrats in LLDCs in transport and logistics and other related fields to promote safe and efficient movement of goods in transit as well as promote international logistics hubs;
4. There is need to promote synergies and harmonise regulatory frameworks between LLDCs and transit countries;
5. There is need for LLDCs to sign up and accede to international instruments that assist with transit and trade facilitation;
6. There is need to promote Public-Private Partnerships for the development and maintenance of transport infrastructure;
7. There is need to increase the use of ICTs in LLDCs and in transport networks and systems; and
8. Lastly but not the least, there is need to promote Culture and Arts (Creatives) in LLDCs to spur connectivity among our people and also to raise awareness and funds for transport infrastructure development.

I say this because my daughter and her peers only knew of Armenia because it is the country where the patriarch of the Kardshians emigrated from.

I thank you.