

Statement by
H.E. Mr. Frank Museba Tayali,
Minister of Transport and Logistics of Zambia

Mr. Mammenthan Chakyev, General Director of the Agency for Transport and Communications under the Cabinet of Ministers of Turkmenistan, Chair for this Session;

Distinguished Honourable Ministers here present;

Ladies and Gentlemen.

Thank you for giving me the floor and from the outset, I wish to thank the Government of Turkmenistan and the UN-OHRLLS for organising this Ministerial Transport Conference of LLDCs whose theme, “Ashgabat Process: Financing for Better Connectivity” could not have come at a better time than this.

Zambia like other Land-Locked Developing Countries (LLDCs) faces various challenges which are directly related to the country’s inherent lack of territorial access to the sea. This increases our transaction costs for our imports and exports as compared to the country’s coastal neighbours and has consequently eroded the country’s competitive edge, slowed economic growth and negatively affected our capacity to promote sustained socio-economic development.

Chairperson

Allow me to mention that last year on 12th August 2021, Zambia held General Elections and ushered in the New Dawn Administration under the United National Party for National Development (UPND). It is therefore, just about a year since the UPND was elected into Government. The UPND Government is committed to ensuring that the transport sector is well developed for the country to benefit as well as facilitate regional connectivity. We want to leverage on our geographic disadvantage to turn Zambia into a truly land-linked country.

Chairperson

Zambia remains committed to confronting the challenges related to being land-locked and has made several strides in implementing the six priority areas of the Vienna Programme of Action (VPoA) for Landlocked Developing Countries for the Decade 2014 to 2024.

While some key milestones have been achieved in each of the priority areas, the country still faces challenges in implementing the VPoA. This was exacerbated by the Covid 19 Pandemic. Zambia had to work with all her neighbouring countries and the Private Sector as well as Regional Economic Communities such as SADC, COMESA and the East African Community to ensure the smooth movement of goods and services, while at the same time containing the spread of the virus.

The Southern African Development Community (SADC) through the combined effort of Ministers of Foreign Affairs, Health, Transport and Trade issued Guidelines on the Harmonisation and Facilitation of Cross Border Operations across the Region during the Covid 19 Pandemic.

The SADC Guidelines called for the automation and simplification of processes to facilitate the fast movement of goods in the region such as the automation of clearing processes, licence and permit issuance, as well as the introduction of pre-clearance of goods and the single window concept. Zambia adopted all these measures and ensured that the Ports of Entry had facilities to reduce the spread of the virus to protect the Border personnel and truck drivers. Transport operators also came on board to ensure that their drivers and crew were tested for Covid 19 and adopted ICTs to track their cargo and pre-clear their goods.

Chairperson

As indicated earlier, Zambia has made strides in improving regional connectivity. While border facilities and procedures have been streamlined and harmonised, leading to some level of increased efficiency, several other transit issues require to be addressed on a country to country basis as we are surrounded by eight (8) countries. There is also slow harmonisation and domestication of trade facilitation instruments such as Customs and immigration matters, security and border operating hours.

With regard to Infrastructure Development and Maintenance, there is inadequate Infrastructure and missing links on major corridors. Zambia has over six (6) key corridors traversing the country and makes it costly to coordinate and develop these corridors at the desired pace due to lack of resources. There are inadequate resources for road and railway construction, rehabilitation and maintenance. Marine Infrastructure also remains underdeveloped due to lack of resources and the country only

has one (1) main inland port at Mpulungu on Lake Tanganyika, the gateway to the Great Lakes Region.

The country also lacks inter-modal linkages, particularly road to railway transfers. In addition, Zambia has poor Logistics infrastructure and systems, especially at entry points. While one stop border posts have been established, there is still need to improve efficiency of border management and develop inland dry ports, among others, to facilitate improvements in logistics infrastructure and services to support domestic and regional trade.

Chairperson

Financial assistance or resource mobilisation is therefore, key to help the country address the transport connectivity-related constraints and build the physical means to move goods and export them. This also refers to financing transport and storage infrastructure as well as enhancing the use of ICTs in the country's logistics system.

As Zambia, in the post Covid 19 era, we would appreciate to be assisted beyond Existing Regional and International partnerships to actualise the different Agreements for the development of transport corridors and infrastructure. On our part, Government is willing to leverage on Public-Private Partnerships (PPPs) to develop ICTs and the much needed physical infrastructure. I also want to assure the International Community that the UPND Government is prudent and will work tirelessly to improve the well-being of the Zambian people and region at large.

I thank you for your attention.