Statement by
H.E. Mr. Saleumxay KOMMASITH, Ambassador and Permanent Representative
of the Lao People's Democratic Republic to the United Nations
Chair of the Group of Landlocked Developing Countries
On Agenda Item 22: Groups of Countries in Special Situations
New York, 21 October 2013
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Mr. Chairman,

I have the honor to deliver this statement on behalf of the Group of Landlocked Developing Countries (LLDCs).

The Group of LLDCs associates itself with the statement delivered by the distinguished Permanent Representative of Fiji on behalf of the Group of 77 and China.

I would also like to thank Ambassador Gyan Chandra Archarya, Under-Secretary-General and High Representative for the Least Developed Countries (LDCs), Landlocked Developing Countries (LLDCs) and Small Island Developing States (SIDS) for presenting the UNSG's report on the Implementation of the Almaty Programme of Action.

Mr. Chairman,

We would like to reiterate that Landlocked Developing Countries has long been recognized by the UN system as one of the most vulnerable groups of countries in special situations due to their special problems and needs. Those problem and needs have been reflected prominently in the Almaty Programme of Action, the Millennium Development Goals, the Rio+20 outcome document and other processes.

Almaty Programme of Action is the first and the only UN framework that aims to address the special needs and challenges faced by the LLDCs in achieving their development goals by setting out actions in five priority areas to be undertaken by LLDCs, transit developing countries, development partners and other relevant
stakeholders. Therefore, the Group attaches particular attention to its full and effective implementation.

Over the past 10 years, we have witnessed considerable progress in the implementation of this Program of Action especially in the establishment of efficient transit transport systems that have significantly contributed to the socio-economic development and well-being of peoples in LLDCs, as well as to the integration of LLDCs into the regional and global economic system. Nevertheless, with emerging global phenomena, there remains much work to be done. LLDCs continue to face combined adverse effects of landlockedness and newly emerging challenges such as the global economic and financial crisis, compounded by the negative impacts of climate change, desertification, land degradation and drought. Indeed, our economies remain fragile and very vulnerable to external shocks.

In this context, the Group of LLDCs has continued to call for effective implementation of Almaty Programme of Action, while highlighting the fact that LLDCs have very unique geographical challenge that is difficult if not impossible to address only by themselves. It is indeed our strong belief that the solution to this unique challenge is dependent on effective cooperation of the international community, particularly the genuine partnership between LLDCs and their transit neighbors with sufficient support and cooperation from development partners and other relevant stakeholders. This partnership should not reflect only at the political level but also its actual implementation on the ground in good faith.

Mr. Chairman,

The UN General Assembly has decided to hold a comprehensive 10-year Review Conference on the Implementation of the Almaty Programme of Action next year(2014) to which we attach great importance. This Conference will provide a unique opportunity not only for LLDCs, but also for all other relevant stakeholders, including the transit developing countries, development partners, United Nations system, international, regional and sub-regional organizations and private sector, to comprehensively and critically review the implementation of the Almaty Programme of Action, and to identify best practices and constraints as well as to adopt effective policies, support measures and the means to address the negative impacts of our landlockedness and promote sustainable development.

The Group welcomes the progress being made in the preparatory process of the comprehensive ten-year Review Conference in its inter-governmental, inter-agency, and private sector tracks, including the outcomes of the Euro-Asia Regional Review Meeting
on the implementation of the Almaty Programme of Action held in Vientiane, Lao People’s Democratic Republic, from 5 to 7 March 2013, the African Regional Review Meeting held in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, from 16 to 18 July 2013. In this connection, the Group encourages the participation at the highest possible level of landlocked developing countries, transit countries, donor countries and international financial and development institutions in the Regional Review Meeting for Latin America on the implementation of the Almaty Program of Action, to be held in Asuncion, Paraguay, in November.

In light of the ongoing preparatory process for the Conference, the Group would like to underline that the international community should develop a new comprehensive, common action-oriented framework of LLDCs for the next decade, while taking into account the unfinished agenda of Almaty Program of Action as well as the new emerging development challenges that LLDCs face today. At the same time, it is also important to focus on accelerated reduction of the high transport and transaction costs, the establishment of efficient transit transport systems through increased investments in transport, energy and information and communications technology infrastructure and border crossing. In particular, enhancement of trade and productive capacity, diversification of exports, value-addition, technology transfer, development of service sector, ICT, and improved market access and strengthening of institutions, all this should be pursued as means to achieve structural transformation.

Furthermore, as we embark on intergovernmental process for the post-2015 development agenda or formulation of sustainable development goals, the special needs and problems of LLDCs should be adequately addressed in the process. To this end, the Group of LLDCs stands ready to work closely with other partners in the coming months.

Mr. Chairman,

It is our strong belief that all of these would greatly contribute to the transformative changes in LLDCs and meaningful integration of LLDCs into the global trading system, and thus moving closer to achieving the internationally agreed development goals and sustainable development in the coming decade.

Let me conclude by once again calling upon the international community to provide necessary support and actively participate in the preparatory process and the conference itself. Our Group looks forward to productive consultations and negotiations concerning LLDCs issues, including a resolution under this agenda item during this current session.

Thank you Mr. Chairman.