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Statement

By

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On

Agenda Item (22): Groups of countries in special situations (a&b)

At

The Second Committee of the 68th Session of the United General Assembly

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New York.
Mr. Chairman,

Allow me at the outset to express my delegation’s appreciation to the Secretary-General for his reports under this agenda item.

I also would like to thank Mr. Gyan Chandra Acharya, Under-Secretary-General and High Representative for the Least Developed Countries, Landlocked Developing Countries and Small Islands Developing States for presenting the reports.

My delegation would like to associate itself with the statements made by the distinguished representatives of the Republic of Fiji on behalf of the Group of 77 and China, Republic of Benin on behalf the Group of the LDCs and the People’s Democratic Republic of Lao on behalf of the Landlocked Developing Countries, respectively.

Mr. Chairman,

It is to be recalled that two years ago we agreed to embark upon the crucial task of implementing the Istanbul Programme of Action with the overarching objective of enabling half of the LDCs to graduate from their status by the end of this decade. Now that two years have passed, the results of the implementation have been reported to be mixed, sparking a cause of concern in the LDCs by the shaky start of the implementation process. The deteriorating global economic environment has also been added to the equation and to have contributed to a further decline in development assistance to the LDCs. This is worrisome particularly to those LDCs which happened to have enjoyed sustained economic growth over the past few years and which have begun a process of structural transformation.

It is true that many LDCs have indeed begun to exert more efforts to address their development challenges. The adoption of the IPOA has further given impetus to support the momentum of change in these countries. One such country is my own. Ethiopia, which served as one of the co-chairs of the IPOA process, embraced the importance of this
programme of action from the start and played a critical role from its inception to its adoption in Istanbul. The process was also an opportune moment as we were just beginning the implementation of our five-year national development plan, the Growth and Transformation Plan- GTP which afforded us the opportunity to align the Plan with the objective of the priority areas of the IPOA.

This is critical for us to bring our efforts and the support of the international community together so as to bring about the necessary structural transformation and achieve sustainable growth and development. Ethiopia has continued to register a double-digit economic growth for more than a decade with remarkable progress achieved in the implementation of the MDGs. We have also begun the implementation of our Climate-Resilience Green Economy Strategy within the framework of the GTP with the objective of becoming a carbon-neutral economy by 2025 maintaining a high growth trajectory while shifting away from the business-as-usual growth model thereby building a greener economy.

Like any other LDCs, we, however, still face enormous development challenges that we need to overcome to ensure sustainability of our growth and transformation. We need to enhance our productive capacity. We need to adapt well to the new and emerging challenges, such as climate change. We need to enhance the capacities of our institutions so as to strengthen our domestic resource mobilization efforts to finance our own development. We need to continue to develop our human resources. And most importantly, we need to develop our renewable energy sources so as to attain our objective of building green economy.

Energy, Mr. Chairman, is one of the most critical areas that LDCs must develop and investing in renewable sources in these countries help expediting their efforts of eradicating poverty and ensuring sustainable development. In this regard, my delegation would like to thank the Chair of the Group of the LDCs and the Under-Secretary-General for hosting a high-level meeting on energy last month which my Prime Minister had the privilege of co-chairing with his counterpart, the Prime Minister of Norway and the President of Liberia.
While my delegation calls upon our development partners to supplement the efforts of LDCs and achieve the target of providing 0.15 to 0.2 percent of GNI as ODA, we would like to thank those who have already achieved the target and those who have deployed efforts to streamline their development aid strategies taking into account the priorities of the LDCs. We are confident that assistance to LDCs will be strengthened in the future and more focus will continue to be accorded to these countries in the formulation of the next global development agenda to achieve the objective of the IPOA.

Mr. Chairman,

Next year, the international community will convene the Comprehensive Ten-Year Review Conference on the Implementation of the Almaty Programme of Action. Looking back into those ten years since the adoption of the APOA, LLDCs have made efforts through bilateral and regional cooperations to address the problem of landlockdeness and implement the Almaty Programme of Action.

In Ethiopia, we have taken important steps to incorporate policies such as the Fundamental Transit Policy, Infrastructure Development and Maintenance and International Trade and Trade Facilitation into our successive development plans since 2003 for their effective implementation. We have allocated a major portion of the GDP in the construction of dry port facilities, roads, railroads, telecommunication and power grids along the transit route.

With regards to transit policies, we have put in place at national level laws and regulations required for multimodal transport of goods, dry port services, freight forwarding and shipping, shipping and logistics Services. In addition to adopting the African Maritime Transport Charter, and actively participating in the COMESA Transport Initiatives at sub-regional level, we have signed several bilateral agreements with Sudan, Djibouti and Yemen regarding port utilization and services to import/export cargoes and maritime transport cooperation. We have also accorded high
priority to developing and modernizing infrastructural facilities along the Ethio-Djibouti transit.

Though much has been achieved over the past ten years, we have still much to do, and the challenges we face are no different from those others in our Group face.

The fact is LLDCs still continue to suffer from various challenges as a result of being unable to have direct access to the sea and due to remoteness and isolation from major international markets. According to this year Secretary-General's report on the implementation of the Almaty Programme of Action, because of landlockedness, the level of development in the LLDCs was on average 20 per cent lower than what it would be if these countries were not landlocked. And in 2010 alone, the trade volume of these countries was just 61 per cent of the trade volume of the coastal countries while the transport cost for them was 45 per cent higher than the later.

It should be well underlined that development of infrastructure is extremely crucial for LLDCs to address their challenges to achieve sustainable growth and development. Many of these countries are working closely with transit countries through regional programmes to increase connectivity and create more corridors. However, without the provision of adequate finance, it is becoming difficult for LLDCs to achieve progress in this area. For example, the implementation of PIDA, a regional infrastructure development programme for Africa, requires 24.4 billion US dollars to finance road and railway projects from 2012-2020. And according to the World bank, 93 billion US dollars per year is needed if we need to bridge the infrastructure gap in Africa in the next ten years.

This undoubtedly calls for urgent measures to be taken to address the concerns of LLDCs if they are to benefit fully from international trade, build their resilience to external shocks and most importantly avoid risks that impede their industrialization efforts.

In this regard, the international community must make effective use of the upcoming Review Conference to support the LLDCs and transit
developing countries particularly by providing adequate financial and technical assistance to transit transport, strengthening dry ports, infrastructure development and trade facilitation projects.

My delegation is also of the view that the outcome of the Review Conference serves as a platform to identify the pressing needs of LLDCs and transit developing countries so as to streamline them in the post 2015 development agenda. We, therefore, call on for the effective participation of the international community to make this Review Conference a success.

Once again, I would like to express my delegation's appreciation to our development partners and the UN-OHRLLS for their support.

I thank you.