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STATEMENT

BY

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ON

AGENDA ITEM 22 (a) AND (b)

GROUPS OF COUNTRIES IN SPECIAL SITUATIONS:

(A) FOLLOW-UP TO THE FOURTH UNITED NATIONS CONFERENCE ON THE LEAST DEVELOPED COUNTRIES

(B) COMPREHENSIVE 10-YEAR REVIEW CONFERENCE ON THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE ALMATY PROGRAMME OF ACTION.

AT THE

SECOND COMMITTEE OF THE 68TH SESSION OF THE UNITED NATIONS GENERAL ASSEMBLY

NEW YORK
21ST OCTOBER, 2013
Mr. Chairman

I wish to thank you for giving me the floor to deliberate on this important agenda item 22(a) and (b) namely Groups of countries in special situations: (a) follow-up to the Fourth United Nations Conference on the Least Developed Countries and (b) Comprehensive 10-year Review Conference on the implementation of the Almaty Programme of Action. My delegation aligns with the statement by Fiji on behalf of the G77 and China, and to the statements by Benin and Ethiopia on behalf of the LDCs and Africa respectively.

My delegation pays special tribute to the Secretary General for the reports on the agenda items under discussions.

My delegation wishes to acknowledge the importance of the Secretary General’s reports as they have highlighted the situation of some varied and slow progress made particularly in addressing the LDCs development needs. However, it has been recognised that greater challenges still remain in particular to LDCs in Africa and LLDCs group of countries. Further, my delegation recognises the importance of the reports in addressing and drawing the due attention and consideration of the international community for accelerated implementation of the MDGs as the target date approaches and much more for an all-inclusive development agenda beyond 2015.

Mr. Chairman,

My delegation supports the architecture for development of not only increasing and sustaining high levels of economic growth, but also making sustainable progress in human and social development as stipulated in the “Istanbul Program of Action (IPoA 2011-2020)” adopted at the fourth United Nations Conference on the Least Developed Countries (LDCs). With regard to its implementation, my delegation wishes to urge for stronger efforts given the slow progress made towards creating favourable environment for sustainable development, increasing productive capacities, diversification of economy and building the necessary infrastructure so as to reduce vulnerabilities of LDCs. I wish to particularly emphasise the need to address high poverty levels, the constraints to economic growth, and other structural impediments that make LDCs and LLDCs lag behind in development.

Further, the actualisation of the strategy to address new challenges to development including the effects of the economic crises and climate change, and a strong focus on structural transformation requires commitment and concerted effort on our part as well as on our development partners.
Mr. Chairman,

Zambia, has been implementing development policies that have integrated the eight priority areas of the IPoA as well as other international initiatives such as the Millennium Development Goals. As per the IPoA, Zambia’s development agenda focuses on infrastructure and human development as gateways to accelerated and sustained economic growth. Recent review indicates that Zambia has been making steady progress towards achieving the IPoA objectives. Stable macroeconomic environment has been maintained with an average of economic growth of above 6 percent for the last five years. We are therefore committed to ensuring the continued integration of IPOA priorities into the national development agenda.

Zambia recognizes the task at hand for ensuring successfully implementation of the objectives of the Istanbul Programme of Action. To this effect, my delegation stands ready to cooperate and work with our development partners on the development challenges of LDCs. It is as a result of these collaborative efforts that will lead to at least half of the LDCs graduating to Middle Income Countries by 2020. We thus support the call for governments, intergovernmental, non-governmental organizations, and cooperation partners to contribute to the Trust Fund in a timely manner for monitoring of the Istanbul Programme of Action.

Mr Chairman,

We appreciate the international commitment on enhancement of building productive capacities for LDCs for sustainable high economic growth. In this respect, Zambia has focused on the building of productivity capacities in the areas of agriculture, education and skills training in order to move in tandem with the current technological advancement that will stimulate both industrial productivity and human capacity development. Specifically, in the agriculture sector, my government has embarked on new technological innovations for improved agriculture productivity, and skills development. We are also creating linkages between agriculture and agro-business industry taking into consideration comparative advantage. In human development, the focus is on enhancement of human resource skills through expansion of skills training centres and exploitation of technological development. Further we are mainstreaming youth initiatives across sectors in order to create jobs and improve skills for the youths.

Mr. Chairman,

Regarding the implementation of LLDCs programme of action, I wish to allude to one of the findings on the challenges faced by LLDCs in the Secretary General’s report. The lack of access to the coastal sea and the long distance from major international markets compounded with the cumbersome transit procedures and inadequate transport infrastructure continues to be
the main factors behind the high of external trade transactions for landlocked developing countries including my country.

These factors together with the other structural vulnerabilities alluded to in the report continues to expose LLDCs to external shocks and other emerging challenges. The limited productive capacities in key sectors such as agriculture and manufacturing coupled with inadequate scientific and technological know-how, and lack of resilience to shocks need to be addressed. Unless this is done, countries in these situations will continue to suffer from constrained value addition.

Zambia therefore reiterates the call for the international community for their continued efforts to implement the specific actions called for in the Almaty Programme of Action. In addition, we call upon the international community to address the remaining significant gaps for the achievement of the original objectives of the programme particularly those pertaining to: transport infrastructure development, sustainable growth; ICT growth and improved connectivity; deeper regional integration and capacity enhancement.

In addition, technological innovation that supports genuine and pro-poor growth in affected LLDCs also needs consideration of the global and regional interventions. Further, the need to meet commitments and implementation of key international agreements on trade and development would enhance progress.

Mr. Chairman,

I wish to conclude by reaffirming Zambia's support for the declaration made at the LDCs IV conference which underscored the ownership and primary responsibility of eradicating poverty for sustainable development and well-being of all lies with the LDCs themselves. We further reaffirm our commitment to ensure that there is sustainable and inclusive economic growth that will enable Zambia graduate from the LDCs status. We also look forward to the 2014, 10 Year Review Conference on the Implementation of the Almaty Programme of Action (APoA).

I thank you.