Statement by
Mr. Kham-Inh Khitchadeth, Chargé d'affaires a.i., Deputy Permanent Representative of the Lao People's Democratic Republic to the United Nations Chair of the Group of Landlocked Developing Countries on Agenda Item 17: Macroeconomic Policy Questions: (a) “International Trade and Development”
New York, 24 October 2013

Mr. Chairman,

I have the honour to deliver this statement on behalf of the Group of landlocked developing countries on Agenda item 17 (a) “International Trade and Development”.

We associate ourselves with the statement delivered by the distinguished Permanent Representative of Fiji on behalf of G77 and China.

We would like to thank the Secretary General of the United Nations for his comprehensive report on this agenda item.

Mr. Chairman,

The Group of LLDCs notes the relapse of the world economy in the aftermath of the global economic and financial crisis that took place in the last decade. At the present, the spillover effect of the crisis has taken its toll on the economies of the developing countries, especially those who are the most vulnerable to external shocks namely LDCs, LLDCs, and SIDs.

As we move towards the final phase of implementing the APoA, the Group welcomes considerable progress and achievements made over the past decade in integrating LLDCs into the regional and global economic system. The value of total trade of LLDCs has also increased at a rate of 18.8 per cent per year since 2000. Nonetheless, our share of world trade stood at only 1.1 percent in 2011.
Mr. Chairman,

Our Group underscores the importance of trade facilitation for the growth and expansion of the external trade of LLDCs and its positive impact on their economic development, in particular, in reaping the full benefits from international trade. We call upon the international community to ensure the successful conclusion of the Doha Development Round, with favourable outcomes for LLDCs and underscore the importance of an adoption of an Agreement on Trade Facilitation with binding commitments to lowering transaction costs by reducing transport time and enhancing certainty in trans-border trade, ensuring freedom of transit, strict limits on fees, charges and formalities and transparency as well as common standards for documentation requirements, therefore allowing for the expedited movement, release and clearance of goods. The international community should provide technical assistance and support for capacity building in view to enable landlocked and transit developing countries to fully participate in and benefit from multilateral trade negotiations and effectively implement policies and regulations aimed at facilitating transport and trade.

In addition, we call for a development-friendly solution to the current impasse in the Doha Round of trade negotiations that could open the way for a successful and ambitious conclusion of the ten-year round. This should increase market access, generate increased trade flows and focus on the needs of LLDCs. Emphasis should remain on the commitment to make operationally effective the principle of special and differential treatment for developing countries.

The Group also calls upon relevant United Nations and other international organizations to provide greater support to strengthen the negotiating capacities of LLDCs and their ability to implement trade facilitation measures.

Mr. Chairman,

We reiterate the value of constructing a multilateral trading system that is non-discriminatory, balanced and rule-based in order to foster an international economic environment that promotes growth and sustainable development equally in all regions. In this context, we further urge developed countries to honor their commitments outlined in the Monterrey Consensus and Doha Declaration pertaining to providing financial and technical assistance to developing countries especially LLDCs.
In addition, we underline the urgency of the universal membership of the WTO. The group further stresses the need that WTO takes into account the geographical disadvantage of LLDCs, which have posed serious constraints and challenges in their process of acceding to the WTO. All provisions on Special and Differential Treatment reflected in the GATT and in all WTO agreements must be effectively granted to all acceding LLDCs. The Group wishes to express its sincere appreciation to the WTO members for the support to the successful completion of the accession of the Lao PDR and Tajikistan earlier this year.

In this context, it is our high hope that the upcoming 9th WTO ministerial meeting to be convened in Bali later this year will deliver positive results, including on trade facilitation measures in the context of the Doha Development Round.

Furthermore, we underscore the prominent role that foreign direct investment (FDI) plays in accelerating development and poverty reduction through employment, transfer of managerial and technological know-how and non-debt creating flows of capital, as well as its key role in providing infrastructure for transport, telecommunications and utilities.

Mr. Chairman,

Let me conclude by stressing that the Group of LLDCs suffers a unique geographical disadvantage, which ultimately has impaired our capacity to induce sufficient development both economically and socially and reaffirming the importance of international trade and trade facilitation as one of our priorities. It is our belief that promoting international trade and implementing trade facilitation measures in an effective manner will help compensate for our weakness of being disconnected with the sea and enhance the group's growth dynamics and development.

I thank you.