

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.

Allow me to mention that last year on 12<sup>th</sup> August 2021, Zambia held

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

