

**STATEMENT**

**DELIVERED BY H.E MR. COLLEN VIXEN KELAPILE,  
AMBASSADOR AND PR OF BOTSWANA TO THE UN**

**ON BEHALF OF  
THE GROUP OF LANDLOCKED DEVELOPING COUNTRIES  
(LLDCS)**

**DURING**

**THE FIRST PART OF  
THE FIFTH UNITED NATIONS CONFERENCE ON THE  
LEAST DEVELOPED COUNTRIES(LDC5)**

**17 MARCH 2022**

**GENERAL ASSEMBLY HALL**

- **Your Excellency, Mr. Sheikh Mohammed bin Abdulrahman Al-Thani, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign of the State of Qatar and President of LDC5;**
- **Your Excellency, Mr. Lazarus Chakwera, President of the Republic of Malawi and Chair of the LDCs;**
- **Mr. Secretary General;**
- **Excellencies;**

1. It is with great honour that I deliver this statement on behalf of the Group of Landlocked Developing Countries (LLDCs).
2. The Group takes this opportunity to congratulate the State of Qatar for assuming the Presidency of the LDC5 and we are confident on the able leadership of Qatar to steer us to a successful Conference in Doha.

**Mr. President,**

3. While regretting that the COVID-19 pandemic necessitated the postponement of the 5<sup>th</sup> United Nations Conference on Least Developed Countries (LDC5) in Doha, as LLDCs we nonetheless welcome the General Assembly's decision to hold the Conference in two parts -- with the first part today, 17 March 2022, and the second part in Doha in March, 2023.
4. We do recognize that it is in the best interest of the LDCs themselves and the international community to urgently adopt the Doha Programme of Action for LDCs without any further delay, in order not to lose

momentum from Istanbul in consolidating the support needed to launch these countries onto a sustainable development path.

5. We also take this opportunity to commend the continued generosity of the State of Qatar in supporting the LDCs, and for maintaining the kind offer to host the Conference under the still challenging circumstances.

**Mr. President,**

6. The LDCs, LLDCs as well as the SIDS, although facing challenges peculiar to each grouping, share a lot of commonalities that bond these group of countries together. In fact, 46 LDCs are part of the family of 91 countries in vulnerable situations, together with the LLDCs and SIDS. Furthermore, more than half of the 32 LLDCs are also categorized as least developed.
7. In view of their special circumstances, we firmly believe that it is important to continue our relentless efforts to address the challenges encountered by these groups of countries which also have overlapping belonging. We are therefore, pleased that the Doha Programme of Action also recognizes the unique challenges faced by the Landlocked Least Developed Countries, and makes a commitment to address those challenges.
8. It is further worth noting that the Vienna Programme of Action for LLDCs, and the just adopted Doha Programme of Action for LDCs, have much in common and are grounded on the same spirit of solidarity and the conviction that achieving development progress is a right for all, in particular for the most vulnerable countries.

**Mr. President,**

9. We cannot help but underscore the fact that the COVID-19 pandemic has not only exposed, but also amplified the LDCs' high degree of vulnerability. As the world continues to show signs of recovery, it is clear that it will take even much longer for LDCs to return to the pre-pandemic levels of gross domestic product (GDP) per capita.
10. With diminished fiscal space -- compounded also by the debt crisis -- and limited productive capacities, these countries are severely constrained in stimulating their sustainable economic growth. They also lack the kind of diversification needed to also boost resilience to shocks and thus firmly integrate them into the global economy.
11. As a result of the vaccines inequity that has affected containment of the pandemic in many developing countries, we are also concerned that the vaccination rate -- which is fundamental to ending the pandemic and achieving economic recovery -- remains relatively low in the LDCs and other vulnerable countries.
12. The adoption of the Doha Programme of Action today, indeed signals our renewed and collective commitment to support the LDCs, as we strive to leave "no one behind". We need to reaffirm our commitment to collectively accelerate recovery from the pandemic, especially for the most vulnerable.
13. Beyond the adoption of the Doha Programme of Action, we as LLDCs welcome the plan to hold the 12<sup>th</sup> Ministerial Conference (MC12) of the

World Trade Organization (WTO) in 2022, as another opportune moment to give due consideration to LDCs' priorities.

14. In this regard, we call on all the Members of the WTO to deliver a favorable outcome for the most vulnerable members of the Organization to support their economic recovery, resilience building and sustainable development.

**Mr. President,**

15. Let me end by noting that our Group is also set to soon embark on preparations for the Third United Nations Conference on LLDCs to be held in 2024, in accordance with the General Assembly resolution 76/217.
16. The LLDCs Group will therefore build on the experiences emanating from the preparations and convening of LDC5, and would rely on the usual dedicated support offered by OHRLLS, the entire UN system and all other stakeholders.
17. I wish to reaffirm the LLDCs unwavering solidarity and commitment to ensure successful implementation of the Doha Programme of Action for the LDCs.

**I thank you for your kind attention.**