

MINISTERIAL DECLARATION

Annual Ministerial Meeting of the Group of Landlocked Developing Countries

New York, 23 September 2020

We, the Ministers of Foreign Affairs of Landlocked Developing Countries (LLDCs), have met virtually during this challenging time on 23 September 2020, on the margins of the 75th session of the UN General Assembly to provide strategic guidance for the accelerated and full implementation of the Vienna Programme of Action for Landlocked Developing Countries for the Decade 2014-2024, under the theme "*Partnering for accelerated implementation of the VPoA and achieving sustainable development in LLDCs in the era of COVID-19*",

Recalling the Vienna Programme of Action for Landlocked Developing Countries for the Decade 2014-2024, adopted in December 2014 which provides a comprehensive plan of action for the next decade to address the special challenges and needs of LLDCs arising from their landlockedness, remoteness and geographical constraints in a more coherent manner and thus contributing to an enhanced rate of sustainable and inclusive growth, which can contribute to the eradication of poverty in all its forms and dimensions, including extreme poverty;

Recalling also the Political Declaration of the Comprehensive High-level Midterm Review of the Implementation of the VPoA, adopted by the Assembly on 5 December 2019 in which the Assembly reaffirmed its commitment to the full, effective and timely implementation of the VPoA,

Recognizing the importance of unfettered, efficient and cost-effective access for LLDCs to and from the sea, on the basis of freedom of transit and other related matters, in accordance with the applicable rules of international law,

Recognizing also that high transport and trade transaction costs remain a major stumbling block in the pursuit of LLDCs to achieve their trade and development potentials,

Reaffirming the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, the Addis Ababa Action Agenda of the Third International Conference on Financing for Development, the Paris Agreement, the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015–2030 and the New Urban Agenda and other inter-governmentally agreed development goals,

Underscoring that effective implementation of the VPoA is crucial for the attainment of the SDGs and effective partnerships between LLDCs and transit countries are important and necessary to drive accelerated implementation of the 2030 Agenda and the VPoA,

Reaffirming our commitment to implement the VPoA in synergy with the 2030 Agenda and the other development frameworks as we enter the Decade of Action and delivery for sustainable development,

Emphasizing that eradicating poverty in all its forms and dimensions, including extreme poverty, is the greatest global challenge and an indispensable requirement for sustainable development,

Recognizing the seventy-fifth commemoration of the anniversary of the United Nations under the theme “The future we want, the United Nations we need: reaffirming our collective commitment to multilateralism”,

Expressing condolences and grave concern about the loss of life as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic and the significant adverse social and economic effects it has posed globally, and in particular recognizing that the LLDCs will be severely hit in the long term owing to the fragility of their health systems, limited coverage of their social protection systems, limited financial and other resources, and vulnerability to external shocks,

Recalling General Assembly resolutions 74/270 of 2 April 2020 on global solidarity to fight COVID-19 and 74/274 of 20 April 2020 on international cooperation to ensure global access to medicines, vaccines and medical equipment to face COVID-19,

Recognizing that recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic and other related future crises should not hinder the continued progress towards implementation of the VPoA and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals,

Welcoming the outcomes of the 2020 Follow-up and review of the Financing for Development; and declaration of the high-level meeting on the seventy-fifth commemoration of the anniversary of the United Nations,

Reaffirming that gender equality and the empowerment of all women and girls will make a crucial contribution to the achievement of the VPoA and to progress across all the Sustainable Development Goals and targets.

Adopt the following declaration;

1. **We take note** of the 2020 Report of the Secretary-General on the implementation of the Vienna Programme of Action for LLDCs for the Decade 2014-2024;
2. **We welcome** the convening of the comprehensive high-level midterm review of the implementation of the VPoA in New York on 5 and 6 December 2019 and the adoption of the high-level Political Declaration, in which the Assembly committed to help to turn LLDCs into land-linked countries and looks forward to the implementation of the calls made in the political declaration;
3. **We note with concern** that the Midterm Review of the VPoA revealed that while some progress had been made in implementing the VPoA and towards some of the SDGs, there were still major gaps and challenges that need to be addressed, and we reiterate our firm commitment to the accelerated implementation of the VPoA and call upon all LLDCs, transit developing countries, development partners, United Nations System, the private sector and other stakeholders to further strengthen their efforts to accelerate the implementation of the VPoA in the remaining five years and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development in LLDCs;
4. **We note with concern** that lack of adequate financial resources, limited technical capacity, lack of up to date and reliable data are some of the constraints faced by LLDCs in their efforts to implement the VPoA and underscore the importance of

raising considerable resources to accelerate the implementation of the VPoA and achievement of the SDG targets by 2030 by LLDCs;

5. **We express concern** about the unprecedented and multifaceted impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic on LLDCs and we stress that at the start of the Decade of Action to Achieve the SDGs by 2030, the implementation of the VPoA and the Political Declaration of the Midterm Review in the remaining 5 years needs to be anchored in strong efforts to address the impact of COVID-19;
6. **We reiterate** the importance of fostering strong synergy and coherence at all levels in the implementation, follow-up, and review of the VPoA with the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, Addis Ababa Action Agenda and other development processes including the Paris Agreement on Climate Change, the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction, and the Nairobi Maafikiano;
7. **We reaffirm** our commitment to international cooperation and multilateralism and reaffirm our belief in the importance of the United Nations and its purposes and principles as enshrined in its Charter, as we commemorate the seventy-fifth anniversary of the United Nations. We recognize the central role of the United Nations system in supporting the implementation of the VPoA and 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, as well as catalyzing and coordinating a global response to COVID-19 pandemic, based on unity, solidarity, multilateralism and international cooperation and we encourage Member States, organizations of the United Nations system, as well as the private sector, civil society organizations, individuals and other relevant stakeholders to implement their collective commitment to multilateralism and to the United Nations in supporting the LLDCs;
8. **We commit** to supporting the scaling up of effective social protection systems along with government spending on key services in order to safeguard the poor and vulnerable during the crisis. We call on development partners, the United Nations, and other international organizations to support LLDCs to expand social protection programmes and strengthen social safety nets to help prevent vulnerable groups from falling (deeper) into poverty and we call on the international financial institutions, multilateral organizations and regional banks to provide quick balance-of-payment and budget support so as to enable them to respond adequately to this pandemic;
9. **We express deep concern** that a growing number of people are currently facing food insecurity and the COVID-19 pandemic is further exacerbating the food insecurity situations in LLDCs as most of them are net food importers and in this regard we call upon the international community especially our development partners to enhance their financial and in-kind support and the United Nations and other international and regional organizations to provide humanitarian and technical support towards food security and livelihoods;
10. **We recognize** that LLDCs face major health challenges in tackling COVID-19, in particular due to weak health systems, shortage of trained health personnel, critical dependence on imported medical and pharmaceutical products and have limited resources to invest into strengthening healthcare systems, to purchase medical equipment for treatment such as ventilators, oxygen concentrators, protective gear, testing kits and other medicines;

11. **We call on** development partners, the United Nations, the International Financial Institutions, and other international organizations to support LLDCs with the resources to respond to the health impact of COVID-19, including for strengthening national health systems and laboratories, purchasing of required medical supplies and we call on the international community to support the LLDCs with medical personnel or capacity building to ensure that medical personnel needs are met, we call on removal of restrictions by partner countries on the import of medical equipment products by LLDCs, and call on the international community to ensure adequate, affordable and rapid supply of vaccines/immunization and relevant drugs related to COVID-19, when they are developed;
12. **We are concerned** that LLDCs continue to be disproportionately affected by the adverse impacts of climate change, desertification, land degradation, drought, the loss of vulnerable ecosystems and the retreat of mountain glaciers, floods, including glacial lakes outbursts and other disasters due to their location, level of development, and greater reliance on climate sensitive sectors like agriculture and hydropower. We note that the current COVID-19 crisis has highlighted the need to strengthen international support to LLDCs and we call on Member States, as well as relevant regional and international organizations to continue to support climate change adaptation and mitigation efforts and strengthening resilience;
13. **We recognize** LLDCs' efforts to promote building of resilient societies through Disaster Risk Reduction and call upon development partners, UN system and other international and regional organizations to support LLDCs' to develop and implement national climate change strategies as well as drought and disaster risk mitigation, preparedness and resilience policies and strategies, including early warning and early action systems and to integrate risk management into national development plans;
14. **We invite** climate finance providers to improve access for LLDCs and we encourage the allocation of more resources to ex-ante instruments for building resilience, including new financing approaches which incentivize disaster risk reduction and sustainable reduction of LLDCs' vulnerabilities to climate change and natural disasters;
15. **We commend** the progress that has been made by LLDCs and transit developing countries in ratifying the World Trade Organization Agreement on Trade Facilitation, the revised Kyoto Convention, the TIR Convention and other relevant international conventions and we call upon LLDCs and transit countries to effectively implement their obligations under all relevant international, regional and bilateral agreements to improve transit in a manner consistent with their trade and development objectives and we call on development partners, private sector and relevant international and regional and sub-regional organization to enhance support to LLDCs and transit developing countries to implement these agreements;
16. **We welcome** the progress that has been made by LLDCs and their transit neighbours in improving transit along some transport corridors, including in reducing travel time and corresponding costs along corridors, and significantly reducing the time spent at borders and at intermodal points and in this regard we **call upon** LLDCs and transit countries to make additional efforts to reduce travel time along the corridors and to adopt an integrated and sustainable approach to the management of international transport corridors;

17. **We reaffirm** our commitment to develop quality, accessible, affordable, reliable, sustainable and resilient transport infrastructure, including regional and transboundary infrastructure, to enhance our connectivity to regional and global markets and support economic development and human well-being;
18. **We stress** that the magnitude of the resources required to invest in sustainable and resilient infrastructure development and maintenance remains a major challenge and requires the forging of international, regional, subregional and bilateral cooperation on infrastructure projects, the allocation of more resources from national budgets, the effective deployment of international development assistance and multilateral financing in the development and maintenance of infrastructure and strengthening of the role of the private sector;
19. **We reiterate** our call for support to the LLDCs and transit countries in developing bankable implementable infrastructure projects that are financially viable, environmentally friendly and accepted by the local communities and we call on the UN system and other relevant international and regional organizations to enhance their technical support to LLDCs to develop sustainable infrastructure;
20. **We underscore** the significance of international transport and economic corridors for reducing trade costs and promoting regional sustainable development, and request for strengthening of the role of corridor management organizations and other sub-regional and inter-regional arrangements and call upon the LLDCs and transit countries, in a coordinated manner, to develop and upgrade international transport and transit corridors encompassing all modes of transportation, such as inland waterways, roads, rail networks, ports and pipelines;
21. **We call** on the UN system and other relevant international and regional organizations to provide further policy, analytical and technical support towards the development, functioning and management of corridors;
22. **We note** that the air transport industry has been hit hard by COVID-19 and we call upon the international community including UN system and other international and regional organizations to provide guidance and support on how to build back better the air transport industry since air transport provides LLDCs with direct access to international markets;
23. **We strive** to achieve policies, regulatory and institutional frameworks that promote sustainable energy transition, ensure access to affordable, reliable, sustainable and modern energy for all, with a focus on providing affordable access to sustainable energy for the poorest and scaling up projects on cross border inter-connectors and improving transformational energy access. We call for innovative partnerships between development partners, UN system and other international and regional organizations to support accelerated universal access, renewable energy and energy efficiency development;
24. **We recognize** that the COVID-19 pandemic spotlighted that digital transformation and connectivity creates tremendous opportunity for achieving the Sustainable Development Goals- However, LLDCs face fundamental challenges including inadequate infrastructure, limited internet access, high cost of broadband, inadequate digital skills and regulatory and data policies. We aim to foster favorable conditions for the

development of the digital economy by creating appropriate enabling environment including the necessary policies, legal and regulatory framework to support ICT development in particular the development of broadband, enhancement of digital skills, promotion of digital inclusion, increased adoption and utilization of ICT applications and services and to close the digital divide and we call for increased public private partnerships and support from the development partners to enable LLDCs to reap the full potentials of the digital technologies and e-commerce;

25. **We note** that most of the special development challenges of LLDCs are trans-border and the COVID-19 pandemic has heightened the need for deepened regional integration in order to fully address them. We urge LLDCs and member states in their regions to increase their cooperation and regional integration by strengthening transport, energy and digital infrastructure connectivity; supporting intraregional trade and the development of supply chains within the region; improving the quality and effective implementation of regional integration agreements; and we call upon the UN system, in particular the regional commissions, regional and international development partners, and other international organizations to strengthen their technical, financial and capacity building support to LLDCs and transit countries to enable them to advance their regional integration efforts;
26. **We are concerned** that the VPoA specific objective of substantially increasing LLDC exports remains a challenge as their share in global merchandise exports remains below the level of 2014 and the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic will worsen the situation as the world merchandise trade is set to plummet. We call on our development partners to step up mechanisms supportive of LLDCs' efforts to build their trade and supply-side capacity, such as Aid for Trade, increased market access and technical assistance;
27. **We recognize** that merchandise exports from LLDCs remain undiversified and many LLDCs remain dependent on primary commodities rendering them vulnerable to external shocks, and note that export diversification is critical if LLDCs want to move up the value chains and reduce their vulnerability to the COVID-19 pandemic and other external shocks and invite UN-OHRLLS, UNCTAD, UNIDO, UNDP, United Nations Regional Commissions, Common Fund for Commodities, World Bank, UNDP, ITC, and other partners to provide assistance to LLDCs to strengthen their capacity to participate in regional and global value chains;
28. **We stress** that a rules-based, non-discriminatory and equitable trading system is essential in preserving the interests of the poorest and most vulnerable economies including the LLDCs. The proposed reforms of the WTO must therefore promote inclusiveness and non-discrimination, build trust and address the inequalities and help spur growth and development;
29. **We note** further that five LLDCs are in the process of WTO accession and recognize that the accession process is however, resource-intensive, and urge WTO Members to take into account the challenges faced by acceding LLDCs and further urge the international community to enhance their financial and technical assistance in a timely and efficient matter to facilitate the accession of these countries;
30. **We note** that LLDCs depend on their transit neighbors to access global markets and that imposition of border restrictions aimed at combatting the spread of COVID-19 greatly impact the movement of goods and services to LLDCs. We stress that the use of

border measures designed to tackle COVID-19 has to be transparent, targeted, proportionate, and consistent with WTO rules. Against this background, we call on LLDCs and transit countries to work together to ensure smooth functioning at borders and in transit to facilitate the flow of essential goods and we call upon development partners, the United Nations and other international and regional organizations to support LLDCs and transit countries with technical and financial support towards strengthening trade facilitation and digitalization efforts;

31. **We encourage** LLDCs and transit countries that have not yet notified their capacity needs for the implementation of the WTO Trade Facilitation Agreement to do so and take advantage of the technical assistance opportunities. We also urge development partners, the private sector and UN system and other international and regional organizations to enhance technical and capacity building support in areas identified by LLDCs and transit countries as needing support to accelerate the implementation of the WTO Trade Facilitation Agreement;
32. **We recognize** that the growth in e-commerce provides international trade opportunities including new market opportunities for LLDCs. We call on UN-OHRLLS, UNCTAD, ITU, International Think Tank for LLDCs and partners to undertake studies on how to promote e-commerce in LLDCs;
33. **We are concerned** that little progress has been made with regards to structural economic transformation in LLDCs. **We recognize** that building productive capacities is a core requirement for achieving structural transformation and export diversification, and encourage LLDCs to mainstream the building of productive capacities in their development strategies;
34. **We stress** that national efforts of LLDCs need to be supported by an enabling international economic environment and financial, technical and capacity-building assistance towards building their productive capacities, enhancing diversification and value-addition, implementing industrial policies, and fostering structural economic transformation;
35. **We note** that the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic and the measures taken to mitigate its impact have resulted in lower business and industrial activity, vulnerable and we call on development partners and international organizations to provide assistance to LLDCs to establish initiatives to support SMEs such as through provision of enhanced finance and access to credit, capacity building and employing ICTs and innovation in business operations that may help in building the resilience of LLDCs' economies in the post-COVID-19 era;
36. **We emphasize** that building a conducive business environment for private sector development is one of the most important requirements for promoting sustained economic growth, developing an industrial base, attracting investment and bringing about structural transformation, and we commit to continue to foster an enabling legal and regulatory environment for private sector growth;
37. **We reaffirm** that science, technology and innovation have a critical role in achieving structural transformation and the SDGs. We commit to promote research, innovation, skill and capacity-building initiatives and technology development and adaptation towards advancing innovation-driven economic transformation and development,

efficient transit and transport systems, e-commerce, energy generation and storage, value-addition and economic transformation and call on development partners, the United Nations system and other stakeholders to support our efforts;

38. **We commit** to working together with our development partners to seize the opportunities offered by technologies to help us address the COVID-19 crisis, including by scaling up collaboration on essential medicines, vaccines and innovations in health systems;
39. **We reaffirm** that official development assistance is crucial for LLDCs in accelerating implementation of the VPoA and 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, and calls upon development partners and the international community to mobilize additional development finance from all sources in the form of grants and concessional loans and including through enhanced crisis response mechanisms to support LLDCs' recovery efforts from the COVID-19 crisis;
40. **We encourage** donors to leverage the global Aid for Trade agenda to enable LLDCs to benefit from the opportunities afforded by global value chains and foreign investment as well as from trade facilitation in their sustainable recovery efforts from COVID-19;
41. **We are deeply concerned** about the impact of high debt levels on LLDCs' ability to invest into implementation of the VPoA and 2030 Agenda as well as to deal with the impact of COVID-19. We are concerned that 16 out of 32 LLDCs are indicated as Highly Indebted countries. We encourage creditors to take bolder actions to support LLDCs with debt relief in order to free up liquidity and invest more in their health systems and economic recovery including through suspending debt repayments to international creditors, offering debt-to-health and to-nature swaps channeling additional funds to health systems implementation of environmental initiatives and programs and financing regional development projects in exchange for debt relief;
42. **We commit** to continue promoting conducive policies to attract foreign direct investment that leads to increased trade as well as sustainable development of LLDCs. We call on development partners to provide greater support to the foreign direct investment seeking efforts of LLDCs as well as investments to recover better from the COVID-19 pandemic. We also call on the UNCTAD, UN-OHRLLS, UNIDO, United Nations Commission on International Trade Law, and other international and regional organizations to provide capacity building support to LLDCs to develop more focused policies, strategies and mechanisms;
43. **We welcome** the vigorous measures taken by the International Monetary Fund and World Bank Group, the regional development banks and other multilateral and bilateral development to provide emergency health support, debt relief and other economic assistance to help countries respond to COVID-19, and call for greater prioritization of assistance to LLDCs. We also stress that assistance is targeted to addressing LLDCs' challenges that have been aggravated by COVID-19, such as commodity dependency, high trade costs, trade facilitation, inadequate infrastructure, climate change, among others;
44. **We call upon** countries of the South in the spirit of solidarity and South-South Cooperation, to strive to increase financial and technical assistance to LLDCs towards the effective implementation of the VPoA and recovery efforts from COVID-19 and

stress that such support is a complement to, but not a substitute for, North South cooperation;

45. **We commit** to strengthening our national statistical capacities to address the gaps in data on the VPoA and the 2030 Agenda in order to provide high-quality, timely, reliable, disaggregated data and statistics and to fully integrate the Goals and targets in our monitoring and reporting systems. We call on increased capacity-building and technical support to LLDCs, from all sources, to strengthen their national statistical systems;
46. **We commend** the Secretary-General of the United Nations for his strong leadership and welcome establishment of financial and technical assistance initiatives to enable countries to tackle the socio-economic impact of COVID-19 and to help developing countries to recover better such as the United Nations COVID-19 Response and Recovery Fund and we emphasize that priority allocation of these resources should be accorded to LLDCs who are among the most vulnerable countries;
47. **We call on** the UN system to focus its activities in support of LLDCs to build a sustainable economic and social recovery that leaves no one behind and enable them to overcome the consequences of the COVID-19 pandemic and to make substantial progress in implementing the VPoA and in achieving the Sustainable Development Goals;
48. **We invite** the UN system to incorporate within its planned activities to examine the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on LLDCs, identify lessons learned from past and present epidemics and pandemics and recommendations for improving future preparedness for epidemics and pandemics;
49. **We welcome** the progress achieved by the Secretary-General in the repositioning of the United Nations development system, and looks forward to the timely implementation of outstanding mandates pertaining to the repositioning of the regional assets and the multi-country office review, under national ownership and leadership. Given the cross-border nature of the development issues of LLDCs, we would like to stress that the regional assets are reformed in such a way that they are better able to support the special development needs of the LLDCs;
50. **We also welcome** the increase in the share of expenditure for operational activities for development of the United Nations system in the LLDCs in 2018, which reached 24% of total expenditure at the country level, and stress that the United Nations Development system continues to remain a key development partner of LLDCs. We urge the United Nations development system to continue to prioritize allocations to the LLDCs to support them to address their special development needs;
51. **We call on** the Resident Coordinators and the UN Country teams to mainstream the goals and priorities set out in the VPoA and the SDGs into national development plans and strategies in LLDCs and transit countries and to assist the LLDCs in addressing the socio-economic impact of COVID-19;
52. **We underscore** the need to give due consideration to the issues and concerns of LLDCs in all relevant major United Nations conferences and processes and the relevant work of the United Nations development system, and calls for the elaboration of

information specific to LLDCs in a disaggregated manner in all major United Nations reports where appropriate;

53. **We take note** of the work of the Inter-Agency Consultative Group for the LLDCs, led by the Office of the High Representative and the coordinated support that it is providing to the LLDCs and we also take note of the efforts to develop terms of reference for the Group and to further improve its working methods;
54. **We welcome and adopt** the Roadmap for accelerated implementation of the VPoA in the remaining 5 years that highlights priority action areas with concrete deliverables towards the achievement of the VPoA objectives and targets;
55. **We are strongly committed** to lead the accelerated implementation of the VPoA and the Roadmap in collaboration with the transit countries and with the support of our development partners and we call upon the UN system, other international and regional organizations and other stakeholders to support the implementation of the Roadmap;
56. **We stress** that the progress in the implementation of the Roadmap be reported in the annual report of the Secretary-General and we stress that the Roadmap is a living document that will be regularly updated to reflect changes;
57. **We recognize** that while LLDCs do not have direct access to the sea because of their geographical location, the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS) gives them the right to access and use the ocean space as well as the ocean's resources. We call on the United Nations system and the International Seabed Authority to support the LLDCs in awareness raising, capacity-building, technology transfer, and the sharing of experiences to facilitate the participation of LLDCs in the ocean economy and in ocean related norm setting discussions including in the ongoing discussions on the intergovernmental Conference on an international legally binding instrument under the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea on the conservation and sustainable use of marine biological diversity of areas beyond national jurisdiction (BBNJ). We urge LLDCs that have not yet done so to ratify the UNCLOS and be more active in ISA meetings and activities;
58. **We recognize** the critical importance of the work of the International Think Tank for LLDCs in improving research and capacity development for the LLDCs and in promoting networking and collaboration among researchers and research institutions for the benefit of the LLDCs and call upon relevant international and regional organizations including UN-OHRLS, UN-ESCAP, UNCTAD, UNDP, WTO and others, and research institutions, think tanks, and other stakeholders to strengthen collaboration on research and capacity building with the International Think Tank for LLDCs on all the priority areas of the VPoA and foster coherence in the implementation of the VPoA with the Sustainable Development Goals;
59. **We take note with appreciation** of the contributions made by the host country Mongolia and other LLDCs who are party to the Multilateral Agreement for the Establishment of an International Think Tank for LLDCs and call on development partners, other Member States that are party to the Agreement, United Nations system, other international organizations and other stakeholders to provide voluntary contributions to the International Think Tank;

60. **We urge** all LLDCs that have not yet ratified the Multilateral Agreement for the Establishment of an International Think Tank for LLDCs to do so;
61. **We invite** development partners and the international financial and development institutions to make voluntary contributions to the Trust Fund established by the Secretary-General to support the activities related to the follow-up and the implementation of the VPoA;
62. **We call upon** the United Nations system, including the regional economic commissions, as well as all relevant international and regional organizations, to continue to provide the support necessary to accelerate the implementation of the VPoA;
63. **We stress** that, in accordance with the mandate given by the General Assembly, the Office of the High Representative for the Least Developed Countries, Landlocked Developing Countries and Small Island Developing States should continue to ensure the coordinated follow-up to, effective monitoring of and reporting on the implementation of the VPoA and the outcome of its midterm review, undertake advocacy efforts at the national, regional and global levels raising awareness on the special needs of LLDCs, build multi-stakeholder partnerships, and mobilize international support and resources in favour of the LLDCs;
64. **We call** on the Secretary-General to mobilize the necessary resources, from all sources to enable the LLDC unit of UN-OHRLLS to adequately support the LLDCs and call for the operationalization of paragraph 48 of resolution 74/262 adopted in December last year in which the General Assembly requested the Secretary General to take the action necessary to ensure that additional post and non-post resources are allocated to subprogrammes 2 on LLDCs, and 3 on Small island developing States in the context of the proposed programme budget for 2021 to enable them to effectively carry out their increased mandates;
65. **We welcome** Kazakhstan's hosting of the 12th World Trade Organization Ministerial Conference in Nur-Sultan in June 2021 and stress that the Ministerial Conference should deliver a development-oriented outcome including a deliverable in favor of the LLDCs;
66. **We welcome also** Kazakhstan's hosting of the Ministerial Meeting on Trade for LLDCs that will be held in the margins of the WTO Ministerial Conference, and further reaffirm the critical importance of trade to LLDCs in helping them achieve the SDGs;
67. **We welcome also** Turkmenistan's hosting of the Ministerial Meeting on Transport for LLDCs in 2021, and underscore that increased transport connectivity is critical for LLDCs to become fully integrated in regional and global markets;
68. **We look** forward to the convening of the following upcoming global conferences: Food Systems Summit; UN Climate Change Conference COP26 to be held in 1-12 November 2021 (Glasgow, UK); UN Second Global Sustainable Transport Conference; the 15th UNCTAD Quadrennial Conference to be held on 25-30 April 2021 (Barbados); Ocean Conference to be held on 2-4 March 2021 (Lisbon, Portugal) and the World Investment Forum to be held on 6-8 December 2021 (Abu Dhabi, UAE). We recognize the

importance of these meetings to LLDCs and stress that the outcomes of these meetings should take into account LLDCs issues;

69. **We express** our sincere recognition to the Government of the Kazakhstan, in its capacity as the Chair of the Group of LLDCs, for the efforts undertaken in coordinating the Group's activities; and **we further commend** Kazakhstan in collaboration with the UN OHRLLS for initiating and coordinating the establishment of an elaborate roadmap as a guiding and actionable tool for the acceleration of the implementation of the VPoA for the remaining five year period;
 70. **We underscore** the need for closer cooperation to promote the interests and needs of the 91 countries that make up the three Groups – LDCs, LLDCs and SIDS, especially within intergovernmental negotiating processes. **We encourage** the Chairs of the 3 groups to continue to work together to secure the best interests of the most vulnerable countries – LDCs, LLDCs and SIDS.
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