

MINISTERIAL DECLARATION

Annual Ministerial Meeting of the Group of Landlocked Developing Countries

New York, 22 September 2022

We, the Ministers of Foreign Affairs of Landlocked Developing Countries, have met at the United Nations Headquarters in New York on 22 September 2022, at the margins of the 77th session of the United Nations 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, and have held our deliberations under the theme "*Accelerating implementation of the Vienna Programme of Action in the aftermath of the COVID-19 pandemic and building momentum towards the Third United Nations Conference on Landlocked Developing Countries*",

Recalling the Vienna Programme of Action for Landlocked Developing Countries for the Decade 2014-2024, adopted in December 2014, which is an integral part of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, and provides a comprehensive plan of action to address the special challenges and needs of landlocked developing countries arising from their landlockedness, remoteness and geographical constraints in a more coherent manner and thus to contribute to an enhanced rate of sustainable and inclusive growth, which can contribute to the eradication of poverty by moving towards the goal of ending extreme poverty,

Recalling also the Political Declaration of the Comprehensive High-level Midterm Review of the Implementation of the Vienna Programme of Action for Landlocked Developing Countries for the Decade 2014-2024, adopted by the General Assembly on 5 December 2019 in which it reaffirmed its commitment to the full, effective and timely implementation of the VPoA,

Further recalling the Roadmap for accelerated implementation of the VPoA that we adopted on 23rd September 2020 at the margins of the high-level week of the 75th session of the United Nations General Assembly and recognizing its importance in accelerating the implementation of the VPoA and building back better from the COVID-19 pandemic,

Recognizing the importance of unfettered, efficient and cost-effective access for landlocked developing countries 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 for landlocked developing countries to achieve their trade and development potential,

Recalling the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, the Addis Ababa Action Agenda of the Third International Conference on Financing for Development, the Paris Agreement under the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change, the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015–2030, the UN Convention on Biological Diversity and the New Urban Agenda,

Underscoring that full, effective and timely 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 as well as COVID-19 recovery,

Reaffirming our commitment to implement the Vienna Programme of Action in synergy with the 2030 Agenda and the other development frameworks as we progress through 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 that the COVID-19 pandemic and the significant adverse social and economic effects it has posed globally, and in particular recognizing that the LLDCs are amongst the hardest hit owing to their geographical and structural vulnerabilities, fragility of their health systems, limited social protection coverage, financial and other resource constraints, including limited fiscal and policy space due to debt distress as consequence of the pandemic, and vulnerability to external shocks,

Recalling General Assembly resolution 76/217 of 17 December 2021 on the Follow-up to the second United Nations Conference on Landlocked Developing Countries in which the Assembly took the decision in accordance with paragraph 66 of the Political Declaration of the High-level Midterm Review on the Implementation of the Vienna Programme of Action for Landlocked Developing Countries for the Decade 2014–2024, to hold the third United Nations Conference on Landlocked Developing Countries in 2024 with the mandate to undertake a comprehensive review of the implementation of the Vienna Programme of Action and to formulate and adopt a renewed framework for international support to address the special needs of landlocked developing countries and to strengthen partnerships between the landlocked developing countries and transit countries and their development partners,

Recalling also General Assembly resolution 75/322 of 30 December 2020 on the Quadrennial comprehensive policy review of operational activities for development of the United Nations system that calls upon the United Nations development system to support the full and effective implementation of the Vienna Programme of Action for Landlocked Developing Countries for the Decade 2014–2024, in line with the Political Declaration of the High-level Midterm Review on the Implementation of the Vienna Programme of Action for Landlocked Developing Countries for the Decade 2014-2024 and the Roadmap for accelerated implementation of the VPoA,

Recognizing that sustainable, inclusive, people-centered and resilient recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic and other related future crises should complement and enhance the continued progress towards implementation of the Vienna Programme of Action and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals,

Welcoming the outcomes of the 2022 Follow-up and review of the Forum on Financing for Development and the 2022 Ministerial Declaration of the High-level Political Forum on Sustainable Development that *inter alia* called for further strengthening of international solidarity and cooperation for combating and recovering from the pandemic, including through ensuring that no one will be left behind in the recovery from the pandemic, improving access to quality, safe, effective and affordable vaccines, therapeutics, diagnostics and other health tools, including through the rapid scaling up and expansion of vaccine production globally, and providing economic and social support and protection measures, starting with the most affected people and people in vulnerable situations,

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

Welcoming the adoption of the Doha Programme of Action for Least Developed Countries for the decade 2022-2031 which represents a new generation of renewed and strengthened commitments between the LDCs and their development partners, including the private sector, civil society, and governments at all levels,

Adopt the following declaration;

1. **We take note** with appreciation of the Report of the Secretary-General A/77/269 on the implementation of the Vienna Programme of Action for LLDCs for the Decade 2014-2024;
2. **We are deeply concerned** that the unprecedented impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on LLDCs is being further augmented by worsening global economic conditions. LLDCs are confronted with high inflation, slowing economic growth, persisting poverty, high inequality, unsustainable consumption and production patterns, disruptions in global value and supply chains, increase in food and commodity prices and the serious rise in global food insecurity that further endanger development prospects and are contributing to a divergence in recovery. We call upon the international community to enhance international cooperation to address these urgent challenges, including by preserving and strengthening global value and supply chains, in particular for essential goods and services such as food;
3. **We also express deep concern** that only 26 per cent of the LLDC population was fully vaccinated at the end of April 2022, compared to 59 per cent worldwide in particular due to insufficient access to vaccines amid the spread of new and more transmittable variants. LLDCs did not achieve the target to vaccinate 70 per cent of the population by mid-2022 as outlined in the World Health Organization Global COVID-19 Vaccination Strategy and therefore call **we call on** development partners, the United Nations, International Financial Institutions, and other international organizations to support LLDCs with the resources to respond to COVID-19 and take the necessary steps to ensure equitable access to safe, effective, quality and affordable essential medicines and vaccines for all, including strengthening national health systems and laboratories, enhanced public education, purchasing of required medical supplies such as oxygen delivery systems and ventilators. **We call** on the international community to support LLDCs with capacity building to ensure that in addition to immediate needs, the capacity of LLDCs to respond to future health crises is also strengthened;
4. **We call** on the Secretary-General, in close collaboration with the World Health Organization, to continue to take the necessary steps to effectively coordinate and follow up on the efforts of the United Nations system to promote and ensure global access to medicines, vaccines and medical equipment needed to address COVID-19 and other major diseases;
5. **We welcome** the initiatives which aim to accelerate development and production of and equitable access to COVID-19 diagnostics, therapeutics and vaccines to all countries including Access to COVID-19 Tools Accelerator (ACT-A) and its COVID-

19 Vaccine Global Access (COVAX) Facility, the COVID-19 Technology Access Pool (C-TAP) and other initiatives, and **call upon** the public and private sectors to fill the funding gap of these initiatives;

6. **We welcome also** the Ministerial Decision on the TRIPS Agreement and support ongoing discussion at the World Trade Organization on how the multilateral rules-based trade system can contribute to enhancing access to equitable distribution of COVID-19 vaccines. **We call** on WTO Members to expeditiously conclude the discussions to further contribute to global efforts to enhance access to affordable essential medicines, vaccines, personal protective equipment and medical equipment to effectively address COVID-19;
7. **We stress** that as we head into the final stretches of the 2030 Agenda and the Vienna Programme of Action, efforts towards both need to be reoriented to incorporate the long-term impact of COVID-19, building of more equal, inclusive and sustainable institutions and the nurturing of resilient economies. Towards this end, a transformative recovery aimed at reducing vulnerability to future crises and ensuring that LLDCs can make the necessary progress towards achieving the SDGs and respond to the ambition and the urgency of the Vienna Programme of Action is paramount. **We renew** our commitment to accelerate the implementation of the VPoA;
8. **We reiterate** the importance of fostering strong synergy and coherence at all levels in the implementation, follow-up, and review of the Vienna Programme of Action with the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, Addis Ababa Action Agenda and other development processes including the Paris Agreement on Climate Change, and the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction;
9. **We recognize** the central role of the United Nations system in supporting the implementation of the Vienna Programme of Action and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, as well as catalyzing and coordinating the global recovery in response to the COVID-19 pandemic, based on unity, solidarity, multilateralism and international cooperation. **We encourage** Member States, the United Nations system organizations, 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;
10. **We recognize** that, although GDP grew 4.6 per cent in LLDCs in 2021, the vulnerability of LLDCs and the adverse global economic conditions constrain their ability to fully recover from the socioeconomic impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic. **We call** on the relevant UN organizations, development partners to support LLDCs efforts to diversify their economies and enhance resilience towards future disasters and shocks including through achieving structural economic diversification;
11. **We express concern** that the proportion of people covered by at least one social protection benefit is significantly lower in LLDCs at 19.6 per cent compared to the global average of 46.9 per cent. 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 current and future crises. **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

international financial institutions, multilateral organizations and regional banks to provide quick balance-of-payment and budget support with limited conditionalities to LLDCs so as to enable them to respond adequately to this pandemic;

12. **We express deep concern** that a growing number of people are currently facing food insecurity due to rapid increase in food prices and shortages of food supplies and fertilizers around the world. This crisis follows already elevated levels of food insecurity and economic difficulties during the COVID-19 pandemic. 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;
13. **We are concerned** that LLDCs continue to be disproportionately affected by the adverse impacts of climate change, desertification, land degradation, drought, melting 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. **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. **We further call** on the UN Climate Change Conference (COP 27) to consider the impact of climate change on LLDCs in the deliberations and outcome;
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 24 LLDCs who have committed to halt and reverse forest loss and land degradation by 2030, endorsing the Glasgow Leaders' Declaration on Forests and Land Use and we encourage other LLDCs to take action towards addressing these issues;
16. **We welcome** the Bali Agenda for Resilience which recognizes the contribution of the Global Platform for Disaster Risk Reduction to the review of the Vienna Programme of Action for the Landlocked Developing Countries and the development of its successor agreement and makes commitment to ensure risk reduction is embedded across key intergovernmental agreements that focus on most vulnerable countries;
17. **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;
18. **We emphasize** that water is critical for sustainable development and the eradication of poverty and hunger and is indispensable for human development, health and wellbeing and a vital element of achieving the Sustainable Development Goals and other relevant goals in the social, environmental and economic fields;

19. **We look forward** to the Midterm Comprehensive Review of the Implementation of the Objectives of the International Decade for Action, “Water for Sustainable Development”, 2018-2028 to be held in 2023 in New York, co-hosted by the Governments of Tajikistan and the Netherlands;
20. **We note** that LLDCs depend on their transit neighbors to access seaports as well as global markets and that the continued imposition of border restrictions due to COVID-19 is greatly impacting the movement of goods and services to LLDCs. **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, including through the enhanced use of digital applications and contactless procedures. **We reiterate** that the use of border measures designed to tackle COVID-19 has to be transparent, targeted, proportionate, and consistent with WTO rules;
21. **We commend** the progress that has been made by LLDCs and transit developing countries in ratifying and implementing the World Trade Organization Agreement on Trade Facilitation, the revised Kyoto Convention, the TIR Convention and other relevant international conventions. **We remain concerned** that implementation of such agreements and initiatives has been negatively impacted by measures introduced by transit countries and LLDCs such as curfews, border measures aimed at curbing the spread of COVID-19. This also threatens 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. **We therefore call upon** LLDCs and transit countries to further enhance implementation of 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; and **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;
22. **We express deepest concern** over supply chains and international maritime transport disruptions which have far reaching impacts including soaring freight rates, and plummeting service reliability and thereby exacerbating the historically high trade cost in LLDCs. We are recognizing the magnitude of the challenge and **call on** all relevant stakeholders to work towards enhancing efficiencies in the transport maritime transport sector, in the transit transport and also help shipping and ports navigate through the crisis supply chains. **We call** for building supply chain resilience including through building resilient ports and transport systems, accelerate the implementation of trade facilitation measures and digitalization;
23. **We are further concerned** that, according to estimations, on average LLDCs pay more than double what the transit countries incur in transport costs and take a longer time to send and receive merchandise goods from overseas markets. The COVID-19 pandemic has further exacerbated these challenges;
24. **We note** with concern the 2022 Secretary General’s Report on the implementation of the VPoA for Landlocked Developing Countries for the decade 2014-2024 which states that the adverse global economic conditions, including stalled growth, surging inflation,

rising energy and food prices, supply chain disruptions and elevated shipping and trade costs, are constraining LLDCs to recover from the socioeconomic impacts of COVID-19 pandemic. **Furthermore, we regret that** while the pandemic-related border restrictions and lockdowns constrained the transport of food, **and that** the increased world market prices resulting from the conflict in Ukraine also affect LLDCs that depend on imported foodstuffs and fertilizers;

25. **We reaffirm** our commitment to develop quality, accessible, affordable, reliable, sustainable and resilient transport infrastructure as an integral element of the COVID-19 recovery efforts, including regional and transboundary infrastructure, to enhance our connectivity to regional and global markets and support a sustainable and inclusive recovery and resilience of our economies;
26. **We welcome** the outcome of the Second United Nations Global Sustainable Transport Conference held in hybrid format in Beijing, China, from 14 to 16 October 2021 and its key recommendations for action by the United Nations system, governments, businesses, scientists, civil society, and others which include the need to invest in transport corridors to improve hinterland connectivity, build integrated transport systems with high inter-connectivity and cost-effectiveness that were geared towards establishing more comprehensive transportation corridors using low carbon, green technologies and recognized that financial and technical cooperation and support by developed countries remain crucial for developing countries to build better connectivity, especially first and last mile connectivity; to maintain existing infrastructure; and to invest in capacity-building for inclusive, green, and accessible transport systems in developing countries;
27. **We also welcome** the Awaza Summary Statement of the Ministerial Transport Conference of Landlocked Developing Countries that was held in Awaza, Turkmenistan on 15 and 16 August 2022, which calls for actions to enhance transport connectivity of LLDCs and accelerate the implementation of the Vienna Programme of Action and **call** for consideration of the Statement as input to the preparatory process of the Third United Nations Conference on LLDCs to be held in 2024;
28. **We stress** that the magnitude of the resources required to invest in quality, reliable, 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, as well as strengthening of the role of the private sector, including international project finance, public-private partnerships and other non-traditional forms of finance. **We recognize** the important role of the United Nations development system, the World Bank and other multilateral institutions in addressing the capacity and funding gaps in sustainable and quality infrastructure investment, working through existing initiatives and we resolve to take steps to utilize all infrastructure financing sources;
29. **We reiterate** our call for enhanced 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;

30. **We underscore** the significance of international transport and economic corridors for reducing trade costs and promoting regional sustainable development, and recognized the need to build integrated transport systems with high inter-connectivity and cost-effectiveness that were geared towards establishing more comprehensive transportation and economic corridor and request for strengthening of the role of corridor management organizations and other sub-regional and inter-regional arrangements and 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;
31. **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;
32. **We note** that the air transport industry has been hit hard by COVID-19 and LLDCs have still not been able to fully recover in this regard. **We call** upon the international community including the UN system and other international and regional organizations to provide support towards building back better the air transport industry since air transport provides LLDCs with direct access to international markets;
33. **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;
34. **We recognize** that the COVID-19 pandemic brought to the fore the importance of digital transformation and connectivity for achieving the Sustainable Development Goals and for COVID-19 recovery including through, enabling the delivery of essential services while complying to social distancing protocols, remote learning, telemedicine, e-commerce, virtual meetings and working, accessing government services and non-physical transit and customs procedures. **We remain concerned** that digital divides and inequalities continue to worsen. 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 continue to foster favorable conditions for the development of the digital economy by creating appropriate enabling environment including the necessary policies, legal and regulatory frameworks to support the development of information and communications technologies (ICT) and we call for strengthened international cooperation to support LLDCs by increasing financial contributions towards investment in ICT infrastructure including 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. **We also urge** the strengthening of digital literacy and skills, as part of efforts to bridge digital and knowledge divides, as a prerequisite for inclusive participation in the digital economy;

35. **We take note** of the report of the Secretary-General entitled “*Our Common Agenda*” and look forward to further discussions on the proposed Global Digital Compact at the Summit of the Future in September 2024 through a technology track involving all stakeholders: governments, the United Nations system, the private sector (including tech companies), civil society, grass-roots organizations, academia, and individuals, including youth;
36. **We welcome** “The Partner2Connect Digital Coalition” launched by The International Telecommunication Union (ITU) in close cooperation with the Office of the Secretary-General’s Envoy on Technology, and in line with the UN Secretary-General’s Roadmap for Digital Cooperation, to foster meaningful connectivity and digital transformation globally, with a focus on but not limited to hardest- to-connect communities including in LLDCs. **We call** on enhanced support towards mobilize resources needed to meaningfully connect the most vulnerable;
37. **We note** that most of the special development challenges of LLDCs are trans-boundary and the COVID-19 pandemic has heightened the need for deepened regional integration in order to fully address them. **We urge** LLDCs and transit countries 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 regional value chains; 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;
38. **We are concerned** that the VPoA specific objective of substantially increasing LLDCs exports remains a challenge as their share in global merchandise exports remains below one percent and the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic has worsened this. **We call** on our development partners to step up mechanisms supportive of LLDCs’ efforts to build their trade and supply-side capacities, such as Aid for Trade, increased market access, productive capacity building and technical assistance. **We further call** on the relevant UN System organizations and other international organizations to enhance their capacity building and technical assistance support towards enhancing the LLDCs’ participation in international trade including in global and regional value chains that account for almost 70% of total trade;
39. **We recognize** that merchandise exports from LLDCs remain undiversified and are heavily skewed towards natural resource commodities, and the COVID-19 pandemic further stalled progress towards structural change. We, therefore, reiterate that export diversification is critical for LLDCs for long-term economic development, employment creation, moving up the value chain and reducing their vulnerability to external shocks;
40. **We underline** that greater integration of LLDCs into world trade and global as well as regional value chains is vital for increasing their competitiveness and diversification and ensuring their economic development, and invite UN-OHRLLS, UNCTAD, UNIDO, UNDP, United Nations Regional Commissions, Common Fund for Commodities, World Bank, World Trade Organization, UNDP, International Trade Centre, and other partners to provide assistance to LLDCs to strengthen their capacity to participate in regional and global value chains;

41. **We stress** that a universal, rules-based, open, transparent, predictable, inclusive, non-discriminatory and equitable multilateral trading system under the World Trade Organization is essential in preserving the interests of the poorest and most vulnerable economies including the LLDCs. **We call on** the WTO Members to take into consideration the special needs of LLDCs in their rules making and implementation;
42. **We call on** the WTO to continue to formulate pragmatic, effective and holistic solutions to support trade in health, and to support open, diversified, secure, and resilient supply chains in the manufacture of COVID-19 critical goods and vaccines and their components;
43. **We note** that LLDCs as a group still lag behind in the implementation of the WTO Trade Facilitation Agreement and LLDCs have notified about 31 per cent of the WTO Trade Facilitation Agreement measures as requiring assistance to fully implement. We 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. These include human resources and training, legislative and regulatory frameworks, ICT and infrastructure and equipment;
44. **We welcome** the decision of the 12th WTO Ministerial Conference (MC12), which was held in Geneva on 12-17 June 2022, under the Chairmanship of Kazakhstan, and established a dedicated session focusing on transit issues during the WTO Trade Facilitation Committee to be held annually until the next review of the Trade Facilitation Agreement is completed in 2026, offers a unique opportunity to find solutions to achieving efficient and resilient transit. We call on LLDCs with the support of relevant UN organizations to propose tangible solutions for consideration and adoption by the committee;
45. **We note** that LLDCs depend on their transit neighbors to access seaports as well as global markets and that the border restrictions due to COVID-19 and the disruptions in the supply chains is greatly impacting the movement of goods and services to LLDCs. COVID-19 disruption has highlighted and amplified the vulnerabilities of global supply chains, including the transportation networks. These trends are happening against a backdrop of heightened climate change mitigation and adaptation requirements, as well as energy transition pressures, disruptive natural disasters and weather patterns, uncertain pandemic and vaccination paths, diverging economic recoveries and heightened geopolitical threats. Against this background, we call for building supply chain resilience including through building resilient ports and transport systems, accelerate the implementation of trade facilitation measures and digitalization. LLDCs and transit countries to work together to ensure smooth functioning at borders and in transit to facilitate the flow of essential goods, including through the enhanced use of digital applications and contactless procedures. **We reiterate** that the use of border measures designed to tackle COVID-19 has to be transparent, targeted, proportionate, and consistent with WTO rules;
46. **We recognize** that COVID-19 has led to a surge in e-commerce and that the growth in e-commerce provides international trade opportunities including new market opportunities for LLDCs. We call on UN-OHRLS, UNCTAD, ITU and partners to

provide technical assistance to promote e-commerce in LLDCs including through capacity building and advice on improving digital infrastructure;

47. **We stress** that building productive capacities is a core requirement for achieving sustainable industrial development and structural transformation and export diversification and encourage LLDCs to mainstream the building of productive capacities in their national development strategies. **We further 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;
48. **We note** that the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic and the measures taken to mitigate its impact have had particularly negative consequences on service sectors such as tourism, retail, and hospitality, some labor-intensive sectors, small and medium-sized enterprises and the informal sector resulting in higher unemployment, particularly amongst vulnerable segments of society. **We therefore 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;
49. **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;
50. **We reaffirm** that science, technology and innovation have a critical role in achieving structural transformation, the SDGs as well as COVID-19 recovery. **We commit** to formulating effective policies on science, technology and innovation and 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, electronic 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;
51. **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;
52. **We recognize** that significant additional domestic public resources supplemented by international assistance as appropriate, will be critical to realizing sustainable development and achieving the Sustainable Development Goals and that the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the Addis Ababa Action Agenda acknowledge the centrality of domestic resource mobilization underscored by the principle of national ownership. We also recognize that, while LLDCs have made considerable efforts to mobilize domestic resources and attract private investment, further progress is needed, and underlines the importance of strengthening domestic

enabling environments and call for enhanced support to build the revenue collection capacity of LLDCs;

53. **We welcome** the growth in official development assistance in 2020 and reaffirm that official development assistance is crucial for LLDCs in accelerating implementation of the VPoA and 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, and call upon development partners and the international community to mobilize additional development finance from all sources to support LLDCs' recovery efforts from the COVID-19 crisis and build long-term resilience;
54. **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 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. This may include debt-to-health and debt-to-nature swaps channeling additional funds to health system and environmental protection and financing regional development projects in exchange for debt relief;
55. **We commend** the G20 for its Common Framework for Debt Treatments beyond the Debt Service Suspension Initiative. However, in light of the continuation of the pandemic and significant economic headwinds that are persisting, we urge for the reinstatement of debt servicing suspension for countries at risk of debt distress. This is especially critical for LLDCs to address immediate challenges, particularly with regard to procurement of vaccines and providing safety nets for the vulnerable segments of their populations. **We underscore** the need for long-term support to improve debt sustainability and to create financing space for investing in a sustainable recovery;
56. **We commit** to continue promoting conducive policies to secure financing and attract diverse sources of investment, including foreign direct investment, that lead to increased trade, economic diversification, structural change as well as sustainable development in LLDCs. **We call** on development partners to provide greater support to the investment seeking efforts of LLDCs especially the investment needed 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;
57. **We welcome** the vigorous measures taken by the International Monetary Fund and World Bank Group, 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;
58. **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;

59. **We are deeply concerned** that illicit financial flows from LLDCs continue to result in huge losses in tax revenues and we call for technical and financial support to LLDCs to build capacity to implement existing instruments, to establish policy oriented anti-corruption and anti-money laundering solutions, and assist them on asset recovery and return, and changes to the rules to close gaps, vulnerabilities and loopholes;
60. **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 for** increased capacity-building and technical support to LLDCs, from all sources, to strengthen their national statistical systems;
61. **We call** on the UN system to focus its activities in support of LLDCs to facilitate a sustainable economic and social recovery that leaves no one behind and enable them to overcome the persistent consequences of the COVID-19 pandemic and to make substantial progress in implementing the VPoA and in achieving the Sustainable Development Goals;
62. **We invite** the UN system to incorporate within its planned activities to examine the long-term 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;
63. **We welcome** the progress achieved by the Secretary-General in the repositioning of the United Nations development system and look 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-boundary 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;
64. We recognize progress made in mainstreaming the goals and priorities set out in the Vienna Programme of Action for LLDCs into the United Nations development system's integrated policy and operational support to Governments, and we **request** relevant entities of the United Nations development system, in consultation with host Governments and in line with national policies, priorities and needs, to address the special development needs and challenges of LLDCs in the common country analysis and in the United Nations planning and programming documents, including the United Nations Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework;
65. **We welcome the** establishment in 2022 of an LLDCs' National Focal Points network comprised of capital-based national focal points to facilitate the strengthening of coherence and coordination of the implementation and follow up of the Vienna Programme of Action, the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, and other global frameworks including the WTO Trade Facilitation Agreement at the national level. **We also note** that it will foster peer-learning and exchange of best practices on LLDCs-related issues and will be instrumental in the preparations for the upcoming Third UN

Conference on LLDCs. **We call on** UN-OHRLLS with the support of other relevant UN organization to strengthen the technical capacities of the LLDCs National Focal Points to ensure their meaningful contribution to the implementation of the VPoA and contribution to the formulation of the next programme of action and its implementation;

66. **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 call for the elaboration of information specific to LLDCs in a disaggregated manner in all major United Nations reports where appropriate;
67. **We agree** on the need to consolidate our positions in the discussions on climate change and formalize our Group of LLDCs under the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) process, in order to enhance our coordination, project a strong voice and work with relevant Stakeholders to advance the interests of LLDCs in climate related issues, especially with regard to vulnerability, mitigation and adaptation to climate change;
68. **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; **We underline** its prominent role as the main global platform for inter-agency coordination and cooperation on support for landlocked developing countries and call to further enhance coordination, collaboration, efficiency, and coherence among member entities in a way that recognizes their respective mandates and roles, considers comparative advantages, and maximizes their resources and expertise;
69. **We are strongly committed** to lead the accelerated implementation of the Vienna Programme of Action and the Roadmap in collaboration with the transit countries and with the support of our development partners;
70. **We welcome** the progress reported towards the Roadmap for Accelerated Implementation of the Vienna Programme of Action, with more than 430 initiatives reported so far in the Roadmap, which provides evidence of significant efforts undertaken by UN and other international and regional organizations to support the LLDCs. **We recognize** that several of these initiatives had now been implemented and had led to positive outcomes such as: improving connectivity and digital inclusion; enhancing customs clearance and the treatment of goods; enhancing cooperation between countries; strengthening resilience to the adverse impacts of climate change; and improving the health response to COVID-19 through the procurement of medical equipment and vaccines;
71. **We reiterate** our call to UN system organizations, other international and regional organizations and other stakeholders to enhance support towards its implementation;
72. **We recognize** the importance of the Roadmap in accelerating implementation of the Vienna Programme of Action and enhancing coordination. **We encourage** that the next programme of action for LLDCs should also therefore establish a similar mechanism to translate its own agreed measures and commitments into concrete deliverables.
73. **We recall** that the area of the seabed and ocean floor and the subsoil thereof, beyond the limits of national jurisdiction, as well as its resources, are the common heritage of

mankind, the exploration and exploitation of which shall be carried out for the benefit of mankind as a whole, irrespective of the geographical location of States. **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 to fully engage on Ocean issues including the negotiations on BBNJ to safeguard their interests in the Ocean economy. **We urge** LLDCs that have not yet done so to ratify the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS);

74. **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. We call upon relevant international and regional organizations including UN-OHRLLS, UN-ESCAP, UNCTAD, UNDP, WTO and others relevant stakeholders, including research institutions, think tanks, to strengthen collaboration on research and capacity building with the International Think Tank for LLDCs on all the priority areas of the Vienna Programme of Action and foster coherence in the implementation of the Vienna Programme of Action with the Sustainable Development Goals;
75. **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, 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. **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;
76. **We call upon** Governments, intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations, major groups and other donors to contribute in a timely manner to the trust fund in support of activities undertaken by the Office of the High Representative to support the implementation of the VPoA and to support the preparatory processes towards the Third UN Conference on LLDCs;
77. **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 Vienna Programme of Action, the Political Declaration of its midterm review and the Roadmap for the accelerated implementation of the VPoA. It should also continue to 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;
78. **We welcome** the appointment of Ms. Rabab Fatima as the High Representative for the Least Developed Countries, Landlocked Developing Countries and Small Island

Developing States and **we request** the United Nations Office of the High Representative for the Least Developed Countries, Landlocked Developing Countries and Small Island Developing States (OHRLLS) to continue to work on its mandate in support of the LLDCs;

79. **We look** forward to the convening of the following upcoming global conferences UN Climate Change Conference COP27 (6-18 November 2022) to be held in Sharm El Sheik, Egypt; and the second part of the 5th UN Conference on LDCs (5-9 March, 2023) to be held in Doha. **We recognize** the importance of these meetings to LLDCs and stress that the outcomes of these meetings should take into account LLDCs issues;
80. **We welcome** the decision of the General Assembly in its resolution 76/217 to hold the Third United Nations Conference on Landlocked Developing Countries in 2024 with the mandate to undertake a comprehensive review of the implementation of the Vienna Programme of Action and to formulate and adopt a renewed framework for international support to address the special needs of landlocked developing countries and to strengthen partnerships between the landlocked developing countries and transit countries and their development partners. **We attach great importance** to the Conference and its preparatory process and are committed to fully participate and contribute to its success, and **we call on** the relevant stakeholders to fully engage and contribute to the review process of the VPoA and formulation of the new programme of Action;
81. **We request** the General Assembly to take decisions at its 77th Session on the Third UN Conference on LLDCs with all organizational details and the scope and terms of reference of the Conference, including its duration; national and regional reviews; preparatory committee meetings and the contributions by the United Nations Development System and other international organizations including the World Bank Group, the IMF, WTO, WCO and Regional Development Banks. In this regard, **we encourage** LLDCs, transit and partner countries to actively engage in the negotiation of the modalities for the third United Nations Conference on LLDCs that will take place in the Second Committee during the main session of the 77th Session of the General Assembly;
82. **We encourage** an evidence-based bottom-up approach in preparing for the Conference, in which national level experience, best practices and lessons learned in the implementation of the VPoA should serve as a key building-block for the next programme of action;
83. **We commit** to prepare national reports that comprehensively assess the implementation of the Vienna Programme of Action highlighting achievements, best or effective practices, the major challenges experienced and suggest recommendations for the new programme of action. The national reports will feed into the preparatory process including the regional and global reviews;
84. **We further commit** to participate at a high political and technical level in the Regional Review meetings and thematic meetings that will take place in the lead-up to the Third Conference, and that constitute the base of the preparations for the global review;
85. **We request** the Secretary-General to mobilize the international community including the UN system to support the Third UN Conference on LLDCs and secure a large

number of participants at the highest political level, including Heads of State and Government in the Conference to be held in 2024;

86. **We request** the Presidents of the 77th and 78th Sessions of the UN General Assembly to make substantive contributions to the preparatory process of the Third UN Conference on LLDCs, including by organizing a dedicated high-level event of the General Assembly focusing on the key priorities of LLDCs in preparation of the outcome of the Conference. **We also request** the Presidents of the Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) to make similar contributions to the preparatory process of the Third UN Conference on LLDCs;
 87. **We underscore** the important role of the Group of Friends of LLDCs and call for their active participation and support in the preparation for the Third UN Conference on LLDCs and at the Conference;
 88. **We strongly encourage** the Secretary-General and the Member States to strengthen the OHRLLS including by allocating additional post and non-post resources to the subprogramme responsible for landlocked developing countries to enable it to effectively carry out the mandate including, to enable it to provide substantive support to LLDCs in their pursuit to meaningfully engage in the intergovernmental discussions and implement the Vienna Programme of Action for LLDCs and the 2030 Agenda;
 89. **We express** our deep appreciation to the Government of Botswana for its able chairmanship, tireless efforts and excellent leadership provided to the landlocked developing countries as the Global Chair of the Group of Landlocked Developing Countries and **look forward** to its continued efforts to the promotion of the interests of the landlocked developing countries.
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