

Meeting of Foreign Ministers of Landlocked Developing Countries 23 September 2020

Statement of H.E. Mr. Peter LAUNSKY, Deputy Minister for Foreign Affairs at the Austrian Federal Ministry for Europe and International Affairs

- It is my great privilege to participate in this year's Ministerial Meeting of Foreign Ministers of Landlocked Developing Countries.
- 2020 is an extraordinary year in many aspects:
 - on Monday we commemorated the 75th anniversary of the UN,
 - we are entering the SDG Decade of Action and
 - we are fighting the COVID-19 Pandemic - a human crisis with unprecedented socio-economic consequences that risk reversing progress achieved so far.

Austria as long standing partner

- As a long-standing partner of the LLDCs and a landlocked country ourselves, we understand and feel many of your challenges and we stand ready to share our experience. It is for this reason that we hosted the Second UN conference on landlocked developing countries in Vienna in 2014, that Austria co-chairs the Group of Friends of the LLDCs and that together with Bhutan we co-facilitated the Outcome Document of the Midterm Review of the Vienna Programme of Action, which was adopted last December.
- Based on our national experience as land-locked country, we are convinced that strong regional cooperation and integration, investment in critical infrastructure, trade and private sector investment as well as international support and ODA are effective means to address potential negative effects of lacking direct geographic access to oceans..

- We welcome the focus of the Roadmap for Accelerated Implementation of the Vienna Programme of Action, building on the findings of the Midterm Review. We remain fully committed to continue our partnership and common effort towards the goals set out in the Vienna Programme of Action and to ensure that achievements and progress are not undermined by the impacts of the Covid-19 Pandemic.

Addressing the challenges of COVID- 19

- We are well aware that LLDCs face particular challenges and development disadvantages, compounded by the impact of COVID-19. We remain convinced that many of the challenges related to landlockedness can be addressed.
- From the outset of the Pandemic, Austria has reacted swiftly by providing additional resources for a coordinated response with a focus on water and sanitation as well as the procurement of personal protective equipment.
- Austria contributes to the maintenance and improvement of water supply and sanitation in the region of Amhara in **Ethiopia**.
- Austria supports the **Bhutanese COVID-19 Response Plan**, procuring protective clothing, test kits, face masks and ventilators.
- In **Burkina Faso**, Austria supports the COVID-19-program of ECHO to strengthen the health care system and prevention.
- UNDP is organizing the *COVID-19 Response and Recovery Window of Moldova's 2030 SDGs Fund*, which addresses the social and economic impact of the pandemic and to which Austria proudly contributes.
- Multilateral action is key in addressing the current global challenges. In times of crisis, more than ever we need to stand together.

- Thank you for the opportunity and again, let me reiterate Austria's full support for and solidarity with the LLDCs.