

**Statement of LLDC Group Chair
Annual Ministerial Meeting of Foreign Ministers of Landlocked Developing
Countries**

23 September 2020, New York, virtual meeting

Time limit: 5 minutes

**Mr. Volkan Bozkir, President of the 75th Session of the General Assembly,
Mr. António Guterres, Secretary-General of the United Nations,
Honourable Ministers,
Ms. Fekitamoeloa ‘Utoikamanu, Under-Secretary-General and High
Representative for LDCs, LLDCs and SIDS,
Distinguished delegates,**

It is a great honor for me to chair for the first time this Annual Meeting of Foreign Ministers of Landlocked Developing Countries convened by Kazakhstan under its Chairmanship of the Group.

At the outset, on behalf of the LLDCs and on my own behalf, I would like to express our gratitude to the Secretary-General for finding time to attend our meeting. Your presence demonstrates the continued commitment and support of the UN system to the LLDCs.

Our appreciation also goes to H.E. Mr. Volkan Bozkir for his presence in our meeting in what are his first weeks in his new capacity as President of the General Assembly for its 75th session.

Let me also take this opportunity to recognize the Under-Secretary-General for LDCs, LLDCs and SIDS Ms. Fekitamoeloa ‘Utoikamanu, and her team at OHRLLS for their continued support and enduring work for the benefit of the LLDCs.

Excellencies, distinguished participants,

Last year under esteemed Chairmanship of Paraguay, we held the Midterm Review of the implementation of the Vienna Programme of Action. While we have collectively made a lot of progress, the Midterm Review revealed that not enough has been made to reach all the objectives of the VPoA by 2024.

The theme of this year’s Ministerial Meeting aims to continue on from the momentum of the Midterm Review, focused on “Partnering for accelerated implementation of the VPoA and achieving sustainable development in LLDCs in the era of COVID-19”.

The impacts of COVID-19 threaten to reverse the hard-won gains made by the LLDCs. The current crisis constrains the already tight financial and fiscal space in LLDCs, with commodity prices collapsing and ODA and foreign direct investment flows to LLDCs continuing to decline.

Without adequate financial assistance, LLDCs risk being left behind. My President underscored this on 28 May speaking on behalf of our Group at the High-level meeting on Financing for Development.

Excellencies, distinguished participants,

As Chair of the Group of LLDCs, Kazakhstan has actively engaged during relevant processes throughout this year, such as the High-Level Political Forum on Sustainable Development, the Financing for Development discussions and others.

As we promised at the beginning of our Chairmanship, we raised awareness about the Group's issues, delivering 26 statements and holding numerous meetings in and outside UN on behalf of our Group.

In this capacity, Kazakhstan will continue to advocate for the interests of our countries in all relevant international fora.

This year we are at a crucial juncture as we have now embarked on the second phase of implementing the Vienna Programme and of the Decade of Action for the SDGs. The full and effective implementation of the Vienna Programme of Action is critical to the achievement of the SDGs.

In this regard, Kazakhstan as the Chair of the Group of LLDCs, has requested for the development of the Roadmap for accelerated implementation of the VPoA in its remaining five years. I want to thank all the member-countries of the Group for their firm endorsement of the idea.

I wish also to express my profound gratitude to the Secretary-General for the establishment of this initiative as well as general strong support and leadership of the UN system to focus its priority activities in support of LLDCs.

My gratitude goes to Under-Secretary-General Utoikamanu and her able team for the coordination and elaboration of the Roadmap that we will adopt today. I also thank all UN and international agencies, present today, who actively engaged in the process.

I am confident that the Roadmap will help to join efforts of the UN agencies and international organizations, transit countries, development partners, private sector and other interested stakeholders. We need to break the silos and avoid duplication of functions and efforts to ensure better practical results on the ground in the remaining five years.

Excellencies, distinguished participants,

To conclude, we must remember that there is a strength in unity and we must continue to act collectively and work together to garner greater international support for our efforts to achieve sustainable development and in these difficult times, to build back better. As the Chair of this Group, Kazakhstan will continue its dedicated work to achieve these goals.

Thank you for your attention.