

Annual Ministerial Meeting of Foreign Ministers of Landlocked Developing Countries

**23 September 2020
8.00-11.00 AM (EST)**

Virtual meeting

UN GA 75th session, New York

Concept Note

Theme: Partnering for accelerated implementation of the Vienna Programme of Action and achieving sustainable development in LLDCs in the era of COVID-19

Background

Due to the lack of direct access to the sea the Landlocked Developing Countries (LLDCs) are faced with challenges related to their geography that deprive them of direct access to seaborne trade, compounded by cumbersome transit and border procedures, and inadequate transport infrastructure of the coastal transit countries. LLDCs therefore face high trade costs that remain a major stumbling block for their integrating into the global economy and their overall development. The Vienna Programme of Action (VPoA) for LLDCs aims to address those challenges in a more coherent manner since the VPoA is an integral part of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

The UN General Assembly held a comprehensive Midterm Review of the VPoA in December 2019 to review progress in the implementation of the Programme. The review recognized efforts and progress achieved in the implementation of the VPoA but acknowledged that progress made was insufficient for LLDCs to achieve the VPoA targets and SDGs. It is in this vein that the General Assembly adopted a forward-looking outcome document with a call for action to accelerate the implementation of the VPoA. The Call for action outlines actions, including in all the six priority areas as well as climate change and gender, to be implemented in the remaining five years of the VPoA by all relevant stakeholders, in particular, by LLDCs, transit countries, development partners, relevant UN agencies and other international organizations and the private sector. Strengthening partnership amongst all these stakeholders is therefore fundamental to achieve the VPoA targets and SDGs.

The outbreak of COVID-19 and its unprecedented socio-economic impact including on LLDCs, threatens to reverse progress so far achieved in the implementation of the VPoA

and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development as well as derails the efforts to implement the Decade for Action. Due to LLDCs high dependence on external trade and in particular, on primary commodities, the contraction of global trade and the significant fall in the prices and demand for primary commodities have a significant impact on LLDCs domestic resources mobilization efforts. In addition, due to their reliance on transit countries to participate in international trade, the introduction of stringent measures to combat the spread of COVID-19 by their transit neighbors affects movement of goods and services to LLDCs. This further marginalize the LLDCs from global trade. Given the multifaceted impact of COVID-19, the fight against its socio-economic impact require enhanced partnership with development partners, transit countries, regional and international organizations and private sector amongst others.

As the international community embarks on the Decade of Action to deliver on the SDGs by 2030 and strives to accelerate the implementation of the VPoA, greater support for LLDCs is essential. With the adoption of the Political Declaration of the Midterm Review, the challenging phase ahead is one of ensuring that the commitments in favour of LLDCs lead to concrete deliverables that would facilitate implementation of the VPoA and help place the LLDCs closer on their path to achieving the SDGs. In this vein, the Group of LLDCs has requested the UN Secretary-General to develop a Roadmap as a visionary map on implementation of multiple projects of the UN Member States and the UN agencies and different international stakeholders. The Ministerial meeting aims to successfully launch its implementation.

In addition, the year 2020 marks the 75th Anniversary of the United Nations and the UN General Assembly will commemorate the occasion under the theme, *'The Future We Want, the UN We Need: Reaffirming our Collective Commitment to Multilateralism.'* The Ministerial meeting will contribute to the discussions to commemorate the 75th Anniversary to enhance global cooperation to achieve SDGs.

2. Objectives

The key objectives of the Ministerial Meeting include the following:

- Review the progress made by the LLDCs in the implementation of the Vienna Programme of Action and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, identify challenges faced and share knowledge, experiences and innovative approaches;
- Discuss the socio-economic impact of COVID-19 on LLDCs, share national experiences and identify recommendations for mitigating its impact.
- Identify opportunities for strengthening synergies between the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, Decade for Action, and the Vienna Programme of Action at the national level in LLDCs, as well as regional and global levels;
- Identify innovative mechanisms for partnership building and resource mobilization to accelerate the implementation of the VPoA and the achievement of the SDGs by LLDCs.
- Discuss the implementation of the Decade for Action by LLDCs.
- Adopt the Ministerial Declaration and launch the UN Roadmap for Accelerated Implementation of the VPoA.

3. Expected Outcome

The Ministerial Meeting will reinforce the political commitment to the implementation of the Vienna Programme of Action, the outcome of the comprehensive High-Level Midterm Review as well as the Decade for Action with a view to accelerating their implementation and achieve the SDGs in LLDCs. The meeting will contribute to the discussions on the commemoration of the 75th Anniversary of the UN. The meeting will also share experiences on addressing the impact of COVID-19 and provide recommendations. The meeting will adopt a Ministerial Declaration of the Group of Landlocked Developing Countries as well as the UN Roadmap for Accelerated Implementation of the VPoA. The Ministerial meeting adopts and aims to successfully launch its implementation.

4. Participation

The Ministerial Meeting will be attended by Ministers and High-Level officials from the 32 LLDCs. Ministers and High-Level Officials from transit developing countries, development partners and high-level representatives of the UN system and other international and regional organizations will also be invited to participate.

5. Documentation Available online

- i) The Vienna Programme of Action for LLDCs for the decade 2014-2024;
- ii) Annual 2020 Report of the UN Secretary-General on the Implementation of the Vienna Programme of Action for Landlocked Developing Countries for the Decade 2014-2024;
- iii) UN Roadmap for Accelerated Implementation of the Vienna Programme of Action for LLDCs in the Remaining Five Years;
- iv) Transforming our world: the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development;
- v) The Addis Ababa Action Agenda;
- vi) Political Declaration of the High-level Midterm Review on the Implementation of the Vienna Programme of Action;
- vii) Report of the Annual Meeting of Foreign Ministers of Landlocked Developing Countries held in 2019;
- viii) COVID-19 Global Humanitarian Response Plan;
- ix) SHARED RESPONSIBILITY, GLOBAL SOLIDARITY: Responding to the socio-economic impacts of COVID-19 - the UN Secretary General Report.