



**21<sup>ST</sup> Annual Ministerial Meeting of Foreign Ministers of  
Landlocked Developing Countries**

**22 September 2022**

10.00 AM – 01.00 PM

**UN-ECOSOC CHAMBERS**

***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***

## Background

LLDCs continue to face multiple developmental challenges due to their lack of direct access to the sea. They face relatively high trade costs compared to their transit neighbors, undiversified economies and export markets and low and undiversified foreign direct investment. The COVID-19 pandemic and its unprecedented socio-economic impact has further exacerbated the LLDCs challenges and threatens to reverse progress achieved over the year.

The Vienna Programme of Action (VPoA), which is also an integral part of the 2030 Agenda, aim to address those challenges through the priorities on transit, infrastructure development and maintenance (transport, energy and ICT), trade and trade facilitation, regional integration, structural economic transformation and means of implementation. The midterm review of the implementation of the VPoA held in 2019 revealed that progress achieved in the implementation of the VPoA since 2014 was not sufficient to attain the VPoA goals by 2024 as well as achieve Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) by 2030. The outcome therefore called for accelerated implementation of the VPoA. In response to this call the Group of LLDCs requested the UN Secretary General to develop the Roadmap for Accelerated implementation of the VPoA which was developed by OHRLLS in consultation with the UN system organizations and other international and regional organizations and adopted by the 19th LLDC Ministerial Meeting held in September 2020. The Roadmap represents a concerted effort by UN system organizations and other relevant international and regional organizations to advance progress towards the achievement of the VPoA and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

Despite these efforts and with only two years left before the end of the VPoA implementation in 2024, progress achieved still falls short of achieving the VPoA goals as well as the Sustainable Development Goals. The fragile recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic has been interrupted in LLDCs due to challenging global macroeconomic conditions resulting in the exacerbation of their structural and geographical vulnerabilities. Sluggish global economic growth, rising inflation, skyrocketing shipping costs, supply chain disruptions and elevated food and fuel costs are all compounding LLDCs' trade and transit related vulnerabilities.

The 2022 Secretary General's report on the implementation of the VPoA and the report on the impact of COVID-19 on LLDCs<sup>1</sup> highlighted the limited progress achieved in LLDCs as reflected by key macroeconomic indicators. Unemployment

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<sup>1</sup> [https://www.un.org/ohrls/sites/www.un.org.ohrls/files/impact\\_of\\_covid19\\_and\\_responses\\_in\\_lldc.pdf](https://www.un.org/ohrls/sites/www.un.org.ohrls/files/impact_of_covid19_and_responses_in_lldc.pdf)

in LLDCs increased from 4.6% in 2015 to 5.7% in 2021<sup>2</sup>. The proportion of LLDCs' population using basic sanitation services in 2020 was 34.9% in rural areas, compared to 61.7% in urban areas, while the proportion of population using basic drinking water services in 2020 was 57.1% in rural areas compared to 90.9% in urban areas.

LLDCs' merchandise exports declined by 11.18% in 2020 compared with a fall of 7.4% for the rest of the world and 5.8% for developing countries. Whilst the LLDCs' trade is estimated to have grown by 28.9% in 2021 year-on-year surpassing pre-pandemic levels, the growth was mainly driven by increasing commodity prices and increasing demand. This is unsustainable growth due to commodity market volatility. More than three quarters of the LLDCs are dependent on commodities. LLDCs' merchandise exports as a share of the global trade remains below 1 per cent at only 0.98 per cent in 2021. On services trade, the COVID-19 related restrictions impacted tourism sector as it resulted in a 66% drop in LLDCs' travel exports. The value-added contribution of the manufacturing sector in LLDCs was 11% of GDP in 2020. This demonstrates very little progress to achieving structural economic transformation.

The UN General Assembly during its 76<sup>th</sup> Session decided to convene 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 LLDCs and to strengthen partnerships between LLDCs and transit countries and their development partners. The conference offers the opportunity to building back better post COVID-19 as well as building resilience against future shocks through structural changes and investment in sustainable infrastructure.

As the international community embarks on continuous efforts to recover from the pandemic, a transformative recovery aimed at building LLDCs' long-term resilience is critical. The Ministerial meeting aims to review the implementation of the VPoA, the Political Declaration of the Midterm Review and the Roadmap for accelerated implementation of the VPoA, while assessing the lingering effects of the COVID-19 pandemic and kickstarting preparations for the Third United Nations Conference on LLDCs to be held in 2024.

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<sup>2</sup> <https://unstats.un.org/sdgs/files/report/2022/secretary-general-sdg-report-2022--EN.pdf>

## **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, the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development as well as review progress in implementation of the Roadmap for the Accelerated Implementation of the VPoA, identify challenges faced and share knowledge, experiences and innovative approaches to accelerate implementation;
- Discuss the socio-economic impact of COVID-19 on LLDCs and current actions and plans for recovery, share national experiences and identify recommendations for sustainable recovery;
- 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 as well as achieving sustainable recovery from COVID-19 pandemic;
- Start building momentum towards the third United Nations Conference on LLDCs;
- Adopt the Ministerial Declaration.

## **3. Expected Outcome**

The Ministerial Meeting will reinforce the political commitment to the implementation of the Vienna Programme of Action, the political declaration of the comprehensive High-Level Midterm Review and the Roadmap for accelerated implementation of the VPoA. The meeting will contribute to the discussions of the 77<sup>th</sup> session of the UN General Assembly. The meeting will also share experiences on addressing the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic and provide recommendations for sustainable recovery. The meeting will adopt a Ministerial Declaration of the Group of Landlocked Developing Countries and initiate to build momentum for the third United Nations Conference on LLDCs to be held in 2024.

## **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) 2022 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) Updated 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 2021;
- viii) Impact of COVID-19 and responses in Landlocked Developing Countries;
- ix) Resolution adopted by the General Assembly on 17 December 2021 entitled "Follow-up to the second United Nations Conference on Landlocked Developing Countries" (A/RES/76/217).
- x) The Awaza Summary Statement of the Ministerial Transport Conference of Landlocked Developing Countries
- xi) WTO, 2021, Easing Trade Bottlenecks in Landlocked Developing Countries. [https://www.wto.org/english/res\\_e/booksp\\_e/00\\_landlocked2021\\_e.pdf](https://www.wto.org/english/res_e/booksp_e/00_landlocked2021_e.pdf)

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