

**Remarks for H.E. Ms. Paula Narváez,
President of ECOSOC,
22nd Annual Ministerial Meeting of Foreign Ministers of
Landlocked Developing Countries
21 September 2023, 10.00 am – 1.00 pm**

Excellencies,

Distinguished Delegates,

I am thankful for the kind invitation to address this important meeting, in the lead up to the Third United Nations Conference on Landlocked Developing Countries in 2024.

This meeting takes place at a critical juncture. We know that progress in the implementation of the Vienna Programme of Action has been mixed. Poverty levels in LLDCs are still above the world average while more than 50% of the group's total population is affected by moderate or severe food insecurity. At the same time, the increased intensity and severity of climate-related disasters wreaks havoc on LLDCs.

Subdued global economic growth, inflation, supply chain disruptions, and rising food and fuel costs, have combined to further exacerbate existing trade and transit related vulnerabilities of LLDCs. Policy space for Governments is severely constrained given rising debt levels, and debt-

servicing obligations which have significantly impeded much-needed investments in infrastructure, education, health and other development areas.

In the light of these factors, further support is needed that is tailored to the specific contexts of LLDCs. The African Union Vision 2063 and other regional frameworks that are aligned with the 2030 Agenda should be advanced to best support LLDCs in their path to achieving sustainable development.

However, for these agendas to be effectively implemented, we need an international financial architecture that is agile and responsive to the current needs of LLDCs, while able to adapt to challenges on the horizon. This requires a rethinking of the financial instruments, practices, metrics and tools to provide timely and adequate resources to the most vulnerable countries.

Excellencies,

Though challenges abound, opportunities for change lie ahead. This High-level week offers key milestones to build momentum and transform commitment to action. As you prepare for Kigali, I hope that you can build on the positive outcomes from this week, and a strengthened sense of multilateralism to define a new and ambitious programme of action for LLDCs.

AS ECOSOC President, I am here to support your efforts throughout the Council's programme of work, to spotlight the dynamic needs of LLDCs through transformative and solutions-oriented policy guidance. Indeed, some of the key priorities of my Presidency are those central to the concerns of the LLDCs: directing attention to the food crisis and strengthening humanitarian aid; addressing gaps in the international financial architecture; advancing solutions for climate action; and strengthening institutions in the context of rapid technological change. I look forward to engaging all of you in the various segments and forums of the Council, which can also serve as contributions to your efforts toward Kigali.

Excellencies,

The theme of this meeting summarizes what our top priority should be today, and in preparation of the Third UN Conference on Landlocked Developing Countries in 2024: to build political momentum, to explore innovative solutions and most importantly, to turn our words into actions. We stand in solidarity with LLDCs, to adopt a transformative agenda that can accelerate the achievement of the SDGs.

I thank you once again for your kind invitation.

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