

*Check against Delivery*

**REMARKS**

**BY**

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DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF ETHIOPIA**

**AT**

**THE MINISTERIAL MEETING OF LANDLOCKED  
DEVELOPING COUNTRIES (LLDCs)**

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*Mr. Chairperson,*

At the outset, I wish to join others in commending you for your country's leadership in effectively steering the work of the LLDCs. Let me take to this opportunity to assure you of our continued support in the effective discharge of your responsibilities.

Ethiopia attaches great importance to the work of this group and I want to express my appreciation to the strategic support provided by the Office of the High Representative for the Least Developed Countries, Landlocked Developing Countries and Small Island Developing States in promoting the implementation of the Vienna Program of Action.

*Mr. Chairperson,*

It is shortly after the adoption of the Political Declaration on the Comprehensive High-level Midterm Review of the Implementation of the VPoA on 5 December 2019 that the unprecedented and multidimensional impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic posed greater risk to us the LLDCs. The pandemic is not only threatening to roll back the development gains that we have made over the past decades, but it is also forcing us to be further left

behind in meeting the goals and targets of the Vienna Programme of Action and Agenda 2030 for sustainable development.

The pandemic is exacerbating the already existing development challenges due to our geographical locations and other structural obstacles. While we continue to take policy measures to promote structural transformation, diversify our economies and increase our exports, special trade and development-related challenges, such as remoteness from global market and high transit costs, arising from our lack of direct access to the sea, constrain our endeavors to meet the Vienna Program of Action, which is an integral part of the 2030 Agenda.

Due to our specific development bottlenecks, our share of global trade remains low. We also continue to depend on few export items with extremely limited capacity to add manufacturing value. Huge infrastructural gaps that hinder regional integration and slow structural transformation process further undermine our efforts to meet the objectives of the Vienna Program of Action. In addition, lack of adequate finance and technological and institutional capacity aggravate our development challenges.

**Mr. Chairperson,**

To fully implement the action areas set out in the Vienna Programme of Action, there is need for a reinvigorated and renewed global partnership with our development partners and development stakeholders – both public and private. In this regard, we believe coordinated and enhanced international support in the areas of manufacturing, trade, and productive capacity that complement our national endeavors would highly contribute to meeting the objectives of the VPOA. In addition, establishing effective and efficient infrastructure system and facilitating the smooth and fast movement of goods and services are critical to integrate LLDCs into the global market. In this connection, the cooperation and partnership of transit countries remains absolutely vital.

Of course, what is at stake at the moment is how to forestall the multifaceted impact of the global pandemic. That is why our meeting is so important to exchange views on charting the way forward. The need for international community's engagement to mitigate the economic and social consequences of COVID-19 through rigorous support to build resilient health systems and protect employment and incomes cannot be

overemphasized. Particularly, the burden of unsustainable external debt is a major development challenge that should be addressed. Therefore, an urgent call should be made to all creditors to provide rapid solutions to this issue. Developing countries, particularly, African countries, LDCs and LLDCs, do not have the reserve cushion to withstand the impact of these shocks which necessitate an urgent mobilization of funds to address their debt relief needs.

*Mr. Chairperson,*

We in Ethiopia have integrated the Vienna Programme of Action into our national development plan and priorities. While we recognize that landlockedness increases our development constraints, we have been taking policy measures to improve our manufacturing base and enhance our connectedness as well as competitiveness. In this respect, achieving inclusive and sustainable industrialization and building resilient infrastructure have been a matter of priority for us.

Based on our comparative advantage, we have given special attention to labor intensive and light manufacturing sectors - agro-processing, leather, and textile. We have also established industrial parks that simplify access to

land, eliminate the challenges in trade logistics and customs service. These policy actions are contributing to enhance our global competitiveness and participation in the global value chain. With our next Ten-Year Prospective Plan, we are also focusing on the mining and tourism sectors to unleash our potential for accelerating economic growth and development.

In addition, we have been making massive public investment in building infrastructure, with the objective of enhancing our productive capacity and promoting regional integration. Encouraging progress has been registered in expanding road, railway, and air transport services. We have also been working with neighboring transit countries to establish and maintain effective transit systems based on common interest. Recently, we have taken bold and historical decision that would, among others, diversify our sea outlets and further promote regional integration.

While we have registered some progress in relation to the above-mentioned measures we have taken in the course of the past decades, we fully recognize that a lot remains to be done to realize inclusive and sustainable development for our people, particularly at this time of COVID-19 Pandemic. The same holds true in other LLDCs as well. That is why we

need to seize this opportunity to reaffirm our commitment to the full and effective implementation of the Vienna Programme of Action and the SDGs, all the more so as we enter the Decade of Action for the SDGs. Let me conclude by assuring you that we on our part are ready to do so in close collaboration with our development partners.

**I thank you.**