



REPUBLIC OF BOTSWANA



LLDC3
3rd United Nations
Conference on the
Landlocked Developing
Countries

STATEMENT

BY

HON. DR. LEMOGANG KWAPE,

**MINISTER OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS OF THE REPUBLIC OF
BOTSWANA**

**AND GLOBAL CHAIR OF THE GROUP OF LANDLOCKED
DEVELOPING COUNTRIES (LLDCS)**

DURING THE LLDC MINISTERIAL MEETING ON

***THEME: ENHANCING EQUITABLE, AFFORDABLE, AND INCLUSIVE
TRANSPORT CONNECTIVITY AS A DRIVER FOR MORE
SUSTAINABLE AND RESILIENT ECONOMIES IN LLDCS***

THURSDAY 14, DECEMBER 2023

10:00 – 13:00 HOURS

YEREVAN, ARMENIA

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- **Your Excellency Mr. Nikol Pashinyan, Hon. Prime Minister of the Republic of Armenia;**
- **Under Secretary General and High Representative, Ms. Rabab Fatima,**
- **Honourable Ministers here present,**
- **Heads of Organizations,**
- **Excellencies,**
- **Distinguished Delegates,**

1. As the Global Chair of the Group of Landlocked Developing Countries (LLDCs), it is a distinct honour for Botswana to participate and deliver some Remarks at this Ministerial Meeting of the Landlocked Developing Countries on the theme ***"enhancing equitable, affordable and inclusive transport connectivity as a driver for sustainable and resilient economies"***.
2. At the outset, allow me to thank the Government of Armenia for organizing this timely Ministerial Meeting, in the lead up to the Third UN Conference on Landlocked Developing Countries (LLDC3).
3. I further wish to express my sincere gratitude to the Government of Armenia, for the excellent and warm hospitality provided to me and my delegation since our arrival in this beautiful city of Yerevan.
4. I would also like to recognize USG Rabab Fatima and her team for co-organizing this important event.

Excellencies,

5. We gather here today to share knowledge and experience. We are also here to reflect on our achievements and challenges, as we draw close to the end of implementation of the Vienna Programme of Action.

6. As we look ahead to the new programme-- for the next decade; we recognize that transport connectivity –without a doubt—is a lifeline for the socio-economic survival of the Landlocked Developing Countries.
7. I therefore, welcome this opportune moment for us to convene on this most important priority for our countries. We acknowledge that indeed, increasing connectivity is the crucial way to transform landlocked countries into land linked countries.

Dear Participants, Excellencies

8. Following on the success of our Ministerial Transport Meeting held in Turkmenistan in August last year, as well as other UN Transport Conferences; we wish to emphasise the important role of safe, affordable, accessible and sustainable transport systems for our countries in order to boost economic growth and achieve the SDGs.
9. While the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development recognizes that transport connectivity is a key driver for the achievement of the SDGs; it remains a major challenge for LLDCs.
10. For instance, LLDCs pay on average, more than double what the transit countries incur in transport costs; and it takes a longer time for our countries to send and receive merchandise and other essential commodities from overseas markets, further compounding the cost of transport.
11. These exorbitantly high transport costs erode LLDCs’ competitive edge, discourage investors, and reduce economic growth. Such a situation is unfavourable for trade and the economy, and it limits the capacity of our countries to achieve sustainable development.
12. That notwithstanding; not all is lost. There is some good progress on the expansions and upgrading of rail, road, ports, air transport and closing missing links within our

countries. This however, is not sufficient. There remain many obstacles to enhance trade integration for our countries.

Honourable Ministers, Excellencies,

13. You will agree with me that expanding transport infrastructure demands very high investment, far beyond the capacities of the LLDCs and the transit countries. This is so because LLDCs' transit neighbours are themselves developing countries faced with vast competing priorities of their own.

14. In this regard, overcoming these challenges requires continuous and dedicated efforts from all of us, in a more coherent and integrated manner.

15. We therefore, call for more integrated international cooperation to help LLDCs in the following areas:

- a. **Firstly**, to develop and maintain quality, affordable, accessible, resilient and sustainable transport infrastructure and transit systems.
- b. **Secondly**, phased out of cumbersome and prolonged transit procedures and simplified border measures to increase transport efficiency and encourage the use of information technology to increase the productivity at the corridors.
- c. **Thirdly**, continued support and increased investment into transport connectivity, for both hard and soft infrastructure is crucial.
- d. **Finally**, enhanced infrastructure financing capacity; as well as leveraging new and innovative financing sources and new funding mechanisms, including blended finance and green bonds to expand private-public partnerships and infrastructure financing for LLDCs, is also necessary.

Excellencies,

16. As I conclude, let me emphasize that our Group of countries count on the continued collaboration with transit countries and support of all our partners to ensure that the key areas and needs of the LLDCs are adequately reviewed and enhanced.

17. We hope that this meeting will contribute valuable ideas and concrete inputs to the next Programme of Action for LLDCs, as we ramp up preparations for the **Third United Nations Conference on LLDCs**, to be held in Kigali in 2024.

I thank you very much for your kind attention and wish you successful deliberations.
