

**Draft remarks for H.E. Ms. Lachezara Stoeva,
Permanent Representative of Bulgaria to the United Nations and
President of the Economic and Social Council
21st Meeting of Ministers of Foreign Affairs of
the Group of Landlocked Developing Countries
22 September 2022**

Excellencies,
Distinguished delegates,

I am honored and thankful to be participating in this important meeting.

The theme of this meeting summarizes the current top priorities of the group: you want to accelerate the implementation of the Vienna Programme of Action and the related Roadmap. You need to continue pandemic recovery efforts and building momentum towards the Third United Nations Conference on LLDCs.

In this regard, the ECOSOC, as the United Nations Principal Organ dedicated to development matters, has an instrumental role to play in policy discussions concerning Landlocked Developing Countries (LLDCs).

This year's report of the Secretary-General on the implementation of the VPoA recognized that the adverse global economic conditions, including stalled growth, surging inflation, rising energy and food prices, supply chain disruptions and elevated shipping and trade costs, constrained the ability of LLDCs to recover from the socioeconomic impacts of the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic.

Such constraints have exacerbated the pre-existing vulnerabilities of LLDCs such as critical infrastructure deficiencies, long distances to ports, poor trade facilitation and high dependence on commodities.

Excellencies,
Distinguished delegates,

The priorities for my presidency of ECOSOC can play a role in addressing these important issues.

For instance, I want ECOSOC to help bridge the “great finance divide”.

This divide has sharply curtailed the ability of many developing countries to recover from the pandemic and invest in recovery and social development.

Heavy emphasis should be put on the financing needed by LLDCs to invest in a sustainable recovery towards the SDGs and building the transport, energy and ICT infrastructure they badly need.

Another priority I set is to ensure that ECOSOC and the HLPF provide solid, evidence based, innovative and actionable policy guidance to curb and address the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic on the SDGs.

Attaining the Goals has been difficult for many LLDCs even before the outbreak of the pandemic.

LLDCs were disproportionately affected by the pandemic.

In this regard, the HLPF Ministerial Declaration called for adequate global and regional value chains and transport systems, including to and from landlocked developing countries

ECOSOC and HLPF guidance should also help LLDCs to respond effectively to the COVID-19 pandemic and other existing challenges and prevent future disruptions.

Deepening partnerships and cooperation of LLDCs with each other, with neighbours and development partners can improve the integration of the LLDCs into regional and international markets. ECOSOC presents a platform for building partnerships.

I commend the 7 Members of the LLDC group that presented their National Voluntary Review (VNRs) at the 2022 HLPF.

As you are aware, the SDG Summit will take place in September 2023. I attach priority to building momentum for preparing the Summit, including at the July 2023 HLPF. I encourage you to actively participate in the Summit and its preparations. This includes launching transformative policies to realize the SDGs in your specific contexts and working towards an ambitious political declaration.

Excellencies,

Distinguished delegates,

I am pleased that this year's HLPF Ministerial Declaration also welcomed the convening of the third United Nations Conference on LLDCs in 2024. The Conference will indeed allow for an opportunity to learn from the last decade and to enhance global commitments towards the LLDCs.

I am aware that the Ministerial Declaration that you will adopt today contains a call to me, as President of ECOSOC, to make contributions to the preparatory process for the Third Conference.

I attach great importance to this request, and I will work in coordination with the other Principal Organs to fulfill this mandate.

As Chair of the Second Committee, I will also encourage smooth negotiations on the resolution on the modalities of the Conference.

Finally, let me reaffirm that ECOSOC and the General Assembly give due attention to the challenges of the LLDCs and to raising the support of the international community to your countries.

I thank you.