



**DRAFT STATEMENT
FOR**

**HONOURABLE 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
21ST ANNUAL MINISTERIAL MEETING OF FOREIGN MINISTERS OF
LLDCS
ON THE 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".

**22 SEPTEMBER 2022
1000 HOURS – 1300 HOURS
UN-ECOSOC CHAMBERS**

Excellencies, Honourable Ministers,

1. I am especially delighted to address you for the first time as the Global Chair of the LLDCs.

2. Coincidentally, I am also flanked on the podium by Senior Officials who recently assumed their respective positions in the UN system. At the outset, allow me therefore to congratulate;

- **His Excellency Mr. Csaba Kőrösi**, on his election as the President of the 77th Session of the General Assembly;
- **Her Excellency Ms Lachezara Stoeva** on her election as the 78th President of ECOSOC, succeeding Botswana's Permanent Representative with whom she recently served as Vice-President of the Council; and
- **Her Excellency Ms. Rabab Fatima**, on her appointment by the UN Secretary-General as the Under-Secretary-General and High Representative for OHRLLS -- an Office that serves the interests of our Group of Countries.

3. I take this opportunity to also commend and congratulate our dear colleague and my immediate predecessor, **His Excellency Mr. Mukhtar Tileuberdi**, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs of Kazakhstan for successfully steering the work of our Group during a very difficult period of the surge of COVID-19 pandemic, 2020-2021.

4. My country, Botswana, is grateful to inherit a firm foundational legacy of excellent work, on which we will build upon in our collective endeavour to advance the common interests of our group of countries.

Excellencies,

5. Like previous ones, this Annual Ministerial Meeting of LLDCs offers us a unique occasion to take stock of progress in implementation of the Vienna Programme of Action (VPoA);

alongside the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and its 17 Goals as well as our ongoing plans to recover from the COVID-19 pandemic.

6. It is during our annual meetings that we assess our achievements, identify challenges, and also share experiences and best practices.
7. We are also here to make recommendations and discuss current and emerging global issues of importance to the LLDCs -- indeed, during a time characterized by complex geopolitical tensions.
8. As you would be aware, 2022 is also a crucial juncture for the LLDCs, as we approach the last two years of implementation of the VPoA and simultaneously embark on preparations for the **Third United Nations Conference on LLDCs** to be held in 2024.

9. These intertwined realities we face are what gathers us here today, and have also informed our theme for this meeting on ***‘Accelerating implementation of the Vienna Programme of Action (VPoA) in the aftermath of the COVID-19 pandemic and building momentum towards the Third United Nations Conference on Landlocked Developing Countries’***.

Excellencies,

10. While progress towards achieving the Sustainable Development Goals by 2030 was already mixed before COVID-19, the pandemic exposed and exacerbated the vulnerabilities of our Group of countries in areas that are key to the full achievement of the VPoA, itself.

11. We must be concerned that our group of countries continue to face obstacles in meeting the target to vaccinate 70% of our population by mid-2022 as outlined in the WHO Global COVID-19 Vaccination Strategy.
12. Whereas scientific progress and cooperation had allowed for timely manufacturing of the vaccines, it is disturbing to note that by end of April 2022 only 26% of our population as LLDCs was fully vaccinated.
13. We must therefore, as part of the outcomes of this meeting, reiterate our call for support to our countries to ensure that in addition to our immediate needs including of vaccines, LLDCs be better capacitated to build resilience to withstand future shocks.
14. Furthermore, as LLDCs we are constrained to recover from the impacts of the pandemic due to adverse global economic

conditions, including stalled growth, surging inflation, rising energy and food prices, supply chain disruptions and elevated shipping and trade costs; and the impact of climate change and its variability.

15. It is therefore important for our group of countries to continue to leverage on the cooperation of the United Nations system and other international organisations as well as all partners to provide enhanced support that advances sustainable development progress in LLDCs -- based on the spirit of unity, solidarity, multilateralism and international cooperation.

Excellencies,

16. We cannot however, focus only on the negatives. I hope we can all agree that these challenges are not insurmountable. There is good prospects in our efforts to overcome the multiple

challenges we face, if we adopt risk-informed approach do not relent in our collective efforts.

17. We must therefore continue to look ahead with hope, as we embark on determined efforts to accelerate implementation of the VPoA and the related Roadmap.

18. As we approach the conclusion of the VPoA, we must draw lessons from its evaluation and ensure that the successor LLDCs Programme of Action is not a missed opportunity to mobilize increased global commitments, enhanced partnerships and additional solutions to address the current and emerging challenges.

19. Doing so will enable our group of countries to effectively integrate into the global trade system, achieve sustainable development and advance recovery from COVID-19.

20. As Chair of our group of countries, Botswana will therefore lead efforts to immediately embark on an intentional journey towards the timely preparations of the **Third UN Conference on LLDCs**, ahead of 2024.

21. In this context, I thank you, **President of the General Assembly**, for setting the tone and leading the process on organizational aspect of the Conference during this 77th Session.

22. We would be grateful to organize a dedicated high-level event with you, focusing on some key priorities of LLDCs as part of preparations for this important Conference.

23. Our group of countries also requests you, **President of ECOSOC**, to make similar contributions to the preparatory process.

24. We also count on the engagement of all stakeholders and partners in the preparatory process for the Conference; and as

Chair, Botswana pledges to fully engage to ensure its ultimate success.

25. As recently recommended by our Ambassadors and Permanent Representatives in New York, the preparations for the Conference would also benefit from the revival of the **Group of Friends of LLDCs**, with participation of transit countries and our partners.

26. **Mr. President of the General Assembly**, our group of countries also looks forward to fully engage with you on the continuation of the **Board of Advisers on LDCs, LLDCs and SIDS**, and consideration for its further enhancement.

27. **Madam Deputy Secretary General**, through you our group of countries wishes to thank the Secretary-General for his declared commitment to focus on the plight of the LLDCs.

28. We welcome his very clear message of 'rescue or turbocharging of the SDGs' towards accelerated implementation

of the 2030 Agenda. In this spirit, we will continue constructive engagement on his report on **Our Common Agenda**.

29. Our group of countries expects that the same language of determination should also translate into tangible impact to fully implement the VPoA and formulation of its successor Programme.

30. The LLDCs support your own tireless efforts, **Madame Deputy Secretary-General**, to transform the UN Development System to better respond to the needs of our countries, especially through financing that is adequate, predictable and sufficient.

31. We are particularly happy to hear that recent assessments of the reforms indicate that the new generation of Resident Coordinators feel more empowered and that the country support frameworks are much more impactful.

32. As LLDs -- whose membership is also home to a highly vulnerable group of 17 LDCs -- we urge for continued focus on the development agenda, in a manner that ensures a careful balance of funding needs vis-à-vis equally important humanitarian needs. None should be at the expense of the other.

33. **Madame President of ECOSOC**, our group of countries highly recognize the important role of the Council and strengthened collaboration with the General Assembly and especially the **Second Committee of the General Assembly**; which I note you will also Chair during the 77th Session.

34. Both entities are key in the implementation of the 2030 Agenda and providing dedicated support to our group of countries.

35. We therefore look forward to the convening of future joint thematic, regional and other events to advance our group of

countries' interests -- with active input from ECOSOC and Second Committee.

36. I cannot emphasize enough that, in the lead-up to the **Third United Nations Conference on LLDCs** in 2024, the convening of targeted thematic sessions will become even more imperative.

37. In this regard, it would be remiss on my part to end without thanking the government of Turkmenistan for recently convening the **LLDCs Ministerial Conference on Transport**. The *Awaza* summary outcomes of the Conference -- which we will hear shortly -- underscores our resolve to address the connectivity challenges we face. We must build on those outcomes, as we prepare for the LLDCs Conference in 2024.

38. As I conclude, I wish to reiterate the LLDCs' support to the upcoming global conferences, including the **UN Climate Change Conference, COP27**, to be held in Sharm El Sheik, Egypt in November 2022; the second part of the **5th UN**

Conference on LDCs to be held in Doha, in March 2023; and the **4th International Conference on SIDS** also to be held in 2024.

39. We recognize the importance of these meetings to the needs of our group of countries and, as LLDCs Chair, Botswana will actively play her leadership role.

40. I wish to take this opportunity to appreciate the strong support that the High Representative and her OHRLLS team provide to our group of countries. In our view, the simultaneous and back-to-back convening of the upcoming mandated conferences for LLDCs, LDCs and SIDS and the potential growth in the demands for OHRLLS services will challenge the current capacity of the Office.

41. **Madame Deputy Secretary-General**, our group of countries strongly encourage the Secretary-General to entrust the High Representative for OHRLLS to re-examine the needs of the

Office with a view to further strengthen it to effectively carry out its mandate.

42. I also wish to add my voice of encouragement for expedited efforts to mobilize voluntary contributions to the **Trust Fund for LLDCs, LDCs and SIDS**, as I understand it is running very low.

43. While we count on our partners, I strongly recommend that the LLDCs, LDCs and SIDS groups under OHRLLS mandate should consider making token contributions themselves as a show of commitment.

44. In this instance, I wish to announce a pledge of \$10,000.00 from the Government of Botswana to the Trust Fund, as support for LLDCs activities.

Excellencies,

45. In closing, I am certain that we will all have fruitful deliberations. I look forward to listening to your ideas and

aspirations for a forward-looking and dynamic 21st Annual Meeting of the Landlocked Developing Countries.

I thank you for your kind attention.