

**Statement by H.E. Ms. Baiba Braže
Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Latvia
at the 23rd Annual Ministerial Meeting of Foreign Ministers
of Landlocked Developing Countries**

*Theme: Building momentum towards Gaborone: Partnering for a Decade
of Action and Transformation in LLDCs*

New York, 26 September 2024

Excellencies,

It is a great honor for me to address this distinguished gathering at the 23rd Annual Ministerial Meeting of Foreign Affairs of Landlocked Developing Countries.

Although Latvia is not a landlocked nation, we stand firmly alongside LLDCs in your efforts to overcome the unique challenges and vulnerabilities you face in achieving sustainable development, some of which are amplified by current geopolitical tensions.

As we approach the pivotal LLDC3 Conference in Gaborone, Botswana, in December this year, Latvia is preparing for active and constructive participation. It will provide a great opportunity both to listen to issues of particular importance to the LLDCs and to share our vision and contribution to address these various challenges.

Today I will just briefly highlight digital connectivity as one of the keys for socio-economic development and a resilient future of LLDCs. We must urgently join our efforts to bridge the digital divide to allow the developing countries to access the benefits of digital transformation.

Through strategic partnerships and shared knowledge, we can amplify the positive impact on LLDCs' sustainable development.

Latvia has made strides in advancing digital transformation, and we are eager to share our experiences and expertise with LLDCs to help accelerate digitally-enabled solutions in e-governance or the use of smart technologies for management of natural resources, for instance land and forest.

Particularly I would like to stress our expertise in digitalization of education in smaller languages. Latvia's experience shows how we can rely on digital innovations to improve accessibility to education and promote linguistic equality.

Another direction Latvia champions and forges international partnerships, is empowerment of women in tech aiming at increasing women's representation in the field of technology and empowering women to lead and innovate.

Latvia already has well established cooperation with such LLDCs as Uzbekistan, Moldova, Zambia and Zimbabwe with a number of successfully implemented development cooperation projects in the areas I just mentioned. We look forward to strengthening and expanding such bilateral partnerships.

As Latvia is seeking to serve as an elected member of the United Nations Security Council for the term 2026-2027, I would also like to use this opportunity to express Latvia's unwavering commitment to advocate for the concerns of LLDCs within the Security Council, should we have the honour of being elected.

Thank you!