



STATEMENT BY

**The Minister of Foreign Affairs and International Relations-
Honourable Matsepo Ramakoae on the Occasion of the Annual
LLDCs Ministers of Foreign Affairs Meeting:
23 September, 2020**

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President of the General Assembly
Mr. Secretary General
Mr. Chairperson
Excellencies,
Distinguished delegates,

It is a great honour and privilege to address this august gathering, it is equally gratifying that the work of our group has continued despite the present day challenges. May I, at the onset congratulate Kazakhstan for its leadership in steering the work of our group.

Mr. Chairman

The comprehensive UN Road map as a guiding and actionable tool for the acceleration of the implementation of the Vienna Program of Action, for the remaining five year period, couldn't have come at a better time as it coincides with the commencement of the decade of action, aimed at ensuring that 'no one is left behind'.

The unprecedented socio-economic impacts of Covid-19 have exacerbated the vulnerability of our countries as they have reversed some of the gains made on the achievement of some Sustainable Development Goals and Vienna Programme of Action priorities, thus putting us further behind.

Mr. Chairman

We realize that COVID-19 has placed even greater urgency and importance to addressing the special needs of our countries. Closures of borders; restrictions on movement of people and goods; interruptions in remittance disbursement has further exacerbated the dire challenges that Landlocked Developing Countries are grappling against.

We can all attest to the fact that the effects of COVID-19 have reemphasized the need for LLDCs to embrace the use of digital platforms in order to cope with the new realities that the world is faced with. In an effort to remain on course for the attainment of the SDGs during this trying times, Government of Lesotho has placed major emphasis on restructuring the Information and Communications Technology (ICT) sector and supporting the applications of ICT in all productive sectors and support sectors to enhance efficiency and promote private sector led job creation and inclusive economic growth.

The high costs associated with ICT has and remains the major impediment towards LLDCs access to ICT led socioeconomic development. It is therefore incumbent on Governments to firmly take advantage of regional integration to lower bandwidth prices. We are therefore confident that these initiatives will yield positive indicators related to some of the VPoA priority areas in LLDCs.

Mr Chairman,

As I conclude, may I call upon the United Nations System and our development partners, to continue to provide the necessary support to LLDCs to accelerate the implementation of the Vienna Programme of Action. I further, wish to reiterate Lesotho's firm commitment to supporting your visionary leadership, and that of the Office of the High Representative for the Least Developed Countries, Landlocked Developing Countries and Small Island States' concerted efforts of better positioning us in addressing challenges, and achieving goals of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, as well as the VPoA priority areas in this remaining five year term.

I thank you.