

As delivered



Closing Remarks

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**Under Secretary General & High Representative for the Least
Developed Countries, Landlocked Developing Countries and
Small Island Developing States and
Secretary General of LLDC3 Conference**

at

Closing Session of LLDC3

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**His Excellency Mr. Rashid Meredov, Deputy Chairman of the
Cabinet of Ministers and Minister for Foreign Affairs of
Turkmenistan,
Excellencies,
Distinguished Delegates,**

It is my honour to address you at the closing of the Third United Nations Conference on Landlocked Developing Countries.

As we draw this once-in-a-decade Conference to a close, allow me - on behalf of the United Nations and all participants - to express our deepest appreciation and gratitude to the Government and people of Turkmenistan for the outstanding arrangements made for the Conference, and for the gracious welcome and hospitality extended to us throughout our stay in this beautiful city of Awaza.

Awaza will long be remembered as a defining moment in the LLDC journey – not only for the resounding success of the LLDC3, but for ushering in a new era of bold partnerships and decisive actions.

You have made Awaza a symbol of hope, aspiration, and shared purpose.

We are deeply grateful to His Excellency President Serdar Berdimuhamedow for his personal leadership and commitment to the success of this Conference.

His words at the opening captured the spirit that has guided us throughout: [And I quote]

“We are addressing the challenges of landlocked developing countries in a spirit of equality, mutual respect, and shared purpose - with care for our peoples and their future.” [End of quote]

Excellencies,

This Conference has been a turning point. It has reaffirmed that geography must not determine destiny.

We now have a bold and practical blueprint - the Awaza Programme of Action and the Political Declaration. They set out a clear vision and path forward.

Our task now is clear: to translate this vision into action on the ground.

As the UN Secretary-General reminded us in his opening address, [and I quote]:

[We must ensure that] Together, we transform geography from a barrier to a bridge – connecting not just markets, but the peoples and cultures that give meaning to development.

Excellencies, Distinguished Colleagues,

Over the past four days, five key priorities have emerged:

Our top priority is to break the LLDCs geography-infrastructure trap.

Landlocked developing countries remain trapped by geography and inadequate infrastructure, which delay trade and limit connectivity.

The Awaza POA offers the solutions we need.

The proposed Infrastructure Investment Finance Facility can mobilize public-private capital to bridge the transport deficit.

The Secretary-General's High-Level Panel on Freedom of Transit can transform legal frameworks into practical pathways.

In addition, we have heard further commitments here in Awaza - including a \$10 billion infrastructure investment from the Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank, which underscores growing momentum.

Second, we must unleash productive capacity for inclusive growth.

Manufacturing contributes barely 10% to LLDC GDP.

Services exports are below global benchmarks.

The Awaza POA sets ambitious but achievable targets: to double manufacturing value-added, services exports, and medium and high-tech contributions to GDP by 2034.

Agriculture – still the largest employer in LLDCs - will also be given the urgent attention it requires.

The proposed Regional Agricultural Research Hubs will deliver climate-smart solutions to improve yields, ensure food security, and increase rural incomes.

Third, it would be critical to integrate LLDCs into global trading systems.

With LLDCs accounting for just over 1% of global merchandise exports, trade barriers must be addressed.

The full and accelerated implementation of the WTO Trade Facilitation Agreement is essential.

The proposed WTO Work Programme for LLDCs will also amplify their voice in global trade discussions and help streamline transit procedures.

Fourth, it is imperative to mobilize more resources for climate adaptation and resilience.

The establishment of an LLDC Climate Negotiating Group under the UNFCCC, announced here in Awaza, marks a breakthrough - ensuring a unified voice for LLDCs in global climate negotiations.

Finally, the means of implementation must be robust and predictable.

**The international financial architecture must deliver for LLDCs
- with increased ODA, scaled-up climate finance, and greater
access to concessional financing.**

Partnerships are our foundation.

Finance is our fuel.

Accountability must be our compass.

Excellencies, Distinguished Colleagues,

**As we have witnessed this week, the United Nations system is
fully committed to supporting the implementation of the Awaza
POA.**

**Implementation will be our true measure of success. My Office is
committed to working with all partners - governments, UN
agencies, international and regional organizations, and other
stakeholders - to translate the Awaza POA into concrete results.**

**We have developed national implementation toolkits and
convened dialogues here in Awaza with UN Resident
Coordinators and focal points to ensure alignment.**

We will continue to build on the system-wide roadmap, with clear milestones, deliverables, and progress tracking.

This Conference was also a powerful demonstration of the strength of multi-stakeholder collaboration.

We were enriched by the voices of youth, women leaders, parliamentarians, private sector actors, civil society, and South-South partners - all united by a common goal: to build a future of prosperity and opportunity for the 32 LLDCs.

It is this spirit - of solidarity, partnership, and shared purpose - that will carry us forward. A future where we are not divided by geography, but connected through ideas, trade and innovation.

Where "landlocked" becomes "land-linked", and this defines our future.

As we close this Conference, allow me to offer heartfelt thanks:

- To our co-chairs, moderators, speakers, and panelists for their valuable insights, expertise, and leadership.**

- **To every stakeholder - parliamentarians, business leaders, civil society representatives, youth and women's advocates - for giving this Conference its richness and relevance.**
- **To the media for taking our message beyond these walls.**
- **To the interpreters, technicians, and support staff - your behind-the-scenes dedication made it all possible.**
- **To Team Turkmenistan - for being an exemplary host and a true partner.**
- **And finally, to Team UN and my own dedicated team at OHRLLS, your commitment, professionalism, and resolve have made this Conference a resounding success.**

Together, you have helped deliver a pivotal milestone in the LLDC journey.

Excellencies, Distinguished Colleagues,

The legacy of this Conference will be measured not by words, but by the real progress we make in the lives of 600 million people in the 32 LLDCs.

My earnest hope is that each of us leave Awaza with a practical plan to turn our aspirations into reality.

Let us make the promise of “land-linked” not only a phrase but a new way of life.

I thank you.