



REPUBLIC OF BOTSWANA



REMARKS

BY

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PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF BOTSWANA TO
THE UNITED NATIONS**

AND

**CHAIR OF
THE GROUP OF LANDLOCKED DEVELOPING COUNTRIES
(LLDCS)**

**INITIAL MEETING OF THE REVITALIZED GROUP OF
FRIENDS OF LLDCS**

**23 NOVEMBER 2022, 9:00AM-9:45AM, UN
SECRETARIAT,
CONFERENCE ROOM 11**

Under-Secretary-General and High Representative for LDCs, LLDCs and SIDS, Madam Rabab Fatima,

Excellencies, Colleagues and Friends,

1. At the outset, let me thank the Permanent Representatives of Austria, Rwanda and India for taking the lead on this important initiative.
2. Reviving the Group of Friends of LLDCs has been part of the LLDCs' Group discussions at the global level for the past few months and, as the Global Chair of LLDCs, I am delighted to see it become a reality.
3. The Group of Friends is of the utmost importance as we approach the last two years of implementation of the Vienna Programme of Action (VPoA) and simultaneously embark on preparations for the Third United Nations Conference on LLDCs to be held in 2024.
4. As you know already, LLDCs face unique development challenges. Our lack of access to the sea and our isolation from global markets, combined with difficult terrain, road and railway conditions make it extremely expensive to transport goods and people.
5. Many of our transit neighbors are themselves developing countries and often face similar economic and infrastructure challenges.

6. Because of these issues, LLDCs pay, on average, more than double what the transit countries incur in transport costs, and it takes a longer time for LLDCs to send and receive merchandise from overseas markets.
7. Adding to this already challenging situation, strict travel restrictions, lockdowns and other COVID-19 containment measures such as border closures, have exacerbated the difficulties in the movement of goods and services that LLDCs were already facing.
8. Furthermore, the increased risk of disasters that our countries face due to climate change increase LLDCs' vulnerability due to their great reliance on climate sensitive sectors, which hurt agriculture productivity and trigger other calamities like famine, disease outbreaks and biodiversity loss. It also results in major loss and damage to our transport infrastructure.
9. As we make efforts to recover from global crises, we continue to face peculiar challenges emanating from the socio-economic downturn and reversal of the gains made.

Friends,

10. LLDCs need urgent support. And, therefore, this Group is crucial. It is crucial to raise awareness on LLDC issues, to mobilize increased global commitments and support, and to enhance partnerships outline solutions to address LLDCs' current and emerging challenges.
11. This Group of Friends represents an ideal tool to partner together to collectively address LLDCs' sustainable development challenges as we move towards the Third UN Conference on LLDCs.

12. The preparatory process for that Conference will require time, commitment and resources, and the Group of Friends' strong support will be critical in this regard. In particular, resource mobilization for facilitating the participation of LLDCs will be paramount to ensure their full representation in the preparatory process and the Conference itself.
13. I should note that that the Group of Friends should remain active beyond 2024 to support the implementation of the Conference's outcome.

Excellencies, Friends,

14. As we approach the last mile of the VPoA, and embark on preparations for the Third LLDC Conference, it is more important than ever that we work together to make progress on LLDCs' priorities. The road to 2024 is short. Let's make the most of the two years ahead to strengthen partnerships and accelerate action in support of LLDCs.

I thank you for your kind attention.
