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Statement

By

Ms. Fekitamoeloa Katoa ‘Utoikamanu

High Representative

and

Under-Secretary- General

Least Developed Countries, Landlocked Developing Countries and Small Island

Developing States

**At the Latin America Region Midterm Review of the Implementation
of the Vienna Programme of Action for LLDCs for the Decade 2014-2024**

Santiago, Chile

Closing Session

12 June 2019

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H.E Mr. Julio Arriola Ramirez (Representative of Paraguay to UN and Global Chair of LLDCs)

Our distinguished Co Facilitators,

H.E. Ms. Doma Tshering, Permanent Representative of the Kingdom of Bhutan to the UN

H.E. Mr. Jan Kickert, Permanent Representative of Austria to the United Nations to the UN

My esteemed colleague, Ms. Alicia Bárcena, our Under Secretary-General and Executive Secretary of the United Nations Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean,

Excellencies,

Distinguished Delegates from landlocked, transit developing countries and donor countries

Representatives of international and regional organizations

Colleagues and friends

Ladies and Gentlemen

It gives me great pleasure to address this Closing Session of the Latin America Mid Term Review of the implementation of the Vienna Programme of Action for Land Locked Developing Countries.

I thank H.E Mr. Julio Arriola Ramirez, Permanent Representative of Paraguay to the United Nations and Chair of this meeting for efficiently steering this meeting to a

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very successful outcome. I also thank him for his leadership as the global Chair of the Group of LLDCs in New York.

I wish to thank all participants and panelists for your active participation and contribution to the success of this meeting.

Over the last two days, we have heard excellent discussions between LLDCs, transit countries and development partners, and UN agencies on the progress as well as challenges in the implementation of the Vienna Programme of Action and achievement of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development in the region.

The Latin America regional report, the chair's summary and the presentations and discussions in this meeting have clearly outlined both the trends as well as the challenges that the region faces in implementing the Vienna Programme.

There was a convergence of opinion that tangible progress has been made on the priority areas in this region.

It is commendable that the two LLDCs in the region and the five transit countries have all ratified the WTO Trade Facilitation Agreement. The effective implementation of the TFA and regional and sub-regional agreements will facilitate faster, smoother and more efficient transit.

Amongst others, there was clear call for more to be done to build capacity of the LLDCs to implement the Trade Facilitation Agreement and to increase intra-regional trade by strengthening productive linkages and supporting the development of supply chains within the region.

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There has been progress on closing missing links, expanding and upgrading the road and railway network, energy generation and ICT infrastructure. Bolivia and Paraguay are participating in Latin America's most ambitious regional corridor integration project connecting the Atlantic and Pacific coasts of South America.

There has also been progress on inland waterways with more ports being built and the recently signed Additional Protocol of the River Transport Agreement's for the Paraguay-Paraná Waterway.

We need to maintain and enhance these positive trends.

You also identified the key challenges and areas concerted efforts are needed.

It is commendable that economic structural transformation has been placed at the center of LLDC's national development plans, and that they made some progress towards structural economic transformation. The discussions underscored the need for continued efforts to accelerate structural economic transformation.

Export diversification in both products and markets needs greater efforts.

Additional efforts are needed to support and enable the private sector, micro, small and medium sized enterprises, to grow and bring about structural transformation.

LLDCs also need to undertake policy changes required to achieve this shift.

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The LLDCs' ability to attract and retain investment, including FDI, remains a challenge. FDI flows are directed towards the extractive sector with limited potential for employment creation or skills building.

It was noted that the effects of climate change are having a huge impact on the economies of the LLDCs.

Limited financial resources, institutional bottlenecks and limited skilled human resources remain major constraints.

As we move forward toward the High-Level Midterm review of the VPoA, we need to keep strong emphasis on partnerships by all stakeholders including LLDCs, transit countries, development partners, the United Nations and other international and regional organizations.

Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen,

I wish to thank the co-facilitators- the Permanent Representatives of Austria and Bhutan- I trust that you will take forward the outcome of this meeting into the negotiations of the outcome of the MTR.

I also wish to thank the transit countries and the development partners for your active participation and contribution.

I thank the representatives of the UN-system organizations as well as representatives of other international and regional organizations for your participation and important contributions to the deliberations of this meeting.

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A very special thanks goes to UN-ECLAC for co-organizing the meeting, and for all the important work that you do in this region.

Last but not least, I wish to thank and express my gratitude to the interpreters for the good work and for making it possible for us to have fruitful deliberations.

I look forward to continuing collaborating closely with all of you in this preparatory process leading to MTR in December 2019.

I assure you of UN-OHRLLS support to your endeavors.
