

MINISTERIAL DECLARATION

22nd Annual Ministerial Meeting of the Group of Landlocked Developing Countries

New York, 21 September 2023

PP1 We, the Ministers of Foreign Affairs and heads of delegation of Landlocked Developing Countries, met at the United Nations Headquarters in New York on 21 September 2023, in the margins of the 78th session of the United Nations General Assembly under the theme “*From Vienna to Kigali: Building momentum towards a new decade of action for prosperity and transformation of LLDCs*”,

Reaffirming the Vienna Programme of Action for Landlocked Developing Countries for the Decade 2014-2024, adopted by the Second UN Conference on LLDCs held in Vienna, Austria in December 2014, which is an integral part of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, and provides a comprehensive plan of action to address the special challenges and needs of Landlocked Developing Countries arising from their landlockedness, remoteness and geographical constraints in a more coherent manner and that its full, effective and timely implementation is crucial for the attainment of the SDGs,

Reaffirming further the Political Declaration of the Comprehensive High-level Midterm Review of the Implementation of the Vienna Programme of Action for Landlocked Developing Countries for the Decade 2014-2024, adopted by the General Assembly on 5 December 2019,

Recalling the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, the Addis Ababa Action Agenda of the Third International Conference on Financing for Development, the United Nations Framework Conference on Climate Change and its Paris Agreement, the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015–2030, the UN Convention on Biological Diversity and the New Urban Agenda

Recalling General Assembly resolution 76/217 of 17 December 2021 and 77/246 of 9 January 2022 on the Follow-up to the second United Nations Conference on Landlocked Developing Countries in which the Assembly took the decision to hold the third United Nations Conference on Landlocked Developing Countries in 2024 in Kigali, Rwanda with the mandate to undertake a

comprehensive review of the implementation of the Vienna Programme of Action and to formulate and adopt a renewed framework for international support to address the special needs of landlocked developing countries and to strengthen partnerships between the Landlocked Developing Countries and Transit Countries and their Development Partners,

Recalling further the UN General Assembly resolution 77/329 adopted on Further modalities of the Third United Nations Conference on Landlocked Developing Countries and noting the date of the Conference, two sessions of the intergovernmental Preparatory Committee for the Conference, and the organizational session thereof,

Taking note with appreciation of the Report of the Secretary-General on the implementation of the Vienna Programme of Action for LLDCs for the Decade 2014-2024 in preparation for the third United Nations Conference on Landlocked Developing Countries,

Noting with great concern that while progress has been achieved in some indicators across the priority areas, significant gaps persist between the goals and targets set out in the VPoA and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and *further concerned* that the fragility and the highly uncertain global socio-economic outlook, persisting effects of the COVID-19 pandemic, geopolitical tensions and current multiple crises, which increase pressure on inflation, energy and food prices, and financing, as well as disruptions in supply chains and elevated trade costs, which constrain the ability of LLDCs to achieve the priorities of the VPoA and SDGs,

Concerned about the economic, social and environmental impacts of climate related disasters in LLDCs, as well the impacts of disasters in transit countries that affect the economies of LLDCs,

Taking note that we are meeting in the run up to the Third United Nations Conference on LLDCs to be held in Kigali from 18 to 21 June 2024 and **welcoming** the generous offer of the Government of Rwanda to host the conference

Adopt the following declaration;

1. We **reaffirm** our commitment to addressing the special needs and challenges of the LLDCs and we note with great concern that during the implementation period of the VPoA, LLDCs suffered disproportionately high human and economic losses from disasters as well as the cascading and compounding impacts of the multiple crises affecting the economic, social, and environmental dimensions of sustainable development;
2. We **underscore** that the new programme of action for LLDCs should be an integral part of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and should be an accelerator to achieve the SDGs and therefore look forward to a highly ambitious, comprehensive, action-oriented and forward-looking outcome at the third UN Conference on LLDCs;
3. We **acknowledge** that the last half of the implementation period of the VPoA was marked by the devastating impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic, that stalled or reversed socio-economic development gains that had been achieved by LLDCs, and we **recognize** that the pandemic impacted this progress in LLDCs due to, inter alia, weak healthcare systems, insufficient access to COVID-19 vaccines, high trade and transportation costs and unpredictable transit restrictions, and we note with concern that the recovery of economic growth in LLDCs is still insufficient to reverse the increase in poverty due to the pandemic;
4. We **recognize** the significant importance of international trade in achieving sustainable development in LLDCs and in this regard call for the convening of the LLDCs Ministerial Meeting on Trade in the Margins of the 13th Ministerial Conference of the World Trade Organization to be held in Abu Dhabi, 26-29 February 2024, to provide inputs to the outcome of the third UN Conference on LLDCs;
5. We **call** for continued solidarity with LLDCs and call on strengthened partnerships between LLDCs, transit countries, development partners, United Nations System, international and regional organizations as well as the private sector and other stakeholder to identify and implement lasting solutions to address interconnected and persistent challenges faced by LLDCs and to enable them to achieve the 2030 Agenda and SDGs and ensure that no one is left behind;

6. We **take note with satisfaction** the ongoing preparations for the third UN Conference on LLDCs and we welcome the convening of the three regional review meetings held in preparation for the Conference held for the Africa region in Gaborone on 29 and 30 May 2023; for the Latin America region in Asuncion on 27 and 28 July 2023; and for the Euro-Asia region in Bangkok on 22 and 23 August 2023. We **endorse** the outcomes adopted at the three regional review meetings, which are contained hereby annexed to the present declaration;
7. We **reiterate** the importance of country-level preparations as a critical input to the preparatory process for the Conference and in the implementation of and follow-up to its outcome, and call on LLDCs that have not submitted their national reports to do so as soon as possible;
8. We **reiterate** our commitment to participate at the third UN Conference on LLDCs at the Head of State and Head of Government level and **invite** our transit countries and development partners to participate also at such high level. We **invite** the international and regional organizations as well as other stakeholders to participate at the highest possible level;
9. We **reiterate** our request to the Secretary-General to mobilize the international community, including the UN system, in favor of the LLDC3 Conference and secure a large number of participants at the highest political level in the Conference;
10. We **recognize** the importance of the Roadmap in accelerating implementation of the Vienna Programme of Action and enhancing coordination. We **request** that the next programme of action for LLDCs should also therefore establish a similar mechanism to translate its own agreed measures and commitments into concrete deliverables;
11. We **call upon** Governments, intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations, major groups and other donors to contribute in a timely manner to the trust fund in support of activities undertaken by the Office of the High Representative to support the

implementation of the VPoA and to support the preparatory processes towards the Third UN Conference on LLDCs, including the participation of LLDCs in the session of the Intergovernmental Preparatory Committee and the Third UN Conference on LLDCs;

12. We **stress** that, in accordance with the mandate given by the General Assembly, the Office of the High Representative for the Least Developed Countries, Landlocked Developing Countries and Small Island Developing States should continue to ensure the coordinated follow-up to, effective monitoring of, and reporting on the implementation of the Programme of Action, for LLDCs;
13. We **welcome** the appointment of Ms. Rabab Fatima, High Representative for the Least Developed Countries, Landlocked Developing Countries and Small Island Developing States as Secretary General of the Third United Nations Conference on Landlocked Developing Countries;
14. We **further welcome** the election of the Bureau of the Preparatory Committee of the third UN Conference on LLDCs and we commit to working closely with the Bureau in the preparation of the outcome for the Conference;
15. We **underscore** the important role of the revitalized Group of Friends of LLDCs and call for their active participation and support in the preparations for the Third UN Conference on LLDCs and at the Conference;
16. We **strongly encourage** the Secretary-General and the Member States to strengthen the OHRLLS including by allocating additional post and non-post resources to the subprogramme responsible for landlocked developing countries to enable it to effectively carry out the mandate including, to enable it to provide substantive support to LLDCs in their pursuit to meaningfully engage in the intergovernmental discussions and implement the Vienna Programme of Action for LLDCs and the new programme of action for LLDCs and the 2030 Agenda;

17. We **take note** of the Secretary-General's report on "Ensuring the effective implementation of the functions of the OHRLLS" (A/77/984) and we recognize that over the years, the responsibilities of the Office have increased significantly in their scope and complexity. We therefore strongly **encourage** the Secretary-General and the Member States to significantly strengthen the capacity and functions of the Office, including by allocating additional post and non-post resources to the subprogramme responsible for landlocked developing countries to enable it to effectively carry out its mandate, improving its strategic position in dealing with key development issues and processes relevant to the most vulnerable countries and providing important service benefits to them while improving its performance implementation rate;
18. We **express** our deep appreciation to the Government of Botswana for its able chairmanship, tireless efforts and excellent leadership provided to the landlocked developing countries as the Global Chair of the Group of Landlocked Developing Countries and look forward to its continued efforts to the promotion of the interests of the landlocked developing countries;
19. We **recall** the Ministerial Declaration of LLDCs adopted on 23 September 2021, which endorsed by consensus the nomination of the LLDCs Bureau of the Republic of Botswana to serve as the Chair of the Group of LLDCs and Armenia, Burundi, Lesotho, Mongolia, Nepal and Paraguay as LLDCs' Bureau Members for two years (2021–2022). We decide to extend the term of the current bureau, namely the Republic of Botswana to serve as the Chair and Armenia, Burundi, Lesotho, Mongolia, Nepal and Paraguay as Bureau Members for one more year ending December 2024. We assure our full support and cooperation to the Bureau in discharging its responsibilities.