

## MINISTERIAL DECLARATION

### Annual Ministerial Meeting of the Group of Landlocked Developing Countries

New York, September 2021

**We**, the Ministers of Foreign Affairs of Landlocked Developing Countries, have met virtually on 23 September 2021, at the margins of the 76<sup>th</sup> session of the General Assembly of the United Nations to provide strategic guidance for the accelerated and full implementation of the Vienna Programme of Action for Landlocked Developing Countries for the Decade 2014-2024, and have held our deliberations under the theme "*Leaving no one behind: Sustainable Recovery from COVID-19 in Landlocked Developing Countries and accelerated implementation of the Vienna Programme of Action and the special Roadmap*",

**Recalling** the Vienna Programme of Action for Landlocked Developing Countries for the Decade 2014-2024, adopted in December 2014, which provides a comprehensive plan of action for the next decade 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 thus contributing to an enhanced rate of sustainable and inclusive growth, which can contribute to the eradication of poverty in all its forms and dimensions, including extreme poverty,

**Recalling also** 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 in which the General Assembly reaffirmed its commitment to the full, effective and timely implementation of the VPoA,

**Further recalling** the Roadmap for accelerated implementation of the VPoA that we adopted at the margins of the high-level week of the 75<sup>th</sup> session of the United Nations General Assembly and recognizing its importance in accelerating the implementation of the VPoA and building back better after COVID-19,

**Recognizing** the importance of unfettered, efficient and cost-effective access for landlocked developing countries to and from the sea, on the basis of freedom of transit and other related matters, in accordance with the applicable rules of international law,

**Recognizing also** that high transport and trade transaction costs remain a major stumbling block in the pursuit of landlocked developing countries to achieve their trade and development potentials,

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

**Underscoring** that effective implementation of the VPoA is crucial for the attainment of the SDGs and effective partnerships between LLDCs and transit countries are important and necessary to drive accelerated implementation of the 2030 Agenda and the VPoA,

**Reaffirming** our commitment to implement the Vienna Programme of Action in synergy with the 2030 Agenda and the other development frameworks as we progress through the Decade of Action and delivery for sustainable development,

**Emphasizing** that eradicating poverty in all its forms and dimensions, including extreme poverty, is the greatest global challenge and an indispensable requirement for sustainable development,

**Expressing** condolences and grave concern about the loss of life as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic and the significant adverse social and economic effects it has posed globally, and in particular recognizing that the LLDCs will be severely hit in the long-term owing to the fragility of their health systems, limited social protection coverage, financial and other resource constraints, and vulnerability to external shocks,

**Recalling** General Assembly resolution 75/228 of 21 December 2020 on the Follow-up to the second United Nations Conference on Landlocked Developing Countries that called on all stakeholders to implement the relevant actions, consistent with national priorities, agreed upon in the Vienna Programme of Action in its six priority areas in a coordinated, coherent and expeditious manner,

**Recalling also** General Assembly resolution 75/322 of 30 December 2020 on the Quadrennial comprehensive policy review of operational activities for development of the United Nations system that calls upon the United Nations development system to support the full and effective implementation of the Vienna Programme of Action for Landlocked Developing Countries for the Decade 2014–2024, in line with the Political Declaration of the High-level Midterm Review on the Implementation of the Vienna Programme of Action for Landlocked Developing Countries for the Decade 2014-2024 and the Roadmap for accelerated implementation of the VPoA,

**Recognizing** that recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic and other related future crises should not hinder the continued progress towards implementation of the Vienna Programme of Action and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals,

**Welcoming** the outcomes of the 2021 Follow-up and review of the Forum on Financing for Development and the 2021 Ministerial Declaration of the High-level Political Forum on Sustainable Development that *inter alia* called on scaling up financing efforts for sustainable development, supporting the COVID-19 Vaccine Global Access (COVAX) Facility and committing to an inclusive and coordinated recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic in LLDCs through funding stimulus measures that address specific vulnerabilities,

**Reaffirming** that gender equality and the empowerment of all women and girls will make a crucial contribution to the achievement of the Vienna Programme of Action and to progress across all the Sustainable Development Goals and targets,

Adopt the following declaration;

1. **We take note** of the Report of the Secretary-General A/76/267 on the implementation of the Vienna Programme of Action for LLDCs for the Decade 2014-2024;

2. **We express concern** that the unprecedented impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on LLDCs is continuing unabated with little signs of a recovery. LLDCs continue to face multifaceted negative effects ranging from strained health services, job losses, increased poverty and food insecurity, disruptions in global supply chains and border restrictions to reduced economic growth, declining exports, decreased transport services, falling remittances, low levels of private investment and a near halt in tourism. We call on the Secretary-General, in close collaboration with the World Health Organization, to take the necessary steps to effectively coordinate and follow up on the efforts of the United Nations system to promote and ensure global access to medicines, vaccines and medical equipment needed to address COVID-19;
3. **We stress** that as we head into the final stretches of the 2030 Agenda and the Vienna Programme of Action, efforts towards both need to be reoriented to incorporate the long-term impact of COVID-19, building of more equal, inclusive and sustainable institutions and the nurturing of resilient economies. Towards this end, a transformative recovery aimed at reducing vulnerability to future crises and ensuring that LLDCs can make the necessary progress towards achieving the SDGs and respond to the ambition and the urgency of the Vienna Programme of Action is paramount;
4. **We reiterate** the importance of fostering strong synergy and coherence at all levels in the implementation, follow-up, and review of the Vienna Programme of Action with the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, Addis Ababa Action Agenda and other development processes including the Paris Agreement on Climate Change, and the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction;
5. **We recognize** the central role of the United Nations system in supporting the implementation of the Vienna Programme of Action and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, as well as catalyzing and coordinating the global recovery in response to the COVID-19 pandemic, based on unity, solidarity, multilateralism and international cooperation and we encourage Member States, the United Nations system organizations, as well as the private sector, civil society organizations, individuals and other relevant stakeholders to implement their collective commitment to multilateralism and to the United Nations in supporting the LLDCs;
6. **We express concern** that growth in real GDP of LLDCs plummeted from 4.3% in 2019 to -2.4% in 2020 due to the impact of COVID-19. Not only is this likely to increase the number of people living in poverty, but it is also likely to stall long-standing efforts for economic development;
7. **We express concern** that the proportion of people covered by at least one social protection benefit is significantly lower in LLDCs at 14.2% compared to the global average of 46.9%. **We commit** to supporting the scaling up of effective social protection systems along with government spending on key services in order to safeguard the poor and vulnerable during the current and future crises. We call on development partners, the United Nations, and other international organizations to support LLDCs to expand social protection programmes and strengthen social safety nets to help prevent vulnerable groups from falling deeper into poverty and we call on international financial institutions, multilateral organizations and regional banks to provide quick balance-of-payment and budget support with limited conditionalities to LLDCs so as to enable them to respond adequately to this pandemic;

8. **We express deep concern** that a growing number of people are currently facing food insecurity since all the indicators of food insecurity have continued to exhibit a deteriorating trend due to COVID-19. In this regard, we call upon the international community especially our development partners to enhance their financial and in-kind support and the United Nations and other international and regional organizations to provide humanitarian and technical support towards food security and livelihoods;
9. **We recognize** that LLDCs face major challenges in tackling COVID-19, in particular due to insufficient access to vaccines amid the spread of new and more transmittable variants. For every 1000 people living in LLDCs, just 51 have received a vaccine dose and only 1% of the total global vaccine supply was administered in LLDCs despite them accounting for 7% of the total population;
10. **We call on** development partners, the United Nations, International Financial Institutions, and other international organizations to support LLDCs with the resources to respond to COVID-19, including through support with COVID-19 immunization, as well as strengthening national health systems and laboratories, purchasing of required medical supplies such as oxygen delivery systems and ventilators. We call on the international community to support LLDCs with capacity building to ensure that in addition to immediate needs, the capacity of LLDCs to respond to future health crises is also strengthened;
11. **We call upon** Member States and other relevant stakeholders to immediately take steps to prevent, within their respective legal frameworks, speculation and undue stockpiling that may hinder access to safe, effective and affordable essential medicines, vaccines, personal protective equipment and medical equipment as may be required to effectively address COVID-19;
12. **We welcome** the international commitment to support the financing of stimulus measures in countries in special situations, including LLDCs, in order to facilitate recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic and call for the early realization of these commitments;
13. **We are concerned** that LLDCs continue to be disproportionately affected by the adverse impacts of climate change, desertification, land degradation, drought, melting glaciers, floods, including glacial lakes outbursts and other disasters due to their location, level of development, and greater reliance on climate sensitive sectors like agriculture. We note with concern that land covered by forests in LLDCs has declined from 17.2% in 2015 to 16.8% in 2020. we call on Member States, as well as relevant regional and international organizations to continue to support climate change adaptation and mitigation efforts and strengthening resilience. We further call on COP 26 UN Climate Change Conference to consider the impact of climate change on LLDCs in the deliberations and outcome;
14. **We recognize** LLDCs' efforts to promote building of resilient societies through Disaster Risk Reduction and call upon development partners, UN system and other international and regional organizations to support LLDCs' to develop and implement national climate change strategies as well as drought and disaster risk mitigation, preparedness and resilience policies and strategies, including early warning and early action systems and to integrate risk management into national development plans;

15. **We emphasize** that water is critical for sustainable development and the eradication of poverty and hunger and is indispensable for human development, health and wellbeing and a vital element of achieving the Sustainable Development Goals and other relevant goals in the social, environmental and economic fields;
16. **We welcome** the initiative of the Government of Tajikistan to host jointly with the United Nations the High-Level International Conference on the International Decade for Action "Water for Sustainable Development", 2018-2028 to be held in Tajikistan in June 2022, which would serve as a platform for soliciting and consolidating inputs in preparation of the United Nations Conference on the Midterm Comprehensive Review of the Implementation of the Objectives of the International Decade for Action, "Water for Sustainable Development", 2018-2028 to be held in 2023 in New York;
17. **We invite** climate finance providers to improve access for LLDCs and we encourage the allocation of more resources to ex-ante instruments for building resilience, including new financing approaches which incentivize disaster risk reduction and sustainable reduction of LLDCs' vulnerabilities to climate change and natural disasters;
18. **We commend** the progress that has been made by LLDCs and transit developing countries in ratifying the World Trade Organization Agreement on Trade Facilitation, the revised Kyoto Convention, the TIR Convention and other relevant international conventions and we call upon LLDCs and transit countries to effectively implement their obligations under all relevant international, regional and bilateral agreements to improve transit in a manner consistent with their trade and development objectives and we call on development partners, private sector and relevant international and regional and sub-regional organization to enhance support to LLDCs and transit developing countries to implement these agreements;
19. **We are concerned** that transit has been negatively impacted by measures introduced by transit countries and LLDCs such as curfews, border measures aimed at curbing the spread of COVID-19 and this threatens the progress that has been made by LLDCs and their transit neighbours in improving transit along some transport corridors, including in reducing travel time and corresponding costs along corridors, we **therefore call upon** LLDCs and transit countries to make additional efforts to reduce travel time along the corridors and to adopt an integrated and sustainable approach to the management of international transport corridors;
20. **We reaffirm** our commitment to develop quality, accessible, affordable, reliable, sustainable and resilient transport infrastructure as an integral element of the COVID-19 recovery efforts, including regional and transboundary infrastructure, to enhance our connectivity to regional and global markets and support a sustainable recovery and resilience of our economies;
21. **We stress** that the magnitude of the resources required to invest in sustainable and resilient infrastructure development and maintenance remains a major challenge and requires the forging of international, regional, subregional and bilateral cooperation on infrastructure projects, the allocation of more resources from national budgets, the effective deployment of international development assistance and multilateral financing, as well as strengthening of the role of the private sector, including international project finance, public-private partnerships and other non-traditional forms of finance;

22. **We reiterate** our call for support to the LLDCs and transit countries in developing bankable implementable infrastructure projects that are financially viable, environmentally friendly and accepted by the local communities and we call on the UN system and other relevant international and regional organizations to enhance their technical support to LLDCs to develop sustainable infrastructure;
23. **We underscore** the significance of international transport and economic corridors for reducing trade costs and promoting regional sustainable development, and request for strengthening of the role of corridor management organizations and other sub-regional and inter-regional arrangements and upon the LLDCs and transit countries, in a coordinated manner, to develop and upgrade international transport and transit corridors encompassing all modes of transportation, such as inland waterways, roads, rail networks, ports and pipelines;
24. **We call** on the UN system and other relevant international and regional organizations to provide further policy, analytical and technical support towards the development, functioning and management of corridors;
25. **We note** that the air transport industry has been hit hard by COVID-19 and LLDCs have been impacted particularly severely. We call upon the international community including the UN system and other international and regional organizations to provide support towards building back better the air transport industry since air transport provides LLDCs with direct access to international markets;
26. **We strive** to achieve policies, regulatory and institutional frameworks that promote sustainable energy transition, ensure access to affordable, reliable, sustainable and modern energy for all, with a focus on providing affordable access to sustainable energy for the poorest and scaling up projects on cross border inter-connectors and improving transformational energy access. We call for innovative partnerships between development partners, UN system and other international and regional organizations to support accelerated universal access, renewable energy and energy efficiency development;
27. **We recognize** that the COVID-19 pandemic brought to the fore the importance of digital transformation and connectivity for achieving the Sustainable Development Goals and enabling the delivery of essential services while complying to social distancing protocols, including through remote learning, telemedicine, e-commerce, virtual meetings and working, accessing government services and non-physical transit and customs procedures. However, LLDCs face fundamental challenges including inadequate infrastructure, limited internet access, high cost of broadband, inadequate digital skills and regulatory and data policies. We aim to continue to foster favorable conditions for the development of the digital economy by creating appropriate enabling environment including the necessary policies, legal and regulatory frameworks to support ICT development. Towards this end, we call for increased public private partnerships and support from the development partners to enable LLDCs to reap the full potentials of the digital technologies and e-commerce;
28. **We note** that most of the special development challenges of LLDCs are trans-boundary and the COVID-19 pandemic has heightened the need for deepened regional integration in order to fully address them. We urge LLDCs and member states in their regions to increase their cooperation and regional integration by strengthening transport, energy and

digital infrastructure connectivity; supporting intraregional trade and the development of regional value chains; improving the quality and effective implementation of regional integration agreements; and we call upon the UN system, in particular the regional commissions, regional and international development partners, and other international organizations to strengthen their technical, financial and capacity building support to LLDCs and transit countries to enable them to advance their regional integration efforts;

29. **We are concerned** that the VPoA specific objective of substantially increasing LLDCs exports remains a challenge as their share in global merchandise exports remains below one percent and the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic has worsened this. We call on our development partners to step up mechanisms supportive of LLDCs' efforts to build their trade and supply-side capacity, such as Aid for Trade, increased market access, productive capacity building and technical assistance. We further call on the relevant UN System organizations and other international organizations to enhance their capacity building and technical assistance support towards enhancing the LLDCs' participation in international trade;
30. **We recognize** that merchandise exports from LLDCs remain undiversified with the COVID-19 pandemic stalling progress towards structural change, and note that export diversification is critical for LLDCs to move up the value chains and reduce their vulnerability to external shocks including the COVID-19 pandemic;
31. **We underline** that greater integration of LLDCs into world trade and global as well as regional value chains is vital for increasing their competitiveness and diversification and ensuring their economic development, and invite UN-OHRLLS, UNCTAD, UNIDO, UNDP, United Nations Regional Commissions, Common Fund for Commodities, World Bank, UNDP, ITC, and other partners to provide assistance to LLDCs to strengthen their capacity to participate in regional and global value chains;
32. **We stress** that a rules-based, non-discriminatory and equitable trading system is essential in preserving the interests of the poorest and most vulnerable economies including the LLDCs. **We call on** the 12th WTO Ministerial Conference (MC12) to deliver an ambitious outcome to bolster the participation of the LLDCs in trade and support their recovery from COVID-19 Pandemic;
33. **We call on** the WTO to formulate pragmatic, effective and holistic solutions to support trade in health, as well as their support for open, diversified, secure, and resilient supply chains in the manufacture of COVID-19 critical goods and vaccines and their components;
34. **We note that** LLDCs as a group still lag behind in the implementation of the WTO Trade Facilitation Agreement LLDCs implemented an estimated 50.7% of all notifiable commitments of the WTO TFA by April 2021. We urge development partners, the private sector and UN system and other international and regional organizations to enhance technical and capacity building support in areas identified by LLDCs and transit countries as needing support to accelerate the implementation of the WTO Trade Facilitation Agreement;
35. **We note** that LLDCs depend on their transit neighbors to access global markets and that the continued imposition of border restrictions due to COVID-19 is greatly impacting the movement of goods and services to LLDCs. Against this background, we call for LLDCs

and transit countries to work together to ensure smooth functioning at borders and in transit to facilitate the flow of essential goods, including through the enhanced use of digital applications and contactless procedures. **We reiterate** that the use of border measures designed to tackle COVID-19 has to be transparent, targeted, proportionate, and consistent with WTO rules;

36. **We recognize** that the growth in e-commerce provides international trade opportunities including new market opportunities for LLDCs. We call on UN-OHRLLS, UNCTAD, ITU and partners to provide technical assistance to promote e-commerce in LLDCs including through capacity building and advice on improving digital infrastructure;
37. **We stress** that building productive capacities is a core requirement for achieving structural transformation and export diversification and encourage LLDCs to mainstream the building of productive capacities in their development strategies. **We further stress** that national efforts of LLDCs need to be supported by an enabling international economic environment and financial, technical and capacity-building assistance towards building their productive capacities, enhancing diversification and value-addition, implementing industrial policies, and fostering structural economic transformation;
38. **We note** that the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic and the measures taken to mitigate its impact have had a particularly negative impact on service sectors such as tourism, retail, and hospitality, some labor-intensive sectors, small and medium-sized enterprises and the informal sector resulting in higher unemployment, particularly amongst vulnerable segments of society. **We therefore call on** development partners and international organizations to provide assistance to LLDCs to establish initiatives to support SMEs such as through provision of enhanced finance and access to credit, capacity building and employing ICTs and innovation in business operations that may help in building the resilience of LLDCs' economies in the post-COVID-19 era;
39. **We emphasize** that building a conducive business environment for private sector development is one of the most important requirements for promoting sustained economic growth, developing an industrial base, attracting investment and bringing about structural transformation, and we commit to continue to foster an enabling legal and regulatory environment for private sector growth;
40. **We reaffirm** that science, technology and innovation have a critical role in achieving structural transformation, the SDGs as well as COVID-19 recovery. We commit to promote research, innovation, skill and capacity-building initiatives and technology development and adaptation towards advancing innovation-driven economic transformation and development, efficient transit and transport systems, e-commerce, energy generation and storage, value-addition and economic transformation and call on development partners, the United Nations system and other stakeholders to support our efforts;
41. **We commit** to working together with our development partners to seize the opportunities offered by technologies to help us address the COVID-19 crisis, including by scaling up collaboration on essential medicines, vaccines and innovations in health systems;
42. **We recognize** that significant additional domestic public resources supplemented by international assistance as appropriate, will be critical to realizing sustainable development and achieving the Sustainable Development Goals and that the 2030



Agenda for Sustainable Development and the Addis Ababa Action Agenda acknowledge the centrality of domestic resource mobilization underscored by the principle of national ownership, also recognize that, while LLDCs have made considerable efforts to mobilize domestic resources and attract private investment, further progress is needed, and underlines the importance of strengthening domestic enabling environments;

43. **We welcome** the growth in official development assistance in 2020 and reaffirm that official development assistance is crucial for LLDCs in accelerating implementation of the VPoA and 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, and call upon development partners and the international community to mobilize additional development finance from all sources to support LLDCs' recovery efforts from the COVID-19 crisis;
44. **We are deeply concerned** about the impact of high debt levels on LLDCs' ability to invest into implementation of the VPoA and 2030 Agenda as well as to deal with the impact of COVID-19. We encourage creditors to take bolder actions to support LLDCs with debt relief in order to free up liquidity and invest more in their health systems and economic recovery including through suspending debt repayments to international creditors, that may include debt-to-health and debt-to-nature swaps channeling additional funds to health system and environmental protection and financing regional development projects in exchange for debt relief;
45. **We commend** the G20 for its debt suspension initiative which has been extended until December 2021, and which is benefiting some LLDCs. However, in light of the continuation of the pandemic and significant economic headwinds that are persisting, we urge this initiative to be extended beyond 2021 in order to give additional fiscal space to LLDCs to meet challenges, particularly with regard to procurement of vaccines and providing safety nets for the vulnerable segments of their populations;
46. **We commit** to continue promoting conducive policies to secure financing and attract diverse sources of investment, including foreign direct investment, that lead to increased trade, economic diversification, structural change as well as sustainable development in LLDCs. We call on development partners to provide greater support the investment seeking efforts of LLDCs specially the investment needed to recover better from the COVID-19 pandemic. We also call on the UNCTAD, UN-OHRLLS, UNIDO, United Nations Commission on International Trade Law, and other international and regional organizations to provide capacity building support to LLDCs to develop more focused policies, strategies and mechanisms;
47. **We welcome** the vigorous measures taken by the International Monetary Fund and World Bank Group, regional development banks and other multilateral and bilateral development to provide emergency health support, debt relief and other economic assistance to help countries respond to COVID-19, and call for greater prioritization of assistance to LLDCs. We also stress that assistance is targeted to addressing LLDCs' challenges that have been aggravated by COVID-19, such as commodity dependency, high trade costs, trade facilitation, inadequate infrastructure, climate change, among others;
48. **We call upon** countries of the South in the spirit of solidarity and South-South Cooperation, to strive to increase financial and technical assistance to LLDCs towards the effective implementation of the VPoA and recovery efforts from COVID-19 and

stress that such support is a complement to, but not a substitute for, North-South cooperation;

49. **We commit** to strengthening our national statistical capacities to address the gaps in data on the VPoA and the 2030 Agenda in order to provide high-quality, timely, reliable, disaggregated data and statistics and to fully integrate the Goals and targets in our monitoring and reporting systems. We call on increased capacity-building and technical support to LLDCs, from all sources, to strengthen their national statistical systems;
50. **We call** on the UN system to focus its activities in support of LLDCs to build a sustainable economic and social recovery that leaves no one behind and enable them to overcome the consequences of the COVID-19 pandemic and to make substantial progress in implementing the VPoA and in achieving the Sustainable Development Goals;
51. **We invite** the UN system to incorporate within its planned activities to examine the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on LLDCs, identify lessons learned from past and present epidemics and pandemics and recommendations for improving future preparedness for epidemics and pandemics;
52. **We welcome** the progress achieved by the Secretary-General in the repositioning of the United Nations development system, and look forward to the timely implementation of outstanding mandates pertaining to the repositioning of the regional assets and the multi-country office review, under national ownership and leadership. Given the cross-boundary nature of the development issues of LLDCs, we would like to stress that the regional assets are reformed in such a way that they are better able to support the special development needs of the LLDCs;
53. **We call on** the Resident Coordinators and the UN Country teams to support mainstreaming of the goals and priorities set out in the Vienna Programme of Action for LLDCs and the SDGs into national development plans and strategies in LLDCs and transit countries and to assist the LLDCs in addressing the socio-economic impact of COVID-19;
54. **We note** the importance of establishing an LLDCs' National Focal Points network comprised of capital-based national focal points to facilitate the strengthening of coherence and coordination of the implementation and follow up of the Vienna Programme of Action, the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, and other global frameworks including the WTO Trade Facilitation Agreement at the national level. We also note that it will foster peer-learning and exchange of best practices on LLDCs-related issues. In this regard we will work with Resident Coordinators and UN-OHRLLS to designate national level focal points who will become part of the LLDCs' National Focal Points network;
55. **We underscore** the need to give due consideration to the issues and concerns of LLDCs in all relevant major United Nations conferences and processes and the relevant work of the United Nations development system, and calls for the elaboration of information specific to LLDCs in a disaggregated manner in all major United Nations reports where appropriate;
56. **We take note** of the work of the Inter-Agency Consultative Group for the LLDCs, led by the Office of the High Representative and the coordinated support that it is providing to the LLDCs;

57. **We are strongly committed** to lead the accelerated implementation of the Vienna Programme of Action and the Roadmap in collaboration with the transit countries and with the support of our development partners. **We welcome** the progress reported towards the Roadmap for Accelerated Implementation of the Vienna Programme of Action and we call on UN system organizations, other international and regional organizations and other stakeholders to enhance support towards its implementation;
58. **We note** that the United Nations system needs stronger and more coherent coordination for the achievement of the priority areas of the Vienna Programme of Action and other strategic documents, as well as for the implementation of the projects included into the Roadmap via introducing a dedicated secretariat under the aegis of the United Nations Office of the High Representative for LDCs, LLDCs and SIDS to be financed through the voluntary contributions;
59. **We call on** the United Nations system and the International Seabed Authority to support the LLDCs in awareness raising, capacity-building, technology transfer, and the sharing of experiences to facilitate the participation of LLDCs in the ocean economy and in ocean related norm setting discussions including in the ongoing discussions on the intergovernmental Conference on an international legally binding instrument under the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea on the conservation and sustainable use of marine biological diversity of areas beyond national jurisdiction (BBNJ). We urge LLDCs that have not yet done so to ratify the UNCLOS;
60. **We recognize** the critical importance of the work of the International Think Tank for LLDCs in improving research and capacity development for the LLDCs and in promoting networking and collaboration among researchers and research institutions for the benefit of the LLDCs and call upon relevant international and regional organizations including UN-OHRLLS, UN-ESCAP, UNCTAD, UNDP, WTO and others, and research institutions, think tanks, and other stakeholders to strengthen collaboration on research and capacity building with the International Think Tank for LLDCs on all the priority areas of the Vienna Programme of Action and foster coherence in the implementation of the Vienna Programme of Action with the Sustainable Development Goals;
61. **We take note with appreciation** of the contributions made by the host country Mongolia and other LLDCs who are party to the Multilateral Agreement for the Establishment of an International Think Tank for LLDCs and call on development partners, Member States that are party to the Agreement, United Nations system, other international organizations and other stakeholders to provide voluntary contributions to the International Think Tank;
62. **We urge** all LLDCs that have not yet ratified the Multilateral Agreement for the Establishment of an International Think Tank for LLDCs to do so;
63. **We invite** development partners and the international financial and development institutions to make voluntary contributions to the Trust Fund established by the Secretary-General to support the activities related to the follow-up and the implementation of the Vienna Programme of Action;
64. **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 Vienna Programme of Action and the outcome of its midterm review, undertake advocacy efforts at the national, regional and global levels raising awareness on the special needs of LLDCs, build multi-stakeholder partnerships, and mobilize international support and resources in favour of the LLDCs;

65. **We welcome** the appointment of Mr. Courtenay Rattray as the High Representative for the Least Developed Countries, Landlocked Developing Countries and Small Island Developing States and we request the United Nations Office of the High Representative for the Least Developed Countries, Landlocked Developing Countries and Small Island Developing States (OHRLLS) to continue to work on its mandate in support of the LLDCs;
66. **We look forward to** Turkmenistan's hosting of the Ministerial Meeting on Transport for LLDCs on 5-7 April 2022, and underscore that increased transport connectivity is critical for LLDCs to become fully integrated in regional and global markets;
67. **We look forward to** the convening of the following upcoming global conferences: Food Systems Summit (13 September 2021 TBC); UN Climate Change Conference COP26 (1-12 November 2021); UN Second Global Sustainable Transport Conference (14-16 October 2021); the 15th UNCTAD Quadrennial Conference (3-7 October 2021); Ocean Conference 2022; WTO 12<sup>th</sup> Ministerial Conference (30 November – 3 December 2021); the World Investment Forum (17 – 21 October) and the 5<sup>th</sup> UN Conference on LDCs (23-27 January 2022). We recognize the importance of these meetings to LLDCs and stress that the outcomes of these meetings should take into account LLDCs issues;
68. **We recall** paragraph 78 of the Vienna Programme of Action GA Resolution 69/137 and paragraph 66 of the Political Declaration of the High-Level Midterm Review on the implementation of the Vienna Programme of Action GA Resolution 74/15 that invite the General Assembly to consider holding the third United Nations Conference on Landlocked Developing Countries. The conference will undertake a comprehensive appraisal of the implementation of the Vienna Programme of Action and decide on subsequent actions. We request the General Assembly to take decisions at its 76th Session on the third United Nations Conference on Landlocked Developing Countries with all organizational details and the scope and terms of reference of the Conference, including its preparatory process at national, sub-regional, regional and global levels. In this regard, we request the Secretary-General to explore the potential generous host of the Conference and mobilize necessary resources for successfully holding the Conference;
69. **We express** our deep appreciation to the Government of Kazakhstan 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 support to the promotion of the interests of the landlocked developing countries;
70. **We recall** the Rules of procedure of the Group of Landlocked Developing Countries A/72/656). We congratulate the newly elected 2022-2023 Bureau under the Chairmanship of the Government of Botswana and commit to work closely with them to advance our development agenda;

71. **We underscore** the need for closer cooperation to promote the interests and needs of the 91 countries that make up the three Groups – LDCs, LLDCs and SIDS, especially within intergovernmental negotiating processes. We encourage the Chairs of the 3 groups to continue to work together to secure the best interests of the most vulnerable countries – LDCs, LLDCs and SIDS.
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