



PRESIDENT OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY



THE PRESIDENT OF THE
ECONOMIC AND
SOCIAL COUNCIL

Joint GA-ECOSOC Thematic Event on Landlocked Developing Countries

“Road to Kigali: New Programme of Action for Landlocked Developing Countries as an Accelerator of the Implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development”

Thursday, 7 December 2023, 15:00-18:00

Trusteeship Council Chamber, UNHQ, New York

Concept Note

Background

The Third United Nations Conference on Landlocked Developing Countries (LLDCs) will be held from 18 to 21 June 2024, in Kigali, Rwanda, in accordance with General Assembly resolutions 76/217, 77/246 and 77/329. The Conference will undertake a comprehensive appraisal of the implementation of the Vienna Programme of Action, which was adopted by the second United Nations Conference on Landlocked Developing Countries held in Vienna, Austria in 2014.

In its resolution 77/246, the General Assembly also requested the President of the General Assembly and the President of the Economic and Social Council to organize a half-day dedicated thematic event in the second half of 2023 in order to provide substantive input to the Conference.

Over the last ten years of implementation of the Vienna Programme of Action, tangible progress was made in some areas. However, the overlapping crises during the second half of the implementation period exacerbated the vulnerabilities of the LLDCs.

The 32 LLDCs, with approximately 570 million people, continue to experience the lingering impacts of COVID-19 pandemic, geopolitical tensions, rising conflicts, surging inflation, sharp increases in food and energy prices, tightening financial conditions and exacerbated climate crisis.

Their economic growth has waned. Their trading systems, especially their major export sectors, faced major setbacks due to global supply chain disruptions. Debt distress has escalated. While poverty levels have declined, they remain much higher than the global average. Food insecurity worsened, increasing from 43.4 per cent in 2015 to 57.9 per cent in 2022.

The LLDCs possess inherent disadvantages, as they are isolated from global markets and have no direct access to the sea and global markets. For LLDCs to reach the global average for

physical transport infrastructure, they would need to build nearly 200,000 kms of paved roads and over 46,000 kms of railways. This would cost about 509 billion USD.

The LLDCs are also lagging in energy and ICT infrastructure. As of 2021, the proportion of the population with access to electricity was around 60 per cent while access to the internet was around 32 percent. The LLDCs further face challenges in soft infrastructure related to regulatory and legal frameworks, institutional capacities and policies that dictate transport services and the movement of goods.

The combined effects of these disadvantages have further impeded LLDCs' integration into regional and global value chains and markets.

Addressing the unique challenges of the LLDCs requires comprehensive policies at national, regional and global levels. Massive investment in all forms of infrastructure, robust transit systems with harmonization and digitalization, modern transport corridors and regional integration can offer new opportunities for LLDCs to access the sea and to participate in global trading system more actively.

The development of reliable and resilient infrastructure (SDG9) is not only an important Goal of the 2030 agenda, but it also has significant spillover effects on several other SDGs. It is therefore imperative that infrastructure financing be given its due importance.

There are already several active infrastructure investment funds in the LLDCs. However, the available windows of infrastructure finance have proven to be far from adequate. It is therefore timely to consider innovative approaches to explore new infrastructure finance facilities for the LLDCs.

Information and communication technologies and digitalization are the new frontiers of opportunities for the LLDCs to overcome many of their challenges. Boosting broadband connectivity, digital public infrastructure, and digital skills will ensure that future generations can fully participate in the global economy. However, this requires more investment, innovation, and robust public-private-partnerships.

The Third UN Conference on LLDCs will therefore chart a new ambitious, comprehensive, forward-looking Programme of Action for LLDCs, to enable LLDCs to recover from the COVID-19 pandemic; build resilience against future shocks; overcome their geographical constraints; and accelerate the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development to ensure that LLDCs are not left further behind.

The GA-ECOSOC thematic event will be an extraordinary opportunity to address the special needs and challenges of LLDCs and provide substantive inputs to the Third UN Conference on LLDCs.

Participants

Member States, Observers, UN System, non-governmental organizations in consultative status with the ECOSOC, other relevant Non-Governmental Organizations, Civil Society Organizations, academic institutions and the private sector.

Programme Overview

The High-Level Opening of the event will feature statements by the President of General Assembly, the President of Economic and Social Council, the Deputy Secretary-General of the United Nations, the Under Secretary-General and High Representative for the Least Developed Countries, Landlocked Developing Countries and Small Island Developing States, and Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Botswana, as representative from a landlocked developing country and in capacity as Chair of LLDCs.

Following the opening segment, three keynote speakers will be invited to address the meeting. Then, Member States will deliver general statements on their priorities for the next 10-year Programme of Action for the LLDCs.

There will be no pre-established list of speakers. Time limits for interventions will be three (3) minutes for individual delegations, and five (5) minutes for interventions on behalf of a group of States. For planning purposes, delegations are requested to register their expressions of interest to speak through e-deleGATE.

The event will also feature interventions from representatives of relevant stakeholders.

The event will end with a short closing segment.

Accessibility

Delegations are requested to inform the Secretariat of the accessibility requirements of their delegation members, in order to facilitate participation in the meeting. Upon advance request, adjustments can be made to existing seating arrangements, with a view to enabling the participation of persons with disabilities. For any requests, please contact the Meetings Support Section of the Department for General Assembly and Conference Management (email: accessibilitycentre@un.org; phone: 212 963 7348/9), no later than three working days prior to the meeting.

The Meetings Support Section also offers a print-on-demand service for meeting participants requiring Braille copies of official documents. Requests for Braille copies should be sent to the Chief of the Meetings Support Section (email: chiefmss-dgacm@un.org), at least 24 hours in advance of the meeting date for processing.

Closed captioning (CART services) will be provided for the meeting.

For further enquiries regarding available assistive tools, please contact the Accessibility Centre (email: accessibilitycentre@un.org; phone: 212 963 7348/9).

Media

The event will be broadcast live and on-demand by UN-WebTV.

Outcome

Presidents' Summary of the event will be shared with all Permanent and Observer Missions and will provide substantive input to the Third UN Conference on LLDCs.