

**Statement by Hon. Mr. Pradeep Kumar Gyawali, Minister for Foreign Affairs and the  
Leader of Nepali Delegation to the 74<sup>th</sup> session of the United Nations General Assembly, at  
the 18<sup>th</sup> Annual Ministerial Meeting of LLDCs  
(CR5, New York, 15:00, 25 September 2019)**

Mr. Chairman,

Honorable Ministers,

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

Distinguished Delegates.

I first extend my sincere appreciation to Paraguay for providing leadership to the group and representing us in different processes as the global Chair for the last two years<sup>1</sup> and congratulate Kazakhstan<sup>2</sup> for assuming this role.

I thank and appreciate United Nations Secretary-General Mr. Antonio Guterres for his solidarity and support for the Group.

UN system has always been an important institutional support mechanism to LLDCs. I commend the role played by Under Secretary-General and High Representative for LDCs, LLDCs and SIDS, Madam Katoa Utoikamanu and her team in promoting the cause of LLDCs.

I also thank the Ambassadors of Austria and Bhutan for successfully concluding the inter-governmental negotiations on the draft political declarations<sup>3</sup> to be adopted by the High-Level Mid-Term Review of the VPOA.

**Mr. Chairman,**

LLDCs face several challenges arising from their remoteness, land-lockedness and geographical isolation. They face difficulties to be connected to global trade networks and value chains. The geographical constraint has compounded the cost of development; while perpetuating poverty and economic distress. Add impact of climate change on them, their vulnerability increases manifold.

Infrastructure gap in LLDCs compared to other countries is the highest. Building connectivity is extremely difficult. Geographical remoteness has eroded the competitiveness of their products.

The draft political declaration of VPOA nails down the kernel of LLDCs: a commitment to help them turn into land-linked<sup>4</sup> countries. This speaks the heart and mind of LLDCs. This requires durable and effective partnership between and among LLDCs and transit neighbors, development partners and UN other organizations as well as other stakeholders.

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<sup>1</sup> Paraguay may announce end of their term during the meeting.

<sup>2</sup> Kazakhstan has shown interest in chairing the Group but this is still under consideration.

<sup>3</sup> The draft political declaration was finalized 30 July 2019. It will be adopted by the High-Level MTR of VPOA in December 2019.

<sup>4</sup> Para 4 of the draft outcome document.

Similarly, the draft outcome underscores the importance of unfettered, efficient and cost-effective access for LLDCs to and from the sea. This only can reduce the cost of trade and decrease their remoteness to global market place. Nepal believes that reliable, quality and sustainable infrastructure must be built in the first place to transform the future of these countries. This is a dynamic process requiring huge investment and partnership.

The best support to LLDCs would be to ensure full, timely and effective implementation of the Program of Action. This should be done in full synergy with the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and other development outcomes. Increased international support measures not just the ODA but also partnership, technology transfer, and investments are essential.

The constraints facing LLDCs especially in the area of trade are still under-studied, such as e-commerce<sup>6</sup> readiness and increasing its share. I see an important role of the International Think Tank in this regard. I would like to make a general call for providing the Think Tank with adequate support and commitments for enabling it to do more for LLDCs.

**Mr. Chairman,**

In Nepal, we have mainstreamed the 2030 Agenda and VPOA into our national plans and programs. We have recently adopted the Fifteenth Five-Year Plan with a longer-term development vision for the country towards materializing the goal of “Prosperous Nepal, Happy Nepali”. We endeavor to development of all modes of connectivity including, air transport, roads, railway, transmission line, and inland waterways. We anticipate support of the international community in our national efforts.

Let me conclude by highlighting the importance of unity and solidarity as strength of our group. We must strive more to garner increased level of international cooperation and assistance towards securing progress across all six priority areas of VPOA.

I thank you all.

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<sup>5</sup> Para 5 of the document.

<sup>6</sup> This idea has found entry for the first time in the draft outcome.