

**Statement by Hon. Mr. NP Saud, Minister for Foreign
Affairs of Nepal, at the 22nd Annual Ministerial Meeting of
LLDCs
(New York, 21 September 2023)**

Words to read: 555

Mr. Chairman,

Honorable Ministers,

UN Secretary-General Mr. Antonio Guterres,

USG and High Representative for LDCs, LLDCs and SIDS

Ms. Rabab Fatima,

Distinguished Delegates.

I would like to thank you, Mr. Chairman, for convening this meeting.

Let me express my sincere appreciation to the government of Botswana for the dynamic leadership of our Group.

I also commend the USG High Representative and her able team for the hard work and continued support towards promoting the interests of LLDCs.

Mr. Chairman

The world is witnessing multiple and interlocking crises. These crises are disrupting the decade of action and hindering the LLDCs' efforts of socio-economic transformation.

The world is still struggling to cope with the adverse impact of COVID-19, which has not only strained our health system but also imperiled our economies.

Climate change continues unabated with its multifaceted impacts on the lives and livelihoods of our people.

LLDCs continue to face the persistent problems such as excessive dependence on transit countries, cost of trade and transit, high share of primary commodities in export trade and lack of trade diversification, inadequate transport, and limited social protection.

The emerging geopolitical competition have aggravated the situation.

Inflation, food and fuel insecurity, disruptions in supply chain are on the rise.

Eight LLDCs are at the high risk of debt distress and three are already in distress.

These factors have caused serious setbacks to our development gains.

Mr. Chairman

Progress on Vienna Programme of Action is mixed. As we are at the final stage of its implementation, we must focus on unfinished business. We must do so in synergy with the implementation of the 2030 Agenda and the Addis Ababa Action Agenda.

More than half of LLDCs are also LDCs including my own country Nepal. As our risk and vulnerabilities are higher, our efforts must also be stronger.

Financing is a key to meeting these countries' development and infrastructure needs.

High transport and trade transaction costs remain a major impediment to LLDCs' foreign trade. Improved trade facilitation is vital to address this constraint.

LLDCs' exports need to be diversified. Measures should be taken to increase their trade competitiveness and reduce their vulnerabilities to internal and external shocks.

Developing productive capacity and expanding export base is crucial to set LLDCs on a better growth trajectory.

Building sustainable and resilient transport infrastructure is essential to connect LLDCs to regional and global markets.

The pandemic is a stark reminder of the importance of digital technology. Developing LLDCs' capacity to realize the full potential of digital technologies and e-commerce, and its expansion is critical to offset the constraints facing LLDCs.

Mr. Chairman

Nepal is effortful to offset the constraints posed by landlocked position.

We have integrated the 2030 Agenda and VPoA into our national plans and programs.

We have recently submitted the VPoA National Implementation Report.

Over the years, our focus has been on building infrastructure and enhancing connectivity.

However, our effort alone is not enough. This must be complemented by robust international support in terms of ODA, FDI, aid for trade, debt relief, and climate financing.

To conclude, solidarity and cooperation are the antidotes to changing our destiny of being landlocked.

I believe that the upcoming Kigali Conference on LLDCs will be a significant milestone of renewed commitment and partnership for a better and sustainable future of the LLDCs.

I thank you for your attention.