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Opening Remarks by

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**High Representative
and**

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**Least Developed Countries, Landlocked Developing
Countries and Small Island Developing States**

at

**Enhancing Capacity of Landlocked Developing Countries to
Address Climate Change, energy and water-related
challenges during COVID-19 era: Experiences and Solutions**

Side Event at Water Pavilion at COP26, Glasgow, UK

Wednesday 3 November 2021 (*hybrid format*)

Excellencies,
Distinguished participants,
Ladies and gentlemen,

As you may know, the 32 landlocked developing countries are characterized by:

Remoteness from world markets.
Cumbersome transit procedures, and
Multiple risks resulting in high trade costs.

This leads to limited export earnings, constrained private capital inflows and restricted ability to mobilize domestic resources.

These structural vulnerabilities and limited productive capacities of Landlocked Developing Countries expose them disproportionately to the impact of climate change.

And these impacts are worsening, as these countries are confronted with more frequent extreme weather events such as storms, cyclones, and flooding.

Added to this is an increased frequency of heat waves that are getting hotter, and lasting longer. And disturbed rainfall patterns

are causing prolonged droughts, more intense rainfall, floods, and disrupted water supply.

Over half of LLDCs' land is classified as dryland. And 60% of their population are located in these areas – meaning huge numbers of people are vulnerable to the impact of climate change.

Wildfires are now more common, as seen in the extreme heat waves that took place in Southern Africa in 2019 and in Latin American LLDCs last year.

Meanwhile in the mountainous regions of Bhutan, Nepal, Tajikistan, and Bolivia, rising temperatures are melting glaciers, resulting in more landslides, flash floods and reduced water availability.

Over the long term, threats from this melting include stressed water supplies – impacting agricultural irrigation, fisheries, and navigation. The meltwater that glacial lakes have left behind risk collapsing in sudden and catastrophic glacial lake outburst floods.

The overdependence of LLDCs on climate-sensitive resources - such as agriculture, livestock, forestry, water, and fisheries – make them increasingly vulnerable.

Increased desertification and recurrent droughts in the Sahel region and in Southern Africa have affected agriculture and water security. And there have been detrimental effects on food security, livelihoods and the economy.

The increasing frequency of extreme climate events is compounding those structural weaknesses I mentioned earlier. The human cost is growing, and the burden on national infrastructure projects is increasing.

Look at the impact of tropical cyclone Idai in 2019 which struck Mozambique, Malawi and Zimbabwe with devastating consequences. That same year in South Sudan, heavy rains submerged whole communities that were already facing a humanitarian crisis.

Flooding in LLDCs and transit countries is another element of the climate catastrophe that is compounding existing weaknesses. When transport infrastructure is impacted, transit trade is slowed

or halted - putting further constraints on the ability of these countries to compete on the global market.

The recent IPCC report confirms that climate change is running faster than we are – and we are running out of time.

With continued failures at the global level to meet the promises made in Paris, the latest information tells us that we're heading for 2.7 degrees temperature rise, not 1.5.

For Landlocked Developing Countries, that 1.2 degree difference is like the difference between night and day.

It is vital that we act now by investing in adaptation, mitigation and eventually reversing the effects of climate change.

The LLDCs have limited institutional, human capacity or financial resources to tackle the challenges arising from the climate crisis. And the COVID-19 pandemic has increased their vulnerability to the impact of disasters and reduced their climate change adaptation capacity.

However, there are solutions available to the LLDCs to some of the challenges ahead:

- Sustainable water conservation
- Land restoration and sustainable climate smart agriculture
- Climate-resilient infrastructure
- Renewable energy solutions
- And strengthened early warning systems.

So I look forward to our discussion today to hear the different experiences at a national level - and by the partners working with landlocked developing countries.