

As delivered



Opening Remarks

Ms. Rabab Fatima

**Under-Secretary General and High-Representative
for the Least Developed Countries, Landlocked Developing
Countries
and Small Island Developing States**

**LLDC3 PRIVATE SECTOR FORUM
HIGH-LEVEL CLOSING**

Time: 16:45-17:30, Wednesday, 6 August 2025

**Building 3-08.01 , Awaza Conference Center
Awaza, Turkmenistan**

**H.E. Mr.Mergen Gurdov, Chiar, Chamber of Commerce and
Industry of Turkmenistan**

Excellencies,

Distinguished Representatives from the Private Sector

Dear Friends and Colleagues,

**I congratulate you on the conclusion of a very successful and
impactful first-ever Private Sector Forum of the LLDCs.**

**Allow me at the outset to express my sincere appreciation to the
Government of Turkmenistan for its steadfast support and
cooperation and for the excellent arrangements made for the
Conference.**

**I also thank the members of the private sector advisory group
for their invaluable contributions and leadership in shaping this
Forum.**

**Never before has the private sector enjoyed such a prominent
role in a Conference on landlocked countries. This is not only a
recognition of the growing role of the private sector, but it is also
a call to action.**

Over the past two days, we witnessed rich and forward-leaning conversations. Engagement from business leaders, policy makers, investors and multilateral partners from across sectors and regions has been truly remarkable. The UN Secretary General opened the Forum's meeting.

Together, you have delivered an impressive range of practical and innovative solutions, all tailored, to the unique development challenges of LLDCs.

We have united around that shared vision: to unlock the full potential of the 32 landlocked developing countries.

The Forum has produced a strong set of recommendations across four thematic pillars - trade and transit, economic diversification, digital transformation, and financing.

These are not abstract ideas, but concrete roadmaps for action that reflect the urgency and ambition of LLDCs.

This Forum has powerfully reaffirmed four key positions:

First, [that] trade facilitation and regional integration are indispensable.

We heard the call to modernize processes, embrace regional cooperation, and leverage digital platforms.

These are vital steps to overcome geographical barriers, integrate into global value chains, and reduce the marginalization of LLDCs.

Secondly, vibrant ecosystems are essential for youth entrepreneurship, innovation, and inclusive business growth.

We discussed how to cultivate environments where new ideas can flourish, and diverse enterprises can thrive.

Third, digital transformation is a necessity, not a luxury.

Powered by sustainable energy, it is the cornerstone of resilient economies.

This is particularly true for rural connectivity, youth empowerment, and narrowing the gender digital divide in communities.

Fourth, unlocking private capital is paramount.

Public finance alone cannot meet the scale of infrastructure needs or the demands for more diversified, technology-driven economies.

Therefore, mobilizing private investment, through innovative financial services and robust investment pipelines, is essential to realizing these ambitions.

The role of women cannot be overstated. Women in LLDCs are central actors in agriculture, trade, and informal sectors.

Empowering them is not only a matter of equity, but of economic necessity.

Distinguished Colleagues,

A milestone outcome of this Forum is the formal launch of the Global Business Network for LLDCs. Heartiest congratulations!

[This will be] A new platform dedicated to bringing together the private sector, investors, governments, and UN partners.

A similar, successful model is already in operation for Small Island Developing States – and using this template, we will create a Network for LLDCs that will:

- **Champion cross-sector collaboration**
- **Advance enabling policies and capacity building, and**
- **Mobilize capital and investment for the priorities identified in the APOA.**

I invite you all to join the network and to be part of this journey, driving investment and innovation in support of the aims and ambitions of the Awaza Programme of Action.

Excellencies,

Throughout the Private Sector Forum, increasing investment has emerged as a clear priority.

I am therefore pleased to share that my Office is working with partners, including the Global Partnership Forum and World Association of Investment Promotion Agencies, to prepare a dedicated investment promotion compendium for LLDCs.

The message from this Forum is clear and urgent: the private sector is no bystander; it is a central partner in LLDC's journey towards sustainable and resilient development.

I am confident that the priorities for action you have identified today will guide our collective efforts in the years ahead.

The United Nations system will be with you on this journey to ensure that these ambitions are realized.

Let us move forward from Awaza with renewed determination to unlock business, to unlock development, and - above all - to unlock the future for LLDCs.

Thank you for your participation, your insights, and your leadership.

I wish you all fruitful engagements throughout the remainder of this Conference - and look forward to continuing this collaboration in the months and years to come.

Together, our partnerships will shape a decade of unprecedented opportunity and transformative development, progress, and prosperity.

Thank you.