

Statement

By

**Ambassador and Permanent Representative of Botswana
to the United Nations and other International
Organisations at Geneva, Dr Athaliah Lesiba
Molokomme on behalf of
H.E Collen Vixen Kelapile**

**Ambassador and Permanent Representative of Botswana
to the United Nations in New York
Chair of the Group of Landlocked Developing Countries**

During the

Inaugural Meeting of the National Focal Point Network

Under the Theme:

***“Towards accelerated implementation of the VPoA and
building coherence with the 2030 Agenda for
sustainable development: the role of National Focal
Points”***

16 June 2022, Geneva

- **Ms. Heidi Schroderus-Fox, Acting High Representative for the Least Developed Countries, Landlocked Developing Countries and Small Island Developing States, (UN-OHRLLS);**
- **Colleagues from the United Nations Development Coordination Office (DCO);**
- **Distinguished LLDCs National Focal Points;**
- **Ladies and gentlemen.**

1. It is with great pleasure that I participate in this important Meeting on behalf of my colleague His Excellency Collen Vixen Kelapile, Ambassador and Permanent Representative of Botswana to the United Nations in New York, who could not join us today, to launch the National Focal Points Network for Landlocked Developing Countries (LLDCs).

2. At the outset, I take this opportunity to congratulate Ambassador Fatima on her recent appointment by the UN Secretary-General as the High Representative of UN-OHRLLS;

you can count on Botswana as Chair of the LLDCs to support you on your tenure.

3. I further express my sincere appreciation and gratitude to H.E Ms. Schroderus-Fox for her dedication and support to our Group of countries during her Acting role.

Excellencies,

4. I welcome this Capital-based Focal Points Network as it comes at an opportune moment for us, as we approach preparations for the Third UN Conference for LLDCs; and also, as our countries make all efforts to recover from the devastating impact of the COVID-19 pandemic.

5. As noted by the High Representative in her remarks, the LLDCs are amongst the hardest hit by the pandemic which has reversed many hard-earned development gains over the years.

6. The pandemic has also impeded all efforts towards achieving the 2030 Agenda and its 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and our ability to meet the objectives of the Vienna Programme of Action (VPoA) for LLDCs.
7. To recover and build back sustainably, it is therefore incumbent upon all of us to be creative and adopt new policies and resilient methods to mitigate any future shocks.
8. These challenging times also call for enhancing coherence between global, regional and national initiatives to facilitate recovery and ensure efficient use of the limited capacities and resources at our disposal.
9. As Chair of the LLDCs, Botswana therefore welcomes the National Focal Points Network as a means to contribute to enhancing coherence and building synergies.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

10. The success of global and regional development frameworks depends on the full implementation of agreed commitments at national level. Whilst emphasis has been put on enhancing national level implementation, including by mainstreaming of these development frameworks, there has also been recognition that implementation in developing countries -- including the LLDCs – is lagging behind.

11. The Vienna Programme of Action (VPoA) recognizes the importance of facilitating national level implementation and invites Governments of both LLDCs and transit countries to mainstream the objectives of the VPoA into their national strategies.

12. The midterm review of the VPoA, held in 2019, acknowledged that while progress was achieved much more still need to be done.

13. There has been a number of challenges for LLDCs, including limited capacities and in some cases lack of awareness on implementation of obligations and opportunities. As a result, there is always an information gap between what is happening at the multilateral fora and the capitals.
14. For instance, Missions of most LLDCs lack capacities to deal with the ever-growing demand of the competing multilateral agendas as well as the complexity of new and emerging issues.
15. Furthermore, coordination between government entities and other stakeholders has also been cited as a major challenge impeding national level implementation.
16. In this connection, the initiative to establish the National Focal Points for LLDCs is indeed timely as it will help bridge these shortcomings that exist between the capital-based experts and delegations in New York, Geneva as well as other relevant multilateral stations.

17. I believe that National Focal Points will also be the anchor that brings us together with the relevant stakeholders at national level to ensure a whole-of-government approach and timely flow of information and feedback.
18. This is indeed a good reinforcement, that will ensure national ownership due to the close and constant involvement of the Capitals through the national focal points.
19. I implore the National Focal Points to work closely with the relevant UN System organizations, including the Resident Coordinator Offices to ensure well-coordinated efforts that propels LLDCs towards achieving the SDGs and VPoA.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

20. I reassure you that Botswana, as the Global Chair of the Group of LLDCs in New York and Coordinator in Geneva, remains committed to driving the agenda of the Group in the UN and other relevant Entities.

21. We will continue to make all efforts to ensure that the combined voice of LLDCs is heard in the global discussions and that decisions taken factor our needs, interests and priorities.
22. We do recognize that we can only succeed if we all work together. We therefore count on the active engagement of the Capital-based delegates, especially through this Network.
23. Let me close by wishing you a productive and successful meeting. I look forward to our continued engagement, as we advance the LLDCs agenda forward.

I thank you for your kind attention.