

# **Report of the Annual Ministerial Meeting of Landlocked Developing Countries**

**Held virtually**

**on 23 September 2020**

## Summary

On 23rd September 2020, the Foreign Ministers of the Group of Landlocked Developing Countries (LLDCs) held their 19th Annual Meeting in New York in the sidelines of the 75th Session of the General Assembly's high-level general debate. H.E. Mr. Mukhtar Tileuberdi, Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Kazakhstan chaired the Ministerial Meeting in his capacity as the Global Chair of the Group of LLDCs.

The Meeting was held under the theme “*Partnering for accelerated implementation of the Vienna Programme of Action and achieving sustainable development in LLDCs in the era of COVID-19.*” The meeting aimed to; review the progress made by the LLDCs in the implementation of the Vienna Programme of Action and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, identify challenges faced and share knowledge, experiences and innovative approaches to accelerate implementation, discuss the socio-economic impact of COVID-19 on LLDCs, share national experiences and identify recommendations for mitigating its impact, identify innovative mechanisms for partnership building and resource mobilization to accelerate the implementation of the VPoA and the achievement of the SDGs by LLDCs.

The meeting noted that the LLDCs continue to make efforts to facilitate implementation of the Vienna Programme of Action however the progress achieved was not enough to achieve VPoA goals by 2024 and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. The meeting expressed concern that the social and economic impacts of COVID-19 will not only hamper the LLDCs' ability to achieve the SDGs, but also reverse some of the progress made thus far.

Ministers adopted a declaration to address the structural challenges that hamper development progress in LLDCs. Some of the elements of the declaration include, the need for greater efforts towards building robust transport and energy infrastructure, increasing digital connectivity, facilitating smooth movement of goods, strengthening productive capacities, promoting diversification, enhancing regional integration and cooperation, addressing climate change, desertification, glacial lakes outbursts and other disasters, building strong private sector and promoting FDI.

The meeting also adopted a Roadmap for Accelerated Implementation of the VPoA in the remaining five years. The Roadmap identifies key actions and concrete activities and deliverables by the UN system and other regional and international organizations towards accelerated implementation of the Vienna Programme of Action.

The meeting called on all key stakeholders to further strengthen their efforts to accelerate the implementation of the VPoA and support LLDCs with the resources to respond to the health impact of COVID-19.

The meeting was attended by Ministers and representatives of LLDCs, transit countries, and development partners, UN agencies and other regional and international organizations.

## **A. Introduction**

1. The Government of the Republic of Kazakhstan and Global Chair of the LLDC Group with the support of United Nations Office of the High-Representative for the Least Developed Countries, Landlocked Developing Countries and Small Island Developing States (UN-OHRLLS) organized the Meeting of Ministers of Foreign Affairs of Landlocked Developing Countries that was held on 23<sup>rd</sup> September 2020, in a virtual format on Interprefy. The Meeting was held in the sidelines of the 75th session of the General Assembly's high-level general debate.
2. H.E. Mr. Mukhtar Tileuberdi, Minister for Foreign Affairs of Kazakhstan chaired the meeting in his capacity as the Global Chair of the Group of Landlocked Developing Countries.

## **B. Attendance**

The meeting was attended by delegates, including Ministers and representatives of the following LLDCs, transit countries and development partners: Afghanistan, Algeria, Angola, Argentina, Armenia, Austria, Azerbaijan, Bhutan, Bolivia, Botswana, Brazil, Burkina Faso, Cambodia, Canada, Chad, Chile, China, Côte D'Ivoire, Denmark, Eswatini, Ethiopia, Germany, India, Ireland, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyz Republic, Lao People's Democratic Republic, Lesotho, Malawi, Mali, Moldova, Mongolia, Nepal, Niger, Nigeria, Paraguay, Qatar, Romania, Russia, Rwanda, Senegal, Singapore, Sweden, Tajikistan, Turkey, Turkmenistan, Uganda, Uzbekistan, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, United States, Viet Nam, United States of America, and Zimbabwe. Representatives from: The Asian Development Bank, The Common Fund for Commodities (CFC), the Department of Economic and Social Affairs (DESA), European Investment Bank, the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (UN ESCAP), the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), International Chamber of Commerce (ICC), International Development Law Organization (IDLO), International Renewable Energy Agency (IRENA), International Seabed Authority (ISA), Islamic Development Bank (IsDB), International Trade Centre (ITC) The International Think Tank for LLDCs (ITT LLDC), International Telecommunications Union (ITU), the Joint Inspection Union (JIU), Office of the Special Adviser on Africa, Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe, United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD), United Nations Economic Commission for Africa (UN ECA), The United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD), United National Development Programme (UNDP), United Nations Office for Disaster Risk Reduction (UNDRR), The United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE), United National Environment Programme (UNEP), United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), United Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO), United Nations Organization Stabilization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (MONUSCO), United Nations Population Fund, World Intellectual Property Organization (WIPO), United Nations World Food Program (WFP), United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, United Nations Foundation, United Nations Office for the Coordinator of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA), United Nation Resident Coordinator Offices, United Nations Office for Project Services (UNOPS), World Trade Organization (WTO), World Customs Organization (WCO), and the United Nations Office of the High Representative for the Least Developed Countries, Landlocked Developing Countries and Small Island Developing States (UN-OHRLLS) also attended.

3. The complete list of participants is presented as annex 3 of this report.

### C. Opening Session

4. The meeting was officially opened by H.E. Mr. Mukhtar Tileuberdi, Minister for Foreign Affairs of Kazakhstan, in his capacity as Chair of the Group of LLDCs. H.E. Mr. Volkan Bozkir, President of the 75th Session of the United Nations General Assembly and H.E. Mr. Antonio Guterres, Secretary-General of the United Nations also delivered remarks during the opening session.
5. In his opening remarks, **H.E. Mr. Mukhtar Tileuberdi, Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Kazakhstan and Global Chair of the Group of LLDCs**, recalled that the Midterm Review of the implementation of the Vienna Programme of Action held last December revealed that substantial collective progress has been made on the implementation of the VPoA but progress was not enough to reach the objectives of the VPoA by 2024. He warned that the impacts of COVID-19 threaten to reverse the hard-won gains made by the LLDCs and that without adequate financial assistance, LLDCs risk being left behind. H.E. Mr. Tileuberdi emphasized that as the Global Chair of the LLDC Group, Kazakhstan had actively engaged during relevant processes throughout the year to advocate for and raise awareness of the LLDC Agenda and would continue to do so. He added that the Chair had delivered 26 statements on behalf of the Group since the beginning of the year.
6. H.E. Mr. Tileuberdi stressed that the effective implementation of the VPoA was critical to the achievement of the SDGs, especially as second phase of implementing the Vienna Programme and the Decade of Action for the SDGs had begun. He informed that the Roadmap for accelerated implementation of the VPoA in its remaining 5 years was requested by the Chair and supported by the UN Secretary-General. He thanked the USG and High Representative for LDCs, LLDCs and SIDS and her office for elaborating the Roadmap, as well as all the UN and international agencies who actively engaged in the process. The Minister expressed confidence that the Roadmap would promote cooperation amongst UN agencies and international organizations, transit countries, development partners, private sector and other interested stakeholders and prevent duplication to ensure better practical results on the ground. He concluded by reiterating LLDCs' strength in unity and calling for collective action to garner greater international support for LLDCs' efforts to achieve sustainable development and to build back better.
7. In his remarks, the **President of 75th Session of the United Nations General Assembly, Mr. Volkan Bozkir**, highlighted that he had just recently informed the High-Level Meeting commemorating the 75th Anniversary of the United Nations meeting that, "We must support the United Nations to evolve into a more agile, effective and accountable organization, so it is fit for purpose and can deliver the future we want." He indicated that he would like to reiterate the same words to the LLDC Ministerial Meeting. He noted that while no country in the world escaped the struggles associated with COVID-19, those faced by LLDCs were particularly severe. He underscored that limited access to ports hinders shipments of crucial medical supplies and pharmaceuticals, and already weak exports were being further strained. He indicated that the most vulnerable were being hit hardest.
8. H.E. Mr. Bozkir noted that COVID-19 represents the greatest global challenge since the end of the Second World War and required global cooperation at greater levels than ever before. He warned that failure to act swiftly would only entrench and widen existing inequalities. He stressed that immediate support was required to fulfil the Reform Agenda and ensure that the UN was fit for purpose. He urged the meeting to strive to ensure meaningful progress was made in implementing the Paris Agreement, the Addis Ababa Action Agenda, the Sendai Framework on Disaster Risk Reduction, Vienna Programmes of Action, and the UN Convention to Combat Desertification. He underscored the need to re-energize efforts to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals through the Decade of Action.

9. He pointed out that the SDGs have the potential to serve as a blueprint for resilient recovery from COVID-19. He emphasised that it was essential that the international community consider and account for the contextual circumstances of LLDCs. He emphasized that measures must be taken to facilitate their participation in the global, sustainable recovery and reminded that each country's development conditions, and context differ and therefore discouraged the copy and paste solution. He stressed that Members States must work together with flexibility and adaptability to achieve success. For LLDCs, he underlined that it meant strengthening technical capacity building, facilitating access to financial resources, enhancing technological capacity building, and improving access to markets. He accentuated that as President of the General Assembly, he promoted the use of emerging technologies, strengthened data, and results-oriented action.
10. HE. Mr. Volkan Bozkir concluded his remarks by assuring the Ministers that they could count on his Presidency to extend full support to the implementation of the Roadmap on accelerated implementation of the Vienna Programme of Action. He also indicated that he will work to finalize the modalities of the high-level mid-term review of the decade for action on water, and the high-level meeting on the water-related goals of the SDGs, both of which were critical to LLDCs.
11. In his statement, **H.E. Mr. António Guterres, Secretary-General of the United Nations**, noted that the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic was exacerbating the plight of LLDCs. He highlighted that trade, transport and distribution have been upended; exports and imports have been affected by problems at borders, lockdowns, trade restrictions, disruptions in global supply chains and commodity price shocks; and the risk of debt distress looms. He underscored that these new challenges were affecting the LLDCs threatening economic growth, jobs, livelihoods and, ultimately, the fulfilment of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and Paris Agreement on Climate Change.
12. The Secretary General pointed out that he and the United Nations were there to partner with the LLDCs on finding solutions. He indicated that the UN will continue working with LLDCs to: pursue new technologies for low-emission, safe means of transport and infrastructure during the challenging time; mobilize private and public funding to unlock and scale up solutions; and support LLDCs' transition from dependence on economically volatile fossil fuels to renewable energy systems. He stressed that as the UN embarked on a Decade of Action to deliver the Sustainable Development Goals and strive to recover better from the pandemic, the need to keep the focus on stopping the pandemic was key. He noted that the availability of future vaccines to all developing countries, including LLDCs, was fundamental to any sustainable global recovery. He emphasized the need to ensure that the VPoA and all the global agendas– from Addis Ababa to Paris to the 2030 Agenda – were at the core of recovery. He stressed the need to protect countries against defaults and debt crises noting that in many heavily indebted countries, economies were suffering greatly from acute unemployment, the drop-off of tourism and remittances. He underscored the need to ensure that resources and debt relief reach all countries that need it, in order to create space for investments in recovery and the Sustainable Development Goals. He noted that combatting illicit financial flows was also necessary to ensure that resources were channelled where they were needed most.
13. Mr. António Guterres pointed out that looking at the crucial period ahead, there was need to increase the trade potential of LLDCs. He emphasised that investment in transport infrastructure as well as key enablers include digital technology and regional integration, including through better cooperation between LLDCs and transit countries were crucial. He noted that the new Roadmap for Accelerated Implementation of the Vienna Programme of Action could provide further guidance and momentum. He assured that once adopted by the Ministers, UN-OHRLLS

and the UN system were committed to fully support its implementation. He indicated that he will also continue to strengthen OHRLLS capacities.

14. He noted that climate action was essential in LLDCs' COVID19 response and recovery, especially in creating green jobs and aligning national plans and budgets with the SDGs and the Paris Agreement, to help drive recovery towards a resilient and sustainable future. He requested LLDCs to implement the six principles set out for a climate-positive recovery which include: Invest in green jobs and sectors; Don't bailout polluting industries; End fossil fuel subsidies; Take climate risks and opportunities in all policy and financial decisions; Work together; and leave no one behind.
15. In conclusion he noted that as the United Nations marks its 75<sup>th</sup> anniversary, they were determined to meet the test of the pivotal moment, including through the reforms to the UN development system. He assured the Ministers that the United Nations system continued to support their efforts to realize sustainable, inclusive development as they respond and ultimately recover from the COVID-19 crisis.

**D. Overview of progress in implementing the Vienna Programme of Action for LLDCs and impact of COVID-19 by Ms. Fekitamoeloa Katoa 'Utoikamanu, United Nations Under-Secretary-General and High Representative for Least Developed Countries, Landlocked Developing Countries and Small Island Developing States (UN-OHRLLS)**

16. USG, Ms. Fekitamoeloa Katoa 'Utoikamanu highlighted that despite the continued efforts by LLDCs to address their development challenges they remain behind in achieving the SDGs and the objectives of the VPoA. She noted that LLDCs lag behind the averages of all the developing countries and of the world on many socioeconomic development indicators. She indicated that LLDC average growth in real per capita GDP declined from 2.3% in 2018 to 1.4% in 2019, their unemployment rate stood at an average 4.5% in 2019 and their food insecurity indicators continue to exhibit deteriorating trends. She also indicated that health-related indicators such as maternal, under-five and infant mortality, to HIV incidence, and vaccinations recorded a modest progress in 2019. She expressed concern that COVID-19 threatened to reverse the limited progress. She pointed out that climate change impact especially drought, desertification, land degradation and the melting of glaciers continued to be of great concern for LLDCs.
17. Regarding the progress on the implementation of the VPoA, Ms. 'Utoikamanu pointed out that LLDCs' share of global merchandise trade remained low at about 1 percent in 2019 and their exports continue to be concentrated on very limited products with 26 of the LLDCs dependent on primary commodities for more than 60% of their exports. She also highlighted that very little progress was achieved on structural economic transformation with share of manufacturing value added in GDP remaining at about 10 percent in 2019 and share of services value added in GDP declining from 47.3% in 2017 to 46.6% in 2019. She expressed concern that the limited economic diversification left LLDCs more vulnerable to new shocks and disruptions including from COVID-19. She recalled the importance of addressing high trade costs faced by LLDCs and noted that it was encouraging that all LLDCs that are WTO members had ratified the WTO Trade Facilitation Agreement. She however noted that implementation remains low at about 35%. She warned that progress on trade facilitation was also threatened by introduction of measures aimed to curb the spread of COVID-19. She thus called for enhanced support to build the capacity of the LLDCs and transit developing countries to implement initiatives aimed at facilitating trade. She highlighted that transport infrastructure development in LLDCs lagged and continued to face challenges including

missing links, operational limitations and limited funding. On energy, she informed that the average proportion of population with access to electricity in LLDCs increased from 56.3% in 2017 to 58.7% in 2018. On ICT, she pointed out that the proportion of individuals using internet was estimated to be 25.3% in 2018 which is way below the world average of 51.4% and that the costs for broadband continued to be high.

18. Ms. 'Utoikamanu emphasized the need for enhanced support to enable LLDCs achieve the VPoA objectives and the SDGs but expressed great concern that ODA and FDI to LLDCs continued to decline and remained concentrated in a few LLDCs. She underscored the need for faster and enhanced multilateral efforts and greater cooperation at regional and sub-regional levels. She stressed the fundamental role of LLDCs to achieving full implementation and the VPoA and thus called on LLDCs to redouble domestic efforts to implement the VPoA including by mainstreaming its priorities into national development strategies and sectoral plans. She informed that to play their part, 40 UN system agencies and relevant international and regional organizations contributed to the development of the Roadmap for Accelerated Implementation of the VPoA to support the implementation of the VPoA and help address the challenges of LLDCs. She also stressed that the support of UN Resident Coordinators was fundamental.
19. On OHRLLS efforts to address the COVID-19 impact she informed that OHRLLS organized several events on topics pertaining to; addressing sovereign debt distress; Food Security; and universal Access to Resilient Connectivity. She also informed that OHRLLS in collaboration with WCO issued a joint statement calling for trade and transit facilitation to and from LLDCs during the pandemic. In addition, OHRLLS, UNCTAD, UNECA, UNECE, UNECLAC and UNESCAP issued a joint call for Smooth Transit and Transport Facilitation to and from LLDCs. She emphasized that LLDCs needed faster, deeper and greater cooperation at all levels to address COVID-19 and mitigate its impact. She called on Governments and organizations in the regions to collaborate to keep cross-border transport corridors and regional transport networks open while protecting public health. She also emphasized that Governments around the globe must go beyond minimizing disruptions to international transport and must view the crisis as an opportunity to reorient international freight transport operations towards a more sustainable path.

#### **E. General Debate**

20. Ministers and high-level officials representing landlocked developing countries delivered statements during the interactive debate.
21. **H.E. Mr. Antonio Rivas Palacios, Minister of Foreign Affairs of Paraguay** highlighted that the COVID-19 pandemic had affected every country in the world, and the LLDCs were suffering disproportionate consequences during the health crisis. He noted that measures taken such as closing borders and restricting the movement of people and goods had devastating impact in economic growth and sustainable development. He emphasized that international cooperation was therefore more necessary than ever, especially from transit countries and development partners. He also emphasizes the importance of digital solutions to boost economic dynamism.
22. H.E. Mr. Antonio Rivas Palacios made a call that measures taken to fight the spread of the novel coronavirus should be rational and temporary and should not constitute an obstacle in the flow of essential goods, particularly medical equipment and supplies towards LLDCs. He emphasized that the pandemic should not be an excuse to further exclude LLDCs from access to global markets and the benefits of international trade. He stressed that initiatives such as

Financing the Sustainable Development Goals during the COVID-19 pandemic and beyond and others related to trade facilitation were fundamental. He emphasized the need to double efforts for the effective implementation of the VPoA. He expressed his delegation's confidence on the Roadmap on Accelerated Implementation of the VPoA in the remaining 5 years. He expressed Paraguay's commitment to multilateralism and international law and emphasized that it was crucial to abide by and observe the purposes and principles of the United Nations Charter in order to build a fair and prosperous world while leaving no one behind.

24. **H.E. Mr. Chingiz Aidarbekov, Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Kyrgyzstan**, stated that his country was actively supporting and implementing key points of the VPoA as the important element of the Global Agenda for Development. He added that since the Midterm Review of the Implementation of the VPoA in 2019, Kyrgyzstan had done a considerable amount of work at the national level. He noted that specifically, Kyrgyzstan continued to implement the National Development Strategy until 2040 and Export Development Programme until 2022. He added that in the framework of the Year of Regional Development, Digitalization and Children Support, the region was working on export development.
23. The Minister highlighted the importance of transport and transit corridors connecting economies and supporting development for LLDCs, which was threatened by the pandemic. He noted the challenges faced by Central Asian countries was the remoteness from main sea ports. He noted that the situation complicated delivery of medicines, humanitarian aid, and bringing back Kyrgyz nationals and that demonstrated the importance of support to trade and economic cooperation and promotion of unimpeded transit of freight. As such, he noted that quarantine measures should not turn into economic isolation. On the impact of the pandemic on economic development, mutual trade, disruption of demand and supply chains, budgets' deficits and unemployment, the Minister called for attention towards the importance of debt relief. He welcomed the G20 initiative on implementation of the debt moratorium for developing countries and highlighted Kyrgyzstan's President, H.E. Mr. Sooronbai Zheenbekov's called for a comprehensive debt restructuring and the importance of broader implementation of debt-to-sustainable development project swaps.
24. **H.E. Mr. Rasmus Prehn, Minister for Development Cooperation of Denmark**, acknowledged that the LLDCs were among the most vulnerable when global crisis hits. He added that Denmark had decided to act and had set aside 1 billion Danish Kroner to address the health and socioeconomic impacts of COVID-19 in developing countries. He added that the pandemic adds to the list of existing global challenges, highlighting that meeting the Paris target of limiting global temperature increase to 1.5 degrees and SDGs was still out of reach. He however highlighted that it was now an opportunity to work for a future that was more fair, equal, and greener, conveying that Denmark and other Nordic countries have come together to make sure that they built back better and greener.
25. The Minister added that he will soon be launching the third Danish support package to COVID-19 initiatives. He informed that the endeavor would combine tackling the problem of climate change and solving the economic crisis and promoting job creation through the creation of millions of green jobs, by investing in renewable energy, energy efficiency, and water. He added that Denmark was expecting to further increase climate financing to the poorest and most vulnerable countries in the coming years with a focus on energy, water, and other crucial areas. He reaffirmed Denmark's solidarity with the most vulnerable developing countries.



26. **H.E. Mr. Zohrab Mnatsakanyan, Minister of Foreign Affairs of Armenia** expressed his gratitude to the Secretary-General for his leadership during the unprecedented times, as well as the Under-Secretary-General and High Representative for her support to the LLDC group. He stressed the role of VPoA as the blueprint for cooperation between LLDCs, transit developing countries and their development partners. He noted that the impacts of COVID-19 had affected every corner of the world, but that vulnerable countries such as LLDCs, that were already suffering from structural constraints, were being disproportionately affected, especially following the lockdown measures. He called for urgent unlocking of the LLDCs' trade and productive capacities and their integration into world markets as a priority in order to deliver on the VPoA. The Minister highlighted that the Roadmap for Accelerated Implementation of the VPoA was an essential step in accelerating concerted engagement of the international community in assisting the LLDCs to mitigate the impacts of the pandemic and getting them back on track to achieve the SDGs. He highlighted the importance of consistent monitoring, review and reporting on the implementation of the commitments in the Roadmap. He stressed that efforts to implement the VPoA should include commitment and action by all stakeholders, including LLDCs' transit neighbors.
27. H.E. Mnatsakanyan noted that the current crisis was also an opportunity for meaningful change and to build back better, calling for Member States to address inequality, discrimination and lack of inclusion in their response and recovery efforts. He noted the need to look at pre-existing barriers to development and called for dismantling of unilateral measures that prevent LLDCs' access to the sea, undermine regional cooperation and peace and security and violate international conventions and agreements. He highlighted that inclusive cooperation between LLDCs, and transit countries was essential to removing barriers to the free movement of people, goods and services. He stressed that promotion of human rights, democratic values and equality was key for Armenia, especially for recovery efforts. He noted that fostering of innovation and ICT sector development were also a priority for Armenia in particular towards increasing foreign trade. The Minister expressed Armenia's commitment to the full implementation of the VPoA.
28. **H. E. Mr. Soltan bin Saad Al-Muraikhi, Minister of State for Foreign Affairs of Qatar** stated that the specific needs of the LLDCs requires an enhanced effort to pursue and implement the SDGs and the VPoA that defines their aspirations and priorities. He added that in line with Qatar's commitment to partnership and solidarity in achieving the 2030 Agenda, this success cannot be achieved without paying extra attention to the least developed countries (LDCs). He drew attention to the Fifth United Nations Conference on the LDCs being hosted in Doha in January 2022, expressing hope that it will be a good opportunity to introduce transformative changes in the lives of those living in the most vulnerable countries.
29. Regarding efforts to combat the risks of climate change, the Minister stated that Qatar played an initiating and pioneering role in the Climate Action Summit of December 2019, where H.E. the Emir of Qatar pledged USD100m to support the LDCs and SIDS in addressing climate change. He informed that the Qatar Fund for Development was developing a mechanism through a 10-year strategy to help those countries achieve their goals through the Paris Agreement and for Sustainable Development. The Minister affirmed that Qatar will stay committed to the spirit of cooperation and partnership and spare no effort in supporting the aspirations of the LLDCs and their path towards sustainable and inclusive development.
30. **Ms. Armida Salsiah Alisjahbana, Executive Secretary of ESCAP**, noted that the VPoA symbolizes the aspirations of the LLDCs on their path towards sustainable development. She informed that since the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic, there have been considerable negative impacts on the 12 LLDCs of the Asia-Pacific region, including additional costs due

to connectivity restrictions, 7% increase in trade costs, and 10-15% decrease in trade volumes. She proposed three strategic directions to mitigate socio-economic impacts as well as recover better from the crisis. First, she suggested that Member States should enhance sustainable regional connectivity, with a focus on greater digitalization in connectivity sectors. She added that strengthening of domestic regulatory policies and institutional changes was key for ensuing partnerships with transit countries. Second, she highlighted the need to facilitate seamless trade, with robust public health measures to mitigate border closures while minimizing physical contact. Third, she called for structural economic transformation to remain a priority, adding that the COVID-19 crisis offers an opportunity for economies to transition towards modern service sectors. She further highlighted sustainable financing, human capital development and technology-driven policies as key policy drivers.

31. The Executive Secretary emphasized ESCAP's support to Member States in the context of transport cooperation along the Asian Highway and Trans-Asian Railway Network, the Framework Agreement on Facilitation of Cross-Border Paperless Trade in Asia and the Pacific and the Asia-Pacific Information Superhighway. She noted that digital, resilient and decarbonized are three guiding principles to build back better for regional connectivity. She called for common vision, shared responsibility and solidarity for a full and timely implementation of the VPoA.
32. In his statement, **H.E. Mr. Jeyhun Bayramov, Minister of Foreign Affairs of Azerbaijan** informed the meeting that his country had adopted the Action Plan, that served as anti-crisis response to the pandemic and also a conduit to serve multiple goals of sustainable development in the post-pandemic period. He added that Azerbaijan allocated \$10 million to WHO to support countries in Africa, Asia and Latin America. The Minister also highlighted Azerbaijan's leadership in convening the special sessions of the UN General Assembly and the Summit of the Non-Alignment Movement Contact Group.
33. He drew attention to the vulnerabilities that LLDCs face, such as cross-border restrictions and border closures, which increase the need for enhanced connectivity and sustainable functioning of international trade and transport corridors. He cited Azerbaijan, Turkey, and Central Asia's collaboration and coordination which has ensured the smooth flow of critical supplies during the crisis. He conveyed that regional integration can play an important role through supporting regional trade agreements. He added that innovative solutions need to be implied for improving digital freight corridors, including blockchain technologies. He stated that Azerbaijan has been an enabler of inter- and intra-regional transport connectivity projects, asserting that this makes Azerbaijan into a trans-regional logistical hub. He cited the East-West Trans-Caspian International Transport Route, North-South, South-West and North-West trade routes as the key infrastructure projects designed to increase transit capacity across Eurasia. The Minister added that Afghanistan, Azerbaijan and Turkmenistan have formed a new cooperation to promote the Lapis Lazuli transport route. He added that Azerbaijan's transport sector has undergone significant reforms in terms of upgrading physical infrastructure and improving the regulatory framework; Azerbaijan's government has invested more than \$25 billion in transport infrastructure alone. He cited initiatives such as the Baku-Tbilisi-Kars, Baku International Sea Trade Port, and the Alat Free Economic Zone (AFEZ), which he stated will increase opportunities for trans-regional growth in trade and investment.
34. He informed participants that Azerbaijan has enhanced its role as a reliable energy supplier, adding that the Southern Gas Corridor was reaching completion. He added, however, that the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict had put critical infrastructure at risk.

35. In his statement, **H.E. Mr. Pradeep Kumar Gyawali, Minister of Foreign Affairs of Nepal** recounted the multiple effects COVID-19 had on the world, stressing that the fallouts of the crisis on LLDCs had been much more severe as these countries struggle to balance both the health and economic crisis. He highlighted the excessive commodity dependence attributable to many LLDCs, exposed these countries to the shocks and fluctuations in the international markets. He added that infrastructure investment is a lifeline for LLDCs' trade and development, adding that the potentials of e-commerce and digital technologies could transform LLDCs by liberating their economies from geographical challenges. Therefore, he called for access to easy, affordable and reliable technology. He added that even though the adverse effects of climate change, such as glacial lake outbursts, floods, retreating glaciers, and desertification, pose a serious threat to LLDCs, the current climate finance architecture has no dedicated window for LLDCs.
36. Regarding the Mid-term Review of the VPoA, Minister Gyawali stated that the group must build on the Call for Action contained in the political declaration, adding that the group must intensify efforts to implement the VPoA's six priority areas on the national, regional, and global level. He asserted that it was pertinent to maintain an effective partnership between and among LLDCs, their transit neighbors, development partners, the UN and other stakeholders, for which the Roadmap for Accelerating the Implementation of the VPoA was an important step. The Minister outlined two steps for transforming LLDCs into land-linked countries. Firstly, he asserted that the group must put in place a predictable and reliable transit regime and connectivity infrastructures. Secondly, he called for enhanced productive capacities by capitalizing on the new technologies and embracing low-volume high-value products. He remarked that all means of support, including ODA, trade, technology, and capacity building need to be deployed to support the LLDCs. He asserted that Nepal had mainstreamed the 2030 Agenda and the VPoA into its national plans and programs. He reaffirmed Nepal's commitment to cooperation and solidarity for promoting the Group's common interests and ensuring no one is left behind.
37. In her statement **H.E. Ms. Olga Algayerova, Executive Secretary of UNECE** noted that the Euro-Asian region hosts about 1/3 of the world's landlocked countries, including some of the largest ones and those who are farthest from open sea. She indicated that UNECE works to facilitate the integration of LLDCs into the global economy giving the example that UNECE is the custodian of 59 legal instruments on safe, sustainable inland transport to which 150 UN Member States are contracting parties to at least one of them.
38. Ms. Algayerova noted that in the coronavirus context, transport and trade facilitation standards and digital technologies can limit physical checks in transit and at borders, thus mitigating infection risk. The same is true for electronic exchange of information and paperless solutions. She indicated that UNECE leads several global and regional efforts in the digitalization efforts. She mentioned that following the COVID-19 outbreak, UNECE kick-started accelerated implementation of the eTIR International System which ensures contactless and paperless border crossing, reducing transport times by up to 80% and costs by up to 38%. She pointed out that UNECE's electronic consignment notes, such as eCMR, allow for electronic tracking and tracing of goods and vehicles. UNECE's UN Centre for Trade Facilitation and Electronic Business (UN/CEFACT) provides 480 recommendations, trade standards, and tools, used by governments and businesses worldwide.
39. Ms. Algayerova highlighted that in immediate response to the pandemic, UNECE created an online "Observatory on Border Crossings Status due to COVID-19", which provides a real-time overview of up to-date information regarding freight border crossing limitations, to keep vital supply operational. She also noted that UNECE established an informal

Multidisciplinary Advisory Group on Transport Responses to COVID-19, gathering ministries of transport, economy, health, customs committees, road and railway transport operators, shipping companies and logistics providers. The Advisory Group takes stock of challenges to inland transport and discusses recommendations to increase preparedness for and resilience to future outbreaks. She also said that UNECE also works on harmonization of technical and regulatory standards, prioritization of infrastructure networks, development of corridors, capacity building, and cooperation between LLDCs and transit countries. For infrastructure connectivity, she noted that a flagship UNECE initiative is the Euro-Asian Transport Links project (EATL) launched in 2002, that has greatly contributed to making Euro-Asian inland transport a reality as it gathers public and private stakeholders from over 35 countries including from the EU, Central Asia and South Caucasus as well as non-UNECE countries such as Afghanistan, China, India, Pakistan and Mongolia. She noted that in a next Phase, emphasis will be put on improved coordination mechanisms.

40. The Executive Secretary also informed about the creation of a Unified Railway Law which once in place, this UNECE-led initiative will enable railway operators to operate within a single legal regime along the entire East-West axis, connecting markets in Europe and Asia. She noted that a key challenge for sustainable infrastructure development remains the lack of funding. She pointed out that UNECE is establishing a web-based International Transport Infrastructure Observatory which will enable governments to retrieve the data to prepare, benchmark and present their transport infrastructure projects. She noted that financial institutions can use the Observatory to consider, analyze and compare projects from a regional and international perspective and identify those they wish to finance.
41. She concluded by noting that more needs to be done to untap the full economic and trade potential of LLDCs and coordinated actions are required. She underscored that UNECE stands ready to continue providing the tools and instruments to support the connectivity of the LLDCs.
42. In her remarks, **H.E. Ms. Matsepo Ramakoae, Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Kingdom of Lesotho** noted that the Roadmap was timely given the Decade of Action, and its aim to ensure that ‘no one is left behind.’ She noted that the pandemic has exacerbated the LLDCs’ vulnerabilities and reversed some of the gains made on achieving the SDGs and VPoA Priorities. She noted the closure of borders, restrictions on movement of people and goods, interruptions in remittance disbursement have further exacerbated LLDCs’ challenges. She emphasized the need for the group to embrace the use of digital platforms in order to cope with the pandemic.
43. She informed that the Government of Lesotho placed major emphasis on restructuring the Information and Communications Technology (ICT) sector and supporting the applications of ICT in all productive sectors and support sectors to enhance efficiency and promote private sector led job creation and inclusive economic growth. She added, however, that the high costs associated with ICT was an impediment towards the LLDCs’ access to ICT led socioeconomic development. She declared that it was incumbent on Governments to firmly take advantage of regional integration to lower bandwidth prices, which should yield positive results with regards to some of the VPoA priority areas. She called upon the UN System and development partners to continue providing the necessary support to LLDCs to accelerate the implementation of the VPoA.
44. **Mr. Houlin Zhao, Secretary-General, International Telecommunication Union (ITU)** acknowledged that the pandemic was threatening to reverse LLDCs’ progress toward the Sustainable Development Goals. He highlighted that as the UN specialized agency for

information and communication technologies, ITU remained committed to leveraging ICTs to accelerate the implementation of the Vienna Programme of Action and the SDGs. He added that essential to this effort was improving international connectivity conditions, in line with the revised resolution on special measures for LLDCs and other vulnerable countries. He expressed his pleasure that the Midterm Review of the Vienna Programme of Action held by the UN General Assembly in December 2019 identified ICT infrastructure connectivity as critical and he called for greater investments and better domestic investment environments in ICT as outlined in the UN Roadmap for Accelerated Implementation of the Vienna Programme of Action for LLDCs.

45. He noted that digital infrastructure was not just a convenience, but an essential requirement to take an active part in society and the economy hence through newly launched initiatives such as Connect2Recover, ITU helped expand access to affordable and reliable connectivity in some of the least connected countries. He acknowledged that the moment was pivotal as the improvement of connectivity was slowing down, broadband services were still too expensive for the poorest consumers and the levels of financing needed to extend networks to unserved communities were unprecedented. He stressed that creating environments conducive to investment in ICTs for private sector investors has never been more important. He recalled that he informed the BRICS Communications Ministers and the G20 Finance and Health Ministers a few weeks before that when ICT investments are fragmented among different Ministries and not well coordinated within the same country, there was a risk of causing capacity inefficiencies and resource shortfalls at precisely the time when more investments in ICTs were needed. He called on Foreign Ministers to play key role in catalysing private-sector investment in ICT in LLDCs and ensure that these investments fit within a sound whole-of-government ICT investment strategy.
46. He stressed that ICT could help fight COVID-19 however highlighted that more than 40 per cent of the LLDCs' population still lack access to the digital infrastructure, technologies, and services. He reaffirmed ITU's strong support to LLDCs in the Decade of Action. He stated that leaving no one behind means leaving no one offline. He assured the meeting that ITU would continue to work with LLDCs to address the pandemic, prepare for recovery, and help accelerate the implementation of the Vienna Programme of Action and the SDGs. He stated that their wish was for landlocked countries to become land-connected countries and for all people to be connected.
47. **H.E. Dr. Tandi Dorji, Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Kingdom of Bhutan** noted that the pandemic's effects on LLDCs, specifically through border closures and restrictions on the movement of people and goods. He relayed the significance of the VPoA in helping LLDCs fulfill the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, but underscored findings from the 2019 Midterm Review of the VPoA showed insufficient progress on implementation. He highlighted that the pandemic will most likely hamper progress towards these goals even further. In view of these obstacles, he noted that the UN Roadmap for Accelerated Implementation of the VPoA provides a strategic vision with a focus on key deliverables to accelerate actions in the remaining period of the VPoA implementation.
48. In terms of national response to the pandemic, he highlighted that Bhutan has been fighting the pandemic with a "whole-of-society" approach, including closure of borders, instituting a government funded mandatory 21-day quarantine for travelers returning to Bhutan, and instituting widespread testing. He reported that the measures had been successful in avoiding community transmission and zero COVID related deaths. He mentioned, however, that the Bhutanese economy had suffered a great deal as GDP growth slumped to its lowest at -6.7%, with all sectors of the economy suffering severe impacts. In order to balance the goals of

containing the epidemic and stimulating the economy, the Minister stated that Bhutan was instating a major overhaul of the country's 12<sup>th</sup> Five Year Plan to prioritize economic recovery by intensifying exports, frontloading of resources, boosting domestic consumption capacity, investing in agriculture, and identifying productive sectors to generate domestic revenue. He noted that the measure would also contribute to efforts to meeting the Economic Vulnerability Index threshold, one of the three criteria Bhutan has not met in its graduation from the LDC group. He concluded by reiterating Bhutan's commitment to working together in addressing the LLDCs' common challenges and by joining the call on development partners, the United Nations, the International Financial Institutions, and other organizations to support LLDCs in accelerating the implementation of the VPoA.

49. **H.E. Mr. Kunio Mikuria, Secretary-General of the World Customs Organization** commended Kazakhstan for launching the Roadmap and thanked UN-OHRLLS for developing it. He added that the WCO contributed to the Roadmap's development and remained committed to supporting LLDCs by setting standards for simplified and harmonized border procedures, delivering capacity building projects and enhancing cooperation and coordination with other development partners. He conveyed the WCO's contribution to an accelerated implementation of the VPoA, including in areas of transit, trade and transport facilitation; ICT infrastructure and digital connectivity; public-private dialogue and private sector development; and the impact of COVID-19 on LLDCs. He highlighted a few examples of WCO instruments and tools, such as the International Convention on the Simplification and Harmonization of Customs Procedures, as amended, widely known as the Revised Kyoto Convention (RKC), the set of tools in the area of Customs transit, and the WCO Mercator Programme that supports uniform implementation of the Agreement on Trade Facilitation of the World Trade Organization.
50. He noted that the disruptions brought by the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic demonstrated the importance of freedom of transit and the need for smooth functioning of transit, transport and trade corridors. He further informed participants that OHRLLS and WCO issued a joint statement on 29 May 2020, calling upon LLDCs and transit countries to maintain the continuity of international and regional supply chains during the pandemic. He added that partnering with international organizations and the private sector were some of the measures the WCO undertook to mitigate the impact of COVID-19 on its 183 members and ensure the supply chain continuity. He relayed that WCO had been sharing best practices and supporting customs enforcement activities to protect societies. He stated that more support for LLDCs was essential, especially as the international community embarks on the Decade of Action and strives to accelerate the implementation of the VPoA. Furthermore, he added that the WCO theme of the year is "Customs fostering Sustainability for People, Prosperity and the Planet."
51. **H.E. Mr. Sirojiddin Muhridin, Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Tajikistan** acknowledged that although some progress was achieved in the implementation of the VPoA, there was still significant gaps that needed to be addressed. He stressed advancing the issues of transit and transport, international trade, ICT, regional integration, trade facilitation, and climate change, among other issues in the COVID-19 era, were in the LLDCs' interest.
52. Turning to regional integration and trade, the Minister stated that more attention should be given to the development of infrastructure, enhancement of competitiveness and trade, regional cooperation, and assistance for economic growth and sustainable development. He added that the construction of the interregional transmission line – CASA 1000 – aimed at exporting electricity from Tajikistan and Kyrgyzstan to Afghanistan and Pakistan, would

ensure energy security in the region and increase the industrial production and trade in the Central and South Asia regions.

53. The Minister observed that LLDCs were the most water-stressed countries, and that their geographical impediment was exacerbated by the effects of climate change, leading to crises such as desertification, drought, and land degradation. He opined that one of the prominent platforms to address water-related challenges would be the International Decade for Action 'Water for Sustainable Development,' 2018-2028 (Water Action Decade), which each member of the group supported in 2016. He added that to fulfill the mandate of the Midterm Comprehensive Review of the Implementation of the Water Action Decade, Tajikistan will submit a draft proposal on the modalities of the UN-Water Conference-2023 this fall.
54. **H.E. Mr. Michael W. Lodge, Secretary-General of the International Seabed Authority (ISA)** conveyed the ISA's mandate of ensuring the sustainable management of deep-seabed minerals located beyond national jurisdiction for the benefit of all humanity, which he stated places a positive obligation on the ISA to promote the effective participation of developing States and recognize the special needs of developing landlocked States, which was the result of the LLDCs strong engagement during the negotiations that led to the UN Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS). He declared that the rights of the LLDCs in the Blue Economy were even more explicit, further explaining that they have the right to participate in deep sea mineral exploration and marine scientific research as well as to share the financial and economic benefits from deep-sea minerals. He propounded the need of LLDCs to take full advantage of the opportunities made available to them and he urged the remaining 12 LLDCs that have not yet become party to UNCLOS to join on as soon as possible.
55. He reiterated ISA's commitment to supporting the VPoA and the Roadmap for accelerated intervention. He further specified that the organization wishes to work with each and every member of the LLDC group to support the countries' needs in terms of capacity development in marine science, especially for women.
56. **H.E. Dr. Lemogang Kwape, Minister of International Affairs and Cooperation of the Republic of Botswana,** affirmed his country's endorsement of the Meeting's theme, adding that it is in sync with Botswana's collective aspiration of urgently resetting economies in the aftermath of COVID-19. He relayed that the pandemic's particular effects on Botswana included an increase in the demand for repatriation, goods and services, which translated to high costs of trade due to weak transport infrastructure, coupled with non-tariff barriers, of delays and inefficiencies associated with cross border management. Conversely, however, he noted that Botswana benefited from immense good international partnership and cooperation during this difficult time, which helped meet the demands of much needed goods and services. He expressed gratitude to the "generous and wide-ranging" support accorded to Botswana by their development partners and international organizations in response to COVID-19 and their development agenda.
57. Furthermore, he informed the meeting that Botswana continued to make notable improvements in addressing its own development challenges in line with its national Vision 2036. He noted that a new development in Botswana's development agenda is the adoption of the Economic Recovery and Transformation Agenda, which was aligned to the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. He underscored that enhanced international partnership, particularly regional cooperation, was of paramount importance in the advancement of Botswana's transformation agenda, and conveyed the nation's pursuit of strategies for regional cooperation on infrastructure development and integration as a means of creating more active trade routes and expanding market access. He informed that Botswana

and its' neighbours, South Africa and Namibia, have built a Trans Kalahari Corridor, which is a highway aimed at facilitation faster and cheaper movement of goods and services between these countries. He added that Botswana and Zambia embarked on the construction of the Kazungula Bridget project between the two countries. He stated that this joint project is aimed at further facilitation the movement of goods, persons, and trade within the Southern Africa Development Community region and other regions. Regarding trade and trade facilitation, He stated that Botswana continued to work with its neighbors to harmonize policies that support the timely flow of goods and services. Additionally, Botswana had completed the review of the National Trade Policy and the National Export Strategy, which were intended to contribute to economic and export diversification, improved global competitiveness, and poverty eradication.

58. He attested that these objectives were attainable through enhanced South-South Cooperation and effective mobilization of domestic resources in partnership with the private sector and he concluded that such partnerships based on mutual benefit and aligned with countries' national priorities are critical for LLDCs.
59. In his remarks, **H.E. Mr. Eisenhower Nduwa Mkaka, M.P., Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Malawi** stated that challenges stifling economic growth in LLDCs were very similar to those facing the LDC. He cited lack of territorial access to the sea, isolation and remoteness from world markets which all lead to high transport and transit costs, thereby negatively affecting the business environment of the LLDCs' economies. He pointed out that although the LLDCs were not the main culprits of environmental degradation, they were the biggest victims of vulnerabilities arising from climate change, which acts as a constraint on the LLDCs' overall socio-economic well-being. He noted that COVID-19 had exacerbated border and transit measures impacting negatively on trade facilitation and increasing transit fees. He added there was a need for clear policies for implementing the VPoA's priority areas of transit, infrastructure development, policy issues, international trade facilitation, regional integration, structural economic transformation and means of implementation.
60. In terms of Malawi's own efforts, the Minister stated that Malawi was engaging with its regional neighbors and the international community on transit policy issues, and development of regional infrastructures in areas, such as transport, and ICT. He conveyed that Malawi's interest was to develop adequate transit infrastructure networks for the country to be land-linked and become regionally and international connected. He reaffirmed Malawi's full commitment to the ongoing implementation of the VPoA.
61. **H.E. Ms. Vera Songwe, Executive-Secretary of the UN ECA** noted that Africa is home to the majority of the world's LLDCs which continue to face peculiar trade and development challenges arising from their lack of territorial access to the sea and geographical remoteness from international markets affecting their quest for economic development. She noted that Africa's infrastructure deficit and its resultant high costs of logistics, were primary constraints to growth. She provided an example of its energy infrastructure, stating that only 30 per cent of people living in the African LLDCs had access to electricity in 2017, lagging behind all LLDCs and the world. Furthermore, she informed that the African LLDCs' average poverty headcount ratio and GDP per capita were 55.8 per cent and \$1,506 respectively, compared to the average of all African non-LLDC at 8.4 per cent and \$5,208 respectively.
62. Ms. Songwe added that considering the pandemic's dire effects on African LLDCs, there were some opportunities to build back better after the pandemic. She noted that African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCTFA) was key in helping to address some of the challenges facing



LLDCs, in particular adding value to products, creating jobs and ensuring peace and security in those countries.

63. In his statement, **H.E. Mr. Vincent Biruta, Minister of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation of Rwanda** stated that the pandemic has exacerbated the LLDCs' development challenges, threatening to further marginalize them from access to international markets. He highlighted that the LLDCs' dependence on transit countries for international trade as well as the cross-border management measures implemented to contain COVID-19 had affected the flow of goods and services to and from LLDCs. He acknowledged that the VPoA serves as a direction and ambition to overcome the socio-economic impacts of this global health pandemic on LLDCs. He added that as we have entered the Decade of Action, the effective implementation of the VPoA was key in attaining the SDGs. Therefore, the Minister conveyed that Rwanda welcomed the adoption of the Roadmap for accelerated implementation of the VPoA. He stated Rwanda's commitment to playing a leading role in supporting the Roadmap. He announced that the Government of Rwanda's intention to sign the multilateral agreement for the establishment of an "International Think Tank of Landlocked Developing Countries," and the nomination of a National Focal Point to spearhead the implementation of the VPoA.
64. **H.E. Mr. Peter Launsky, Deputy Minister for Foreign Affairs at the Austrian Federal Ministry for Europe and International Affairs of Austria** began his statement by noting the significant events of the year, including the commemoration of the 75<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the UN, the SDG Decade of Action, and the fight against COVID-19. He highlighted Austria's own status as a landlocked country, expressing the country's readiness to share its own experiences. He reminded participants that Austria co-chairs the Group of Friends of the LLDCs and co-facilitated the Outcome Document of the Midterm Review with Bhutan. He stated that from national experience as a landlocked country, strong regional-cooperation and integration, investment in critical infrastructure, trade and private sector investment as well as international support and ODA were effective means to address the negative effects of geographical obstacles. He welcomed the focus of the Roadmap for Accelerated Implementation of the Vienna Programme of Action and affirmed commitment to continue partnership towards the goals set out in the VPoA and to ensure that achievements and progress are not undermined by the impacts of the COVID-19 Pandemic.
65. Mr. Launsky provided examples of Austria's contributions to LLDCs. He informed that Austria has supported the Amhara region of Ethiopia with maintaining and improving its water supply and sanitation and also supports Bhutan's COVID-19 Response Plan, through procuring clothing, test kits, face masks and ventilators. He also informed that Austria supported Burkina Faso on the COVID-19 program of ECHO to strengthen the healthcare system and prevention and also contributed to the COVID-19 Response and Recovery Window of Moldova's 2030 SDGs Fund, which is organized by UNDP.
66. **H.E. Mr. Li Yong, Director-General of UNIDO**, welcomed the Roadmap for Accelerated Implementation of the VPoA, adding that inclusive and sustainable industrial development (ISID) was well reflected in the document and was also attributable to many priority areas of the VPoA. He informed that UNIDO is operating under the full ownership of the implementing country, the Programme for Country Partnership (PCP) in LLDCs such as Ethiopia, Kyrgyzstan, Rwanda and Zambia.. He stated that the PCP model was tailored to a country's development needs and creates synergy over the VPoA priority areas to maximize the impact on the ground. He added that the impact in LLDCs from PCPs was greater with joint-solutions designed in partnership, unleashing investment from the private sector, international financial institutions and development partners. He asserted that with the onset of the fourth industrial revolution, LLDCs have the opportunity to advance their economic

and social development through new technologies, although digital technologies were not being manufactured in most LLDCs. He stressed that the VPoA priority area on Structural Economic Transformation requires international support, to remove their reliance on outdated industrial capabilities.

67. He underscored the need for partnerships during the pandemic, stating that UNIDO engages with LLDC Country Teams through joint-programmes. He added that the UN Inter-Agency Cluster on Trade and Productive Capacity, held between UNIDO, FAO, ILO, UNCTAD, and UNDP, is supporting micro-, small-, and medium-sized enterprises. He conveyed that the alliance contributed to the acceleration of the VPoA Priority on international trade and trade facilitation in LLDCs. He expressed UNIDO's confidence and commitment to unlocking partnerships for the industrial and economic development potential of LLDCs, during and beyond COVID-19.
68. **H.E. Mr. Redwan Hussein, Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs of Ethiopia** stated the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on the LLDCs' ability to meet the goals of the VPoA and Agenda 2030. Amongst others, he highlighted the LLDCs' dependence on few export items with extremely limited capacities to add manufacturing value, adding that infrastructural gaps hindered regional integration and slowed structural transformation processes and undermined development efforts. He noted that this was further exacerbated by a lack of adequate finance, technological, and institutional capacity. He called for a reinvigorated and renewed global partnership with development partners and stakeholders to implement the VPoA. He specified that coordination and support in manufacturing, trade, and productive capacity would complement Ethiopia's national endeavors. He added that effective and efficient infrastructure systems and the goods and services movement facilitation are critical to integrate LLDCs into the global market. Thus, he noted, the cooperation and partnership of transit countries was vital.
69. He noted that as LDCs and LLDCs do not have the reserve cushions to handle all the current shocks, the mobilization of funds to address their debt-relief needs was crucial. The burden of unsustainable external debt was a major development challenge that should be addressed; he called for all creditors to provide rapid solutions. He added that Ethiopia's national development plan and priorities incorporated the VPoA, specifying that the country had been taking policy measures to improve its manufacturing base and enhance its connectedness as well as competitiveness.
70. In terms of the country's efforts to increase global competitiveness and participate in the global value chain, he highlighted that Ethiopia's focus on labor-intensive and light manufacturing sectors such as agro-processing, leather, and textile. Additionally, he noted that industrial parks had been established that simplify access to land, eliminate the challenges in trade logistics and customs service. He mentioned that Ethiopia's Ten-Year Prospective Plan would focus on the mining and tourism sectors to unleash the nation's potential for accelerating economic growth and development. He further highlighted that Ethiopia had been making public investment in building infrastructure to enhance its productive capacity and promote regional integration. He noted that progress had been made in expanding road, railway, and air transport services and that Ethiopia had also been working with neighboring transit countries to establish and maintain effective transit systems based on common interest.
71. In his statement, **H.E. Mohammad Haneef Atmar, Acting Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan**, noted that the LLDCs' geography made them dependent on transit countries for international trade. He called on LLDCs to work together and advocate for their needs and ensure the maintenance of global trade and supply chains.

He emphasized that, sustainable transport and infrastructure investment needed to be promoted, and building back better should include efforts to enhance connectivity between LLDCs and their neighbors. He recalled the UNCLOS Part X, article 125, that states “...landlocked States shall enjoy freedom of transit through the territory of transit States by all means of transport.” He conveyed Afghanistan’s full commitment to the implementation of the VPoA, as outlined in its February 2019 VPoA National Report. He informed that Afghanistan had mainstreamed the VPoA into its national development plans, and added institutional mechanisms to achieve the Programme and the SDGs.

72. He noted that as an LLDC and post-conflict country, Afghanistan’s specific needs included addressing its lack of access to regional and international markets, infrastructure gaps, investment deficits, and a shortage of human and institutional capacity in various areas. He stated that Afghanistan has made efforts to utilize its central location between Central and South Asia; projects such as the Lapis Lazuli Corridor, the Five Nations Railway Corridor, and energy projects like CASA 1000 and TAPI electricity and natural gas initiatives are projected to have positive impacts on regional connectivity and economic development. He informed that Afghanistan welcomed the peace negotiations with the Taliban, as peace, security, and stability are prerequisites to achieving sustainable development. He expressed gratitude to Afghanistan’s international partners for providing the opportunity to convene for a peace negotiation. He stated that the upcoming Geneva Conference on Afghanistan would significantly contribute to the peace negotiations and development, proving both the government and international community an opportunity to discuss the country’s strategy and vision for socio-economic development. He called for increased global cooperation and solidarity in the aim of implementing the VPoA and for additional targeted support to ensure the timely implementation of the Programme of Action, particularly as the LLDCs endure the pandemic. He affirmed Afghanistan’s cooperation with the Chair and Group for achieving progress on the VPoA and the SDGs.

73. **H.E. Mr. David Musabayana, Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs and International Relations of Zimbabwe** welcomed the Roadmap on the implementation of the VPoA as a vital tool to further align the objectives of the VPoA with Agenda 2030. He stated that Zimbabwe continued to mainstream the 2030 Agenda and VPoA into national plans and programs, adding that the country was working on a five-year National Development Strategy (NDS 1) that would run from 2021-2025. He noted that Zimbabwe aimed to attain upper middle-income status by 2030. He informed that the NDS 1 would be followed by NDS 2, the end of which will coincide with that of the 2030 Agenda.

74. He stated that Zimbabwe endeavors to develop all modes of connectivity including air transport, roads, railway, and transmission lines. Noting the importance placed on ICT infrastructure during the pandemic, Zimbabwe had begun modernizing and expanding its strategic infrastructure as a key priority in its national plans and was committed to its aim to reposition the country into a transport hub for the region. Furthermore, he expressed hope that the international community works to close the digital divide. He informed that Zimbabwe inaugurated a dry port facility at Walvis Bay, Namibia which was expected to provide efficient access to the global supply chain, promote economic growth and development, and integration with other Southern African countries. He conveyed that Zimbabwe was considering the construction of a railway line linking it to Namibia, as well as the establishment of four customs dry ports. He affirmed that Zimbabwe was also working to harmonize the agreed legal frameworks, transit rules, policies, and transport and trade facilitation measures with transit and neighboring countries. He stated, however, that given Zimbabwe’s high-risk profile, the country had restricted access to adequate financial

resources on the international market. He echoed the Secretary-General's call to suspend sanctions as countries struggle to survive.

75. In her statement, **H.E. Dr. Karen Longaric, Minister of Foreign Affairs of Bolivia** welcomed the adoption of the Roadmap for Accelerated implementation of the VPoA. She acknowledged that Bolivia's infrastructure and connectivity required improvement, especially as it seeks to benefit some of the most vulnerable groups such as women and small- and medium-sized businesses.
76. She informed that Bolivia had initiated the implementation of the National Program for Job Reactivation to protect jobs and promote the creation of new ones. She called on LLDCs to pay attention to the allocation of resources within their countries in addition to a new program for external debt alleviation, an increase in ODA without replacing bilateral cooperation channels, the implementation of physical and digital infrastructure, as well as the inclusion of LLDCs in trade facilitation and simplification.
77. In his statement, **Mr. Hakim Elwaer, Advisor to President of the Islamic Development Bank** informed participants that the Islamic Development Bank (IsDB) had 12-member countries that were LLDCs and constituted nearly 50% of the group's total population. He highlighted the promotion of regional connectivity and integration into global markets had been integrated into the IsDB 10-Year Strategy, President 5-Year Program, and recently, the approved Regional Cooperation and Integration Strategy. He stated that the IsDB's approach to promotion of regional connectivity has two interlinked elements, the first being the development of inter-country corridors, and secondly the alignment of physical connectivity with "soft" aspects of regional integration. He stated that as set out in existing regional cooperation programs such as CAREC for Central Asia, priority was given to hard infrastructure development for connecting landlocked economies to international ports and trade networks. He informed that IsDB had approved and implemented USD 454 million for completing the Trans-Saharan Road Corridor in Africa, and USD 371 million for the Kazakhstan-Turkmenistan-Iran railway corridor connected LLDCs in Central Asia to the Middle East.
80. Regarding the challenges arising from COVID-19, Mr. Elwaer stated that IsDB has approved a USD 2.3 billion Strategic Preparedness and Response Program (SPRP), which seeks to "Respond, Restore and Restart," with the aim of assisting member countries in preventing, containing, mitigating and recovering from the pandemic's impact. He highlighted the IsDB's commitment to continue supporting LLDCs in line with the VPoA's priorities.
81. **H.E. Mr. Thongphane Savanphet, Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs of Lao People's Democratic Republic** called on development partners, transit countries, the UN system, regional and international organizations and the private sector to take necessary actions for immediate response, mid-term recovery, and long-term strategic measures in response to COVID-19's impact on LLDCs and safeguard progress made over the years. He added that priority areas of the VPoA have been mainstreamed into the country's national development plan and strategy, especially in infrastructure, trade facilitation and transit transport systems, with the aim to become an inland transit route and a logistic hub. He noted significant progress, in the construction of highways, bridges and railways connecting the country with its neighboring countries, as well as the development of dry ports and logistics parks, which Lao PDR joined last year through the 2013 Intergovernmental Agreement on Dry Ports. Nonetheless, Lao PDR still faces challenges

in the VPoA implementation, such as financial constraints, logistic costs and capabilities, business promotion, and technology.

82. He elaborated on the challenges faced by Lao PDR, such as the impact of climate change on weather patterns has resulted in some infrastructural damage, and COVID-19's depressive effects on economic and social sectors resulting in revenue losses and unemployment rising. Therefore, he called for the recovery to be holistic, strategic, and long-term in terms of infrastructure development, climate resilience and adaptation, trade facilitation and economic stimulus packages. He reaffirmed Lao PDR's commitment to work closely with all transit countries, development partners, the UN system and private sector to accelerate the implementation of the VPoA and called upon the international community to honor their commitment too.
83. In his statement, **H.E. Mr. Feridun H. Sinirlioğlu, Permanent Representative of Turkey to the United Nations** noted COVID-19's significant impact on LLDCs. He stated that as a transit and donor country, Turkey had worked to ensure that no one was left behind in implementing an effective COVID-19 response plan. He stated that Turkey removed customs tariffs on essential medical equipment including masks, ventilators and respiratory devices from certain countries to allow supply chains to run smoothly. He added that Turkey granted exemption from COVID-19 related restrictions to road vehicles and cargo planes traveling in and out of Turkey to guarantee the uninterrupted flow of food and medical supplies and that Turkey has responded to more than 140 countries' and 7 international organizations' medical equipment needs. He stated that the current architecture for international cooperation was insufficient to offer a large-scale and coordinated response to LLDCs' challenges, including during the pandemic. He called for strengthened efforts to integrate the LLDCs into the global trading system, and to foster a rules-based international economic and trade environment for their sustainable recovery.
84. He declared that Turkey supports the G20 and IMF initiatives including debt service payment suspension as well as the UN's Financing for Development initiative. He however stated that more needs to be done from all the three organizations. He informed the meeting about the "Tech Access Partnership (TAP)," which was launched by the UN Technology Bank in Turkey, the World Health Organization (WHO), UNDP and UNCTAD, to increase local production of essential medical technologies in developing countries. He also highlighted the opening of the WHO Geographically Dispersed Office for preparedness for Humanitarian and health Emergencies in Istanbul earlier in September 2020.
85. In his statement, **H.E. Mr. Vassily Nebenzia, Permanent Representative of Russia to the United Nations** noted that most of the LLDCs needed support from donors as well as foreign investors' participation in the transport, energy infrastructure development and modernization, and the promotion of ICT. He stated that Russia supports non-WTO member LLDCs in the process of accession to the organization as well as to its Trade Facilitation Agreement. He underscored Russia's long-standing relations with the Central-Asian countries, adding that assistance to these countries make a great share of Russia's ODA package. He asserted that it was impossible to implement the ambitious concept of the Greater Eurasian Partnership and to develop international transport corridors connecting European countries and the Asia-Pacific region without the Central Asian countries' participation.
86. He stated that although progress has been made at the level of the Eurasian Economic Union, the work on eliminating the barriers that impede trade and shipment, as well as free transit with and through the countries of the union, was still being continued. He reaffirmed

Russia's commitments taken at the Meeting of the G20 Foreign Ministers on 3<sup>rd</sup> of September, on the need for reopening borders in a coordinated manner, bringing families together, and stimulating economic recovery. He added that arranging the "green corridors" in international trade will allow quick recovery.

87. **H.E. Ms. Mami Mitzutori, Special Representative of the Secretary-General for the UN Office for Disaster Risk Reduction** stressed that UNDRR must be at the core of policies and investments for structural economic transformation and resilient infrastructure in LLDCs in order to achieve the SDGs and the Vienna Programme of Action. She emphasized that the Sendai Framework's applicability to help governments build resilient economies and societies, while reducing disaster risk. She commended member states on establishing synergies between the VPoA and the Sendai Framework. She called on LLDCs to develop national DRR strategies that are aligned with the Sendai Framework, which can facilitate a transboundary approach to ensure the resilience of transit, communications and trade networks between LLDCs and neighbors. She added that UNDRR was already implementing activities included in the UN Roadmap for Accelerated Implementation of the Vienna Programme of Action. She further highlighted the EU-funded programme in five Central Asian countries to develop national DRR strategies and collect disaster risk and loss data to guide resilient and risk-informed future investments. She also noted that 56 cities in African LLDCs participate in the 'Making Cities Resilient' campaign.
88. **H.E. Mr. Eric Yemdaogo Tiare, Permanent Representative from Burkina Faso to the United Nations** expressed his gratitude to the Chair for convening the meeting, and conveyed that he would be speaking on behalf of the Minister of Foreign Affairs of Burkina Faso, who due to last minute reasons, could not attend. He commended the creation of the Roadmap and thanked UN-OHRLLS.
89. He relayed that Burkina Faso welcomed the consideration of new priorities put in place after the Mid-Term Review of the VPoA, such as on natural disasters, climate change, COVID-19, women's and girl's empowerment and gender equality. He informed that on 9<sup>th</sup> September 2020, Burkina Faso declared a state of natural disaster due to floods that the country experienced, which resulted in numerous losses of life, displacements, and extensive damage.
90. He added that Burkina Faso was also facing unprecedented terrorism and humanitarian crisis. He informed that the Government has strengthened its efforts to find ways to stimulate the economy and strengthen the health response, but it cannot achieve this endeavor on its own; thus, he called on partners for assistance. He conveyed that the Peacebuilding Commission scheduled for 8<sup>th</sup> October was part of this framework. He conveyed that Burkina Faso welcomed the debt alleviation initiatives, concluding that the Political Declaration and Roadmap that are guides for bettering the futures of LLDCs.
91. **H.E. Mr. Enkhbold Vorshilov, Permanent Representative of Mongolia to the United Nations**, briefed the meeting on Mongolia's contribution to the SDGs' implementation in the COVID-19 context, stating that his government introduced economic stimulus packages amounting up to 5 percent of GDP and taken the measure of implementing a comprehensive plan for tackling the multi-faceted impact of this crisis, including an employment-led and people-centered recovery. The Government's Action Program for 2020-2024 reflect more policies and measures. He announced the recent approval of the "Vision-2050" as a contribution to the acceleration of the implementation of the 2030 Agenda and the VPoA at the national level. He noted that Vision 2050 focuses on poverty

reduction and sustainable development and recognizes common national values, human development, quality of life and middle-class society, economy, governance, green development, and regional development as priorities.

92. He expressed support for the Secretary-General's efforts to maintain transit freight transport for carrying essential goods and equipment to LLDCs, adding the Mongolia introduced the "Green Gateway," a temporary trade regulation to increase exports and boost confidence for economic recovery. He expressed the Government's willingness to diversify its economy and exports of value-added products in non-mining sectors. He highlighted that Mongolia would simultaneously continue development projects in infrastructure for oil refineries, gas pipelines, construction and water supply. He welcomed the Roadmap for Accelerated Implementation of the VPoA. He also underscored the important role of the International Think Tank for LLDCs and its contribution in achieving sustainable development in LLDCs. He invited member states, development partners and relevant stakeholders to provide the Think Tank with adequate support so that it can continue its work.
93. **H.E. Mr. Abdou Abarry, Permanent Representative of Niger to the United Nations** highlighted the insufficient progress made by the LLDCs' in terms of attaining the VPoA and SDGs. He however stated that the LLDCs increasing activity in regional trade agreement participation and economic blocs offers these countries good prospects for integration into the regional commerce. He noted the opportunities provided by the African Continental Free Trade Agreement for further integrating African countries. He noted that the demographic shift in Africa of a growing younger population would require their education and training for jobs. He noted that it was only through implementing the 2030 Agenda and 2063 Agenda that these goals can be achieved.
94. He relayed that Niger faces ongoing internal issues such as combatting terrorism on-top of the pandemic; however, Niger was implementing a recovery program based on the construction of transport and ICT infrastructure. He expressed regret that the economy was facing negative impacts; for instance, the economic growth for ECOWAS was previously projected to be 3.3 percent but due to the onset of the pandemic, it was projected to fall by more than one percent.
95. **H.E. Mr. Bakhtiyor Ibragimov, Permanent Representative of Uzbekistan to the United Nations** recounted Uzbekistan's efforts since the onset of the pandemic, citing measures to contain the spread of the virus including by setting special funds; rendering assistance to neighboring countries in fighting COVID-19, by providing them with needed medical equipment and supplies, foodstuffs and other products of necessity; and expanding collaboration with the UN and its specialized agencies in mitigating the negative consequences of COVID-19.
96. He added that with regard to the VPoA, Central Asian countries have collaborated for the past four years and created fundamentally new political environment in the region, raised the level of political trust, and strengthened good neighborly relations among themselves. He informed that two consultative meetings between the Heads of State of Central Asian countries have been held so far, and the third will be held in 2020 in Kyrgyzstan. He highlighted three areas for Uzbekistan to deepen regional cooperation, which were; expanding cooperation in transport-communication areas, holding regular meetings on various levels to discuss issues pertaining to advancing regional collaboration and jointly addressing ecological and water issues in Central Asia. He emphasized Uzbekistan's commitment to continue close cooperation in the implementation of the VPoA and SDGs.

**The following statements were not delivered during the meeting due to time constraint but were submitted for inclusion in the meeting report.**

97. **H.E. Dr. Adonia Ayebare, Permanent Representative of the Republic of Uganda to the United Nations** noted that despite the challenges faced by Uganda regarding COVID-19 and other obstacles, the country had registered progress in the implementation of the VPoA which was in line with Uganda's Vision 2040 and its associated National Development Plans. He noted that Uganda has simplified and modernized transit procedures of the Regional Electric Cargo Tracking System (RECTS), that serves Uganda, Kenya, and Rwanda. He added that Uganda continues to prioritize investments in infrastructure in a bid to close infrastructure gaps. He further stated that Uganda is implementing its export-oriented growth strategy that promotes export diversification. He called upon the international community to enhance their support to the LLDCs, so that the LLDCs can realize their development agendas.
98. **H.E. Ms. Jan Beagle, Director-General of the International Development Law Organization**, stated that IDLO was committed to ensuring that both their and the LLDCs' programmes and advocacy are geared to support the effort of the United Nations to promote a "build back better" approach to recovery. She stated that this recovery must include a more level playing field in international economic relations and a strengthening of partnerships at all levels. She added that IDLO was ready to do its part, having launched efforts in a few LLDCs including Mongolia, Uganda, and countries in the Sahel region. With UN-OHRLLS, she noted that IDLO had launched an Investment Support Program for the Least Developed Countries (ISP/LDCs). She informed participants that IDLO was implementing this Programme drawing on a list of law firms committed to providing pro-bono services. He informed that the Programme offered no-cost legal and technical assistance, and related capacity building in investment negotiations and dispute settlements, to LDC government and eligible private sector entities. She added that this Programme can be extended to other groups of developing countries.
99. She concluded by stating that IDLO can contribute through policy, legislative, regulatory support, and capacity building for international trade and investment. She further specified legal support services in the implementation of the WTO Trade Facilitation Agreement and the African Continental Free Trade Area Agreement. She added that IDLO can also provide legal and policy support to investment promotion agencies.
100. **H.E. Ambassador Sheikh Mohammed Belal, Managing Director of the Common Fund for Commodities** stated that even before the pandemic, there was a noted steady decline in added value in the agriculture and manufacturing sectors in LLDCs. He conveyed that it was urgent to reverse this trend, adding that the private sector – small- and medium- sized enterprises in particular – have an important role to play in employment creation, poverty alleviation and structural transformation. He noted, however, that SMEs remain weak in most LLDCs. He stated that ODA strategies should recognize the large infrastructure needs of low-income landlocked countries and the need for an increase in direct assistance to support large-scale investments in roads and railways. However, he added that ODA must be complemented by investment in and development of trade capacity. He conveyed that LLDCs must take advantage of their commodity endowment while working on value-addition in their productive sectors.
101. He informed participants that the CFC implemented an emergency liquidity facility of about USD 2 million as mitigation support for its projects that have been impacted by the



pandemic. He stressed the need to address poverty first as shocks such as COVID-19 will always be able to wreak havoc on vulnerable countries unless they are strengthened. He conveyed the CFC's commitment to the group for delivering their services.

102. **H.E. Ms. Dorothy Ng'ambi Tembo, Acting Executive Director, International Trade Center** highlighted that ITC contributes to the International trade and trade facilitation and Regional integration and cooperation priority areas of the VPoA. She stated that ITC has implemented more than 40 projects for almost all of the LLDCs since 2014. She emphasized trade being a key part of recovery. She stated that ITC can intensify efforts in supporting and implementing the VPoA in three areas: (1) enhancing digital access and connectivity of MSMEs to trade online. (2) continuing and accelerating ITC's work on trade facilitation and trade policy to strike the right balance between better control at borders and more trade across borders. And (3), as regional integration was a top priority for ITC's action, ITC was stepping up its efforts to support the implementation of the African Continental Free Trade Agreement (AfCFTA). She reaffirmed ITC's full support to accelerate the implementation of the VPoA.
103. **H.E. Ambassador Odbayar Erdenetsogt, Executive Director of International Think Tank on Landlocked Developing Countries** informed that the pandemic has forced the Think Tank to cancel already agreed-upon projects and financial contributions. He expressed gratitude to the Government of Mongolia for their annual contribution that allowed the Think Tank to continue its work, and to the Government of Kazakhstan for their contribution for a study relevant to the LLDC community.
104. He welcomed and congratulated Niger on becoming the newest member of the ITTLDC and requested the country to appoint a representative to the Board of Governors and inform the Secretariat of the ITTLDC. He called on all remaining LLDCs in Africa to join the agreement at their earliest convenience. He reaffirmed the Think Tank's commitment to the cause of the LLDCs and requested active participation with their work.
105. **Mr. Ovais Sarmad, Deputy Executive Secretary, United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change** asserted that leaders have a choice to consider in their post-pandemic strategies, on how they will build back better. He added that the 2015 Paris Agreement and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development are essential blueprints in this endeavor.
106. He stated that UNFCCC was offering LLDCs support to conduct comprehensive vulnerability and risk assessments and to develop adaptation actions that address their unique difficulties. He relayed that USD 3 million per developing country was available to formulate National Adaptation Plans through the Green Climate Fund. He also informed participants on regional risk-sharing facilities in several regions designed to provide sovereign insurance to countries to cover agro-production in case of climate change. He also highlighted that technical support was available under the UNFCCC and the Paris Agreement to developing countries and in particular the LDCs to facilitate the development of effective adaptation plans. He stated that UNFCCC was available to support all countries in submitting updated National Adaptation Plans, while climate finance was being scaled up to USD 100 billion per year.
107. **H.E. Mr. Satya S. Tripathi, Assistant Secretary-General and Head of UNEP New York Office** highlighted that UNEP has put together a COVID-19 response based on four building blocks: (i) Medical humanitarian emergency phase; (ii) Transformational change for people and the planet; (iii) Investing to build back better and (iv) Modernizing global

environmental governance. He added that UNEP welcomes the Roadmap for Accelerated Implementation of the VPoA. He added that the Roadmap provides opportunities to LLDCs to mitigate COVID-19 impacts and ensure a green and resilient recovery. He stated that UNEP was also committed to supporting countries as they recover from COVID-19 and would continue working in partnership with other agencies to support countries to incorporate the environmental dimension into their sustainable development plans and policies.

108. **H.E. Mr. Patrick Obath, Senior Director of International Chamber of Commerce Office** conveyed ICC's commitment to supporting the Roadmap for Accelerated Implementation of the VPoA. He offered two observations for the day's discussions: firstly, he urged the governments of the world's largest economies for decisive and comprehensive action to ensure that all governments of LLDCs have the necessary means to deal with both the human and economic effects of the pandemic. In this regard, he pleaded with the G20 Governments to commit without delay to three actions: to extend the Debt Service Suspension Initiative 2021, to expand its scope to provide the necessary relief to all countries in need, and to establish strong mechanisms to ensure full participation by private creditors.

109. He encouraged UN-OHRLS and all LLDC governments to pursue implementation of the Roadmap mindful of the deep interdependence between business, governments and society. He noted that ICC had found a successful model in the Global Alliance for Trade Facilitation, which was already working in Malawi and Zambia to develop a modern licensing framework for customs clearance agents that will reduce the time and cost of trade with these countries. He expressed ICC's support to the implementation of the Roadmap.

110. **Mr. Maximo Torero, Chief Economist in Economic and Social Development Stream of the Food and Agriculture Organization** highlighted the Hand-in-Hand initiative that was developed by FAO to address the challenges faced by the LLDCs, LDCs, and SIDS. He elaborated that the initiative was a corporate-wide initiative to reposition FAO's technical, policy and normative capacities in the service of national government and their development partners. He added that FAO also works with host governments that adopt the Initiative to develop dashboards that create transparency for all stakeholders and a mechanism for communication and coordination to sustain and improve collaboration over time, to ensure that both the poverty and hunger objectives of the initiative are achieved. He noted that Burkina Faso, Ethiopia, Lao PDR, Mali, Niger, Tajikistan, and Zimbabwe had joined the Initiative.

111. **Mr. Nick O'Regan, Director of Implementation and Standards of the United Nations Office of Project Services** noted that many LLDCs lacked well-planned infrastructure systems and this negatively impacts their integration into international markets, the delivery of basic services to their populations, and indirectly hampers the attainment of the VPoA and SDGs. He stated that some of the solution for this gap were adequate policy, stronger government capacity, and collaborating with the private sector.

112. He highlighted transport, energy, and digital communication infrastructure sectors as being central to increasing connectivity and urged development partners to scale up their efforts in these areas. He added that this concept should also be integrated into the Roadmap. He noted that without sufficient development of these infrastructures, children, particularly in rural areas, continue to suffer without education. He informed that UNOPS was able to support LLDCs in their endeavors to improve infrastructure. He commended

the Chair and the Government of Kazakhstan, not only for convening the meeting but also for championing the cause of connectivity throughout the Central Asia region. He reaffirmed support and expressed anticipation in accelerating the implementation of the VPoA.

113. **Mr. Francesco La Camera, Director-General of the International Renewable Energy Agency (IRENA)** noted that although progress had been made in the LLDCs, about 40 percent was still without electricity in 2018. He asserted that sustainable energy was essential for both the short-term response to the pandemic and the medium to long-term response as it brought a variety of socio-economic benefits. He noted that according to the Secretary-General's New Social Contract, countries need to transition to renewable energy to achieve net-zero emissions by 2050.

114. He informed that IRENA supported LLDCs through advice and capacity building on policy, enhancement or renewable energy ambition in Nationally Determined Contributions, development of bankable projects and access to finance as well as advice on technical-related aspects of renewable energy deployment. He noted that Renewable Readiness Assessments have been conducted in Azerbaijan, Bhutan, Mali, Mongolia, Niger, Moldova, and Zambia, and were underway in Botswana and Paraguay, and in the planning phase for Burkina Faso and Kyrgyzstan. He added that IRENA was actively scoping possible support to LLDCs including Eswatini, Mali, Niger, North Macedonia, Uganda, Botswana, Sudan, Azerbaijan, Bhutan, Paraguay, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, and Uzbekistan in enhancing their NDCs. He announced the launch of the Climate Investment Platform.

115. He welcomed the Roadmap and added that IRENA's key deliverable would be the preparation of a joint-action oriented report with UN-OHRLLS on scaling up renewable energy in LLDCs. He assured the group of IRENA's full-support for the LLDCs.

#### **F. Consideration and Adoption of the Draft Ministerial Declaration by LLDCs and the Roadmap for Accelerated Implementation of the Vienna Programme of Action**

116. H.E. Mr. Mukhtar Tileuberdi invited members of the Group of the LLDCs to adopt the Draft Ministerial Declaration. There were no objections and the meeting adopted the Ministerial Declaration attached as in **Annex 1**.

117. He then invited members of the Group of the LLDCs to adopt the Roadmap for Accelerated Implementation of the Vienna Programme of Action, informing participants that it was a live document that would be continuously updated. There were no objections and therefore the meeting adopted the Roadmap for Accelerated Implementation of the Vienna Programme of Action.

The Roadmap can be accessed online on: <https://www.un.org/ohrlls/content/roadmap-implementation-vpoa-lldc>

#### **G. Any Other Matter, Conclusion of the Meeting**

Two countries took the floor under this agenda item and exchanged remarks on regional issues.

118. **H.E. Mr. Mher Margaryan, Permanent Representative of Armenia to the UN**

"Mr. Chair, Mr. Minister, Thank you for holding this meeting today and I am sure I speak on behalf of many of our NY-based colleagues in commending the chairmanship of

Kazakhstan and the leadership of our colleague Ambassador Kairat Umarov in stirring the activities of the group. I am taking the floor to make a brief comment on the adoption of the Ministerial Declaration, which, I think can be helpful for our collective reflections on the work of the Group and the way forward. I am compelled to express strongest concern, about the ways, in which one delegation demonstrated a most distasteful and dysfunctional pattern of thought and behavior in course of negotiations on the draft text, holding hostage the inclusion of such important elements in the text of the Declaration as provisions on negative impact of unilateral coercive measures and references to the necessity of maintaining transit freight transportation for the countries in disadvantaged geographical situation. Azerbaijan's complete inability to positively engage and contribute constructively in deliberations, without irrelevant, highly demagogical narratives, is detrimental to the interests of the landlocked developing countries and the agenda that the group stands for. The inflammatory rhetoric we heard today from the foreign minister of that country must be acknowledged for what it is –domestically driven propaganda, and nothing short of instigation of hatred. This was an irresponsible, unhelpful distraction in complete disregard of the core interests of the Group. I think we need to formulate better rules of engagement for the membership of the group so as to make sure that a single country is strictly restrained from hijacking the important collective agenda in front of us. I thank you, Mr. Chair”

119. The delegation of Azerbaijan was not able to respond in the meeting due to time the constraint and submitted a response as follows:

“Mr. Chair, we are taking the floor in reply to the cynical remarks of the delegation of Armenia. We reject the veiled baseless allegations by Armenia regarding the so-called “land blockade”. As part of its full commitment to the UN Charter and international law, Azerbaijan opposes the use of unilateral coercive measures (UCM). Armenia continues to occupy the Nagorno-Karabagh and seven adjacent regions of Azerbaijan and blatantly violates international law, including the UN Security Council resolutions (822, 853, 874, 884). Armenia's objective is not to promote regional cooperation and benefit from transregional connectivity projects, but to expand its aggression and annexation. If Armenia is genuinely interested in regional cooperation, it should comply with its obligations under international law through withdrawing its forces from all occupied territories of Azerbaijan. We will appreciate the due reflection of our intervention in the final records of this meeting. I thank you”.

## **H. Closing**

120. H.E. Mr. Mukhtar Tileuberdi thanked everyone for the full participation in the meeting and adjourned the meeting.

## **Annex 1**

### **MINISTERIAL DECLARATION**

#### **Annual Ministerial Meeting of the Group of Landlocked Developing Countries**

**New York, 23 September 2020**

**We**, the Ministers of Foreign Affairs of Landlocked Developing Countries (LLDCs), have met virtually during this challenging time on 23 September 2020, on the margins of the 75<sup>th</sup> session of the UN General Assembly to provide strategic guidance for the accelerated and full implementation of the Vienna Programme of Action for Landlocked Developing Countries for the Decade 2014-2024, under the theme "*Partnering for accelerated implementation of the VPoA and achieving sustainable development in LLDCs in the era of COVID-19*",

*Recalling* the Vienna Programme of Action for Landlocked Developing Countries for the Decade 2014-2024, adopted in December 2014 which provides a comprehensive plan of action for the next decade to address the special challenges and needs of LLDCs arising from their landlockedness, remoteness and geographical constraints in a more coherent manner and thus contributing to an enhanced rate of sustainable and inclusive growth, which can contribute to the eradication of poverty in all its forms and dimensions, including extreme poverty;

*Recalling also* the Political Declaration of the Comprehensive High-level Midterm Review of the Implementation of the VPoA, adopted by the Assembly on 5 December 2019 in which the Assembly reaffirmed its commitment to the full, effective and timely implementation of the VPoA,

*Recognizing* the importance of unfettered, efficient and cost-effective access for LLDCs to and from the sea, on the basis of freedom of transit and other related matters, in accordance with the applicable rules of international law,

*Recognizing also* that high transport and trade transaction costs remain a major stumbling block in the pursuit of LLDCs to achieve their trade and development potentials,

*Reaffirming* the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, the Addis Ababa Action Agenda of the Third International Conference on Financing for Development, the Paris Agreement, the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015–2030 and the New Urban Agenda and other inter-governmentally agreed development goals,

*Underscoring* that effective implementation of the VPoA is crucial for the attainment of the SDGs and effective partnerships between LLDCs and transit countries are important and necessary to drive accelerated implementation of the 2030 Agenda and the VPoA,

*Reaffirming* our commitment to implement the VPoA in synergy with the 2030 Agenda and the other development frameworks as we enter the Decade of Action and delivery for sustainable development,

*Emphasizing* that eradicating poverty in all its forms and dimensions, including extreme poverty, is the greatest global challenge and an indispensable requirement for sustainable

development,*Recognizing* the seventy-fifth commemoration of the anniversary of the United Nations under the theme “The future we want, the United Nations we need: reaffirming our collective commitment to multilateralism”,

*Expressing* condolences and grave concern about the loss of life as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic and the significant adverse social and economic effects it has posed globally, and in particular recognizing that the LLDCs will be severely hit in the long term owing to the fragility of their health systems, limited coverage of their social protection systems, limited financial and other resources, and vulnerability to external shocks,

*Recalling* General Assembly resolutions 74/270 of 2 April 2020 on global solidarity to fight COVID-19 and 74/274 of 20 April 2020 on international cooperation to ensure global access to medicines, vaccines and medical equipment to face COVID-19,

*Recognizing* that recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic and other related future crises should not hinder the continued progress towards implementation of the VPoA and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals,

*Welcoming* the outcomes of the 2020 Follow-up and review of the Financing for Development; and declaration of the high-level meeting on the seventy-fifth commemoration of the anniversary of the United Nations,

*Reaffirming* that gender equality and the empowerment of all women and girls will make a crucial contribution to the achievement of the VPoA and to progress across all the Sustainable Development Goals and targets.

Adopt the following declaration;

1. **We take note** of the 2020 Report of the Secretary-General on the implementation of the Vienna Programme of Action for LLDCs for the Decade 2014-2024;
2. **We welcome** the convening of the comprehensive high-level midterm review of the implementation of the VPoA in New York on 5 and 6 December 2019 and the adoption of the high-level Political Declaration, in which the Assembly committed to help to turn LLDCs into land-linked countries and looks forward to the implementation of the calls made in the political declaration;
3. **We note with concern** that the Midterm Review of the VPoA revealed that while some progress had been made in implementing the VPoA and towards some of the SDGs, there were still major gaps and challenges that need to be addressed, and we reiterate our firm commitment to the accelerated implementation of the VPoA and call upon all LLDCs, transit developing countries, development partners, United Nations System, the private sector and other stakeholders to further strengthen their efforts to accelerate the implementation of the VPoA in the remaining five years and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development in LLDCs;
4. **We note with concern** that lack of adequate financial resources, limited technical capacity, lack of up to date and reliable data are some of the constraints faced by LLDCs in their efforts to implement the VPoA and underscore the importance of

raising considerable resources to accelerate the implementation of the VPoA and achievement of the SDG targets by 2030 by LLDCs;

5. **We express concern** about the unprecedented and multifaceted impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic on LLDCs and we stress that at the start of the Decade of Action to Achieve the SDGs by 2030, the implementation of the VPoA and the Political Declaration of the Midterm Review in the remaining 5 years needs to be anchored in strong efforts to address the impact of COVID-19;
6. **We reiterate** the importance of fostering strong synergy and coherence at all levels in the implementation, follow-up, and review of the VPoA with the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, Addis Ababa Action Agenda and other development processes including the Paris Agreement on Climate Change, the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction, and the Nairobi Maafikiano;
7. **We reaffirm** our commitment to international cooperation and multilateralism and reaffirm our belief in the importance of the United Nations and its purposes and principles as enshrined in its Charter, as we commemorate the seventy-fifth anniversary of the United Nations. We recognize the central role of the United Nations system in supporting the implementation of the VPoA and 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, as well as catalyzing and coordinating a global response to COVID-19 pandemic, based on unity, solidarity, multilateralism and international cooperation and we encourage Member States, organizations of the United Nations system, as well as the private sector, civil society organizations, individuals and other relevant stakeholders to implement their collective commitment to multilateralism and to the United Nations in supporting the LLDCs;
8. **We commit** to supporting the scaling up of effective social protection systems along with government spending on key services in order to safeguard the poor and vulnerable during the crisis. We call on development partners, the United Nations, and other international organizations to support LLDCs to expand social protection programmes and strengthen social safety nets to help prevent vulnerable groups from falling (deeper) into poverty and we call on the international financial institutions, multilateral organizations and regional banks to provide quick balance-of-payment and budget support so as to enable them to respond adequately to this pandemic;
9. **We express deep concern** that a growing number of people are currently facing food insecurity and the COVID-19 pandemic is further exacerbating the food insecurity situations in LLDCs as most of them are net food importers and in this regard we call upon the international community especially our development partners to enhance their financial and in-kind support and the United Nations and other international and regional organizations to provide humanitarian and technical support towards food security and livelihoods;
10. **We recognize** that LLDCs face major health challenges in tackling COVID-19, in particular due to weak health systems, shortage of trained health personnel, critical dependence on imported medical and pharmaceutical products and have limited resources to invest into strengthening healthcare systems, to purchase medical equipment for treatment such as ventilators, oxygen concentrators, protective gear, testing kits and other medicines;<sup>11</sup>. **We call on** development partners, the United Nations, the International Financial Institutions, and other international organizations to support LLDCs with the resources to respond to the health impact of COVID-19, including for strengthening national health systems and laboratories, purchasing of required

medical supplies and we call on the international community to support the LLDCs with medical personnel or capacity building to ensure that medical personnel needs are met, we call on removal of restrictions by partner countries on the import of medical equipment products by LLDCs, and call on the international community to ensure adequate, affordable and rapid supply of vaccines/immunization and relevant drugs related to COVID-19, when they are developed;

12. **We are concerned** that LLDCs continue to be disproportionately affected by the adverse impacts of climate change, desertification, land degradation, drought, the loss of vulnerable ecosystems and the retreat of mountain glaciers, floods, including glacial lakes outbursts and other disasters due to their location, level of development, and greater reliance on climate sensitive sectors like agriculture and hydropower. We note that the current COVID-19 crisis has highlighted the need to strengthen international support to LLDCs and we call on Member States, as well as relevant regional and international organizations to continue to support climate change adaptation and mitigation efforts and strengthening resilience;
13. **We recognize** LLDCs' efforts to promote building of resilient societies through Disaster Risk Reduction and call upon development partners, UN system and other international and regional organizations to support LLDCs' to develop and implement national climate change strategies as well as drought and disaster risk mitigation, preparedness and resilience policies and strategies, including early warning and early action systems and to integrate risk management into national development plans;
14. **We invite** climate finance providers to improve access for LLDCs and we encourage the allocation of more resources to ex-ante instruments for building resilience, including new financing approaches which incentivize disaster risk reduction and sustainable reduction of LLDCs' vulnerabilities to climate change and natural disasters;
15. **We commend** the progress that has been made by LLDCs and transit developing countries in ratifying the World Trade Organization Agreement on Trade Facilitation, the revised Kyoto Convention, the TIR Convention and other relevant international conventions and we call upon LLDCs and transit countries to effectively implement their obligations under all relevant international, regional and bilateral agreements to improve transit in a manner consistent with their trade and development objectives and we call on development partners, private sector and relevant international and regional and sub-regional organization to enhance support to LLDCs and transit developing countries to implement these agreements;
16. **We welcome** the progress that has been made by LLDCs and their transit neighbours in improving transit along some transport corridors, including in reducing travel time and corresponding costs along corridors, and significantly reducing the time spent at borders and at intermodal points and in this regard we **call upon** LLDCs and transit countries to make additional efforts to reduce travel time along the corridors and to adopt an integrated and sustainable approach to the management of international transport corridors;



17. **We reaffirm** our commitment to develop quality, accessible, affordable, reliable, sustainable and resilient transport infrastructure, including regional and transboundary infrastructure, to enhance our connectivity to regional and global markets and support economic development and human well-being;
18. **We stress** that the magnitude of the resources required to invest in sustainable and resilient infrastructure development and maintenance remains a major challenge and requires the forging of international, regional, subregional and bilateral cooperation on infrastructure projects, the allocation of more resources from national budgets, the effective deployment of international development assistance and multilateral financing in the development and maintenance of infrastructure and strengthening of the role of the private sector;
19. **We reiterate** our call for support to the LLDCs and transit countries in developing bankable implementable infrastructure projects that are financially viable, environmentally friendly and accepted by the local communities and we call on the UN system and other relevant international and regional organizations to enhance their technical support to LLDCs to develop sustainable infrastructure;
20. **We underscore** the significance of international transport and economic corridors for reducing trade costs and promoting regional sustainable development, and request for strengthening of the role of corridor management organizations and other sub-regional and inter-regional arrangements and call upon the LLDCs and transit countries, in a coordinated manner, to develop and upgrade international transport and transit corridors encompassing all modes of transportation, such as inland waterways, roads, rail networks, ports and pipelines;
21. **We call** on the UN system and other relevant international and regional organizations to provide further policy, analytical and technical support towards the development, functioning and management of corridors;
22. **We note** that the air transport industry has been hit hard by COVID-19 and we call upon the international community including UN system and other international and regional organizations to provide guidance and support on how to build back better the air transport industry since air transport provides LLDCs with direct access to international markets;
23. **We strive** to achieve policies, regulatory and institutional frameworks that promote sustainable energy transition, ensure access to affordable, reliable, sustainable and modern energy for all, with a focus on providing affordable access to sustainable energy for the poorest and scaling up projects on cross border inter-connectors and improving transformational energy access. We call for innovative partnerships between development partners, UN system and other international and regional organizations to support accelerated universal access, renewable energy and energy efficiency development;
24. **We recognize** that the COVID-19 pandemic spotlighted that digital transformation and connectivity creates tremendous opportunity for achieving the Sustainable Development Goals. However, LLDCs face fundamental challenges including inadequate infrastructure, limited internet access, high cost of broadband, inadequate digital skills and regulatory and data policies. We aim to foster favorable conditions for the

development of the digital economy by creating appropriate enabling environment including the necessary policies, legal and regulatory framework to support ICT development in particular the development of broadband, enhancement of digital skills, promotion of digital inclusion, increased adoption and utilization of ICT applications and services and to close the digital divide and we call for increased public private partnerships and support from the development partners to enable LLDCs to reap the full potentials of the digital technologies and e-commerce;

25. **We note** that most of the special development challenges of LLDCs are trans-border and the COVID-19 pandemic has heightened the need for deepened regional integration in order to fully address them. We urge LLDCs and member states in their regions to increase their cooperation and regional integration by strengthening transport, energy and digital infrastructure connectivity; supporting intraregional trade and the development of supply chains within the region; improving the quality and effective implementation of regional integration agreements; and we call upon the UN system, in particular the regional commissions, regional and international development partners, and other international organizations to strengthen their technical, financial and capacity building support to LLDCs and transit countries to enable them to advance their regional integration efforts;
26. **We are concerned** that the VPoA specific objective of substantially increasing LLDC exports remains a challenge as their share in global merchandise exports remains below the level of 2014 and the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic will worsen the situation as the world merchandise trade is set to plummet. We call on our development partners to step up mechanisms supportive of LLDCs' efforts to build their trade and supply-side capacity, such as Aid for Trade, increased market access and technical assistance;
27. **We recognize** that merchandise exports from LLDCs remain undiversified and many LLDCs remain dependent on primary commodities rendering them vulnerable to external shocks, and note that export diversification is critical if LLDCs want to move up the value chains and reduce their vulnerability to the COVID-19 pandemic and other external shocks and invite UN-OHRLS, UNCTAD, UNIDO, UNDP, United Nations Regional Commissions, Common Fund for Commodities, World Bank, UNDP, ITC, and other partners to provide assistance to LLDCs to strengthen their capacity to participate in regional and global value chains;
28. **We stress** that a rules-based, non-discriminatory and equitable trading system is essential in preserving the interests of the poorest and most vulnerable economies including the LLDCs. The proposed reforms of the WTO must therefore promote inclusiveness and non-discrimination, build trust and address the inequalities and help spur growth and development;
29. **We note** further that five LLDCs are in the process of WTO accession and recognize that the accession process is however, resource-intensive, and urge WTO Members to take into account the challenges faced by acceding LLDCs and further urge the international community to enhance their financial and technical assistance in a timely and efficient matter to facilitate the accession of these countries;
30. **We note** that LLDCs depend on their transit neighbors to access global markets and that imposition of border restrictions aimed at combatting the spread of COVID-19 greatly impact the movement of goods and services to LLDCs. We stress that the use of

border measures designed to tackle COVID-19 has to be transparent, targeted, proportionate, and consistent with WTO rules. Against this background, we call on LLDCs and transit countries to work together to ensure smooth functioning at borders and in transit to facilitate the flow of essential goods and we call upon development partners, the United Nations and other international and regional organizations to support LLDCs and transit countries with technical and financial support towards strengthening trade facilitation and digitalization efforts;

31. **We encourage** LLDCs and transit countries that have not yet notified their capacity needs for the implementation of the WTO Trade Facilitation Agreement to do so and take advantage of the technical assistance opportunities. We also urge development partners, the private sector and UN system and other international and regional organizations to enhance technical and capacity building support in areas identified by LLDCs and transit countries as needing support to accelerate the implementation of the WTO Trade Facilitation Agreement;
32. **We recognize** that the growth in e-commerce provides international trade opportunities including new market opportunities for LLDCs. We call on UN-OHRLLS, UNCTAD, ITU, International Think Tank for LLDCs and partners to undertake studies on how to promote e-commerce in LLDCs;
33. **We are concerned** that little progress has been made with regards to structural economic transformation in LLDCs. **We recognize** that building productive capacities is a core requirement for achieving structural transformation and export diversification, and encourage LLDCs to mainstream the building of productive capacities in their development strategies;
34. **We stress** that national efforts of LLDCs need to be supported by an enabling international economic environment and financial, technical and capacity-building assistance towards building their productive capacities, enhancing diversification and value-addition, implementing industrial policies, and fostering structural economic transformation;
35. **We note** that the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic and the measures taken to mitigate its impact have resulted in lower business and industrial activity, vulnerable and we call on development partners and international organizations to provide assistance to LLDCs to establish initiatives to support SMEs such as through provision of enhanced finance and access to credit, capacity building and employing ICTs and innovation in business operations that may help in building the resilience of LLDCs' economies in the post-COVID-19 era;
36. **We emphasize** that building a conducive business environment for private sector development is one of the most important requirements for promoting sustained economic growth, developing an industrial base, attracting investment and bringing about structural transformation, and we commit to continue to foster an enabling legal and regulatory environment for private sector growth;
37. **We reaffirm** that science, technology and innovation have a critical role in achieving structural transformation and the SDGs. We commit to promote research, innovation, skill and capacity-building initiatives and technology development and adaptation towards advancing innovation-driven economic transformation and development,

efficient transit and transport systems, e-commerce, energy generation and storage, value-addition and economic transformation and call on development partners, the United Nations system and other stakeholders to support our efforts;

38. **We commit** to working together with our development partners to seize the opportunities offered by technologies to help us address the COVID-19 crisis, including by scaling up collaboration on essential medicines, vaccines and innovations in health systems;
39. **We reaffirm** that official development assistance is crucial for LLDCs in accelerating implementation of the VPoA and 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, and calls upon development partners and the international community to mobilize additional development finance from all sources in the form of grants and concessional loans and including through enhanced crisis response mechanisms to support LLDCs' recovery efforts from the COVID-19 crisis;
40. **We encourage** donors to leverage the global Aid for Trade agenda to enable LLDCs to benefit from the opportunities afforded by global value chains and foreign investment as well as from trade facilitation in their sustainable recovery efforts from COVID-19;
41. **We are deeply concerned** about the impact of high debt levels on LLDCs' ability to invest into implementation of the VPoA and 2030 Agenda as well as to deal with the impact of COVID-19. We are concerned that 16 out of 32 LLDCs are indicated as Highly Indebted countries. We encourage creditors to take bolder actions to support LLDCs with debt relief in order to free up liquidity and invest more in their health systems and economic recovery including through suspending debt repayments to international creditors, offering debt-to-health and to-nature swaps channeling additional funds to health systems implementation of environmental initiatives and programs and financing regional development projects in exchange for debt relief;
42. **We commit** to continue promoting conducive policies to attract foreign direct investment that leads to increased trade as well as sustainable development of LLDCs. We call on development partners to provide greater support to the foreign direct investment seeking efforts of LLDCs as well as investments to recover better from the COVID-19 pandemic. We also call on the UNCTAD, UN-OHRLS, UNIDO, United Nations Commission on International Trade Law, and other international and regional organizations to provide capacity building support to LLDCs to develop more focused policies, strategies and mechanisms;
43. **We welcome** the vigorous measures taken by the International Monetary Fund and World Bank Group, the regional development banks and other multilateral and bilateral development to provide emergency health support, debt relief and other economic assistance to help countries respond to COVID-19, and call for greater prioritization of assistance to LLDCs. We also stress that assistance is targeted to addressing LLDCs' challenges that have been aggravated by COVID-19, such as commodity dependency, high trade costs, trade facilitation, inadequate infrastructure, climate change, among others;
44. **We call upon** countries of the South in the spirit of solidarity and South-South Cooperation, to strive to increase financial and technical assistance to LLDCs towards the effective implementation of the VPoA and recovery efforts from COVID-19 and

stress that such support is a complement to, but not a substitute for, North South cooperation;

45. **We commit** to strengthening our national statistical capacities to address the gaps in data on the VPoA and the 2030 Agenda in order to provide high-quality, timely, reliable, disaggregated data and statistics and to fully integrate the Goals and targets in our monitoring and reporting systems. We call on increased capacity-building and technical support to LLDCs, from all sources, to strengthen their national statistical systems;
46. **We commend** the Secretary-General of the United Nations for his strong leadership and welcome establishment of financial and technical assistance initiatives to enable countries to tackle the socio-economic impact of COVID-19 and to help developing countries to recover better such as the United Nations COVID-19 Response and Recovery Fund and we emphasize that priority allocation of these resources should be accorded to LLDCs who are among the most vulnerable countries;
47. **We call on** the UN system to focus its activities in support of LLDCs to build a sustainable economic and social recovery that leaves no one behind and enable them to overcome the consequences of the COVID-19 pandemic and to make substantial progress in implementing the VPoA and in achieving the Sustainable Development Goals;
48. **We invite** the UN system to incorporate within its planned activities to examine the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on LLDCs, identify lessons learned from past and present epidemics and pandemics and recommendations for improving future preparedness for epidemics and pandemics;
49. **We welcome** the progress achieved by the Secretary-General in the repositioning of the United Nations development system, and looks forward to the timely implementation of outstanding mandates pertaining to the repositioning of the regional assets and the multi-country office review, under national ownership and leadership. Given the cross-border nature of the development issues of LLDCs, we would like to stress that the regional assets are reformed in such a way that they are better able to support the special development needs of the LLDCs;
50. **We also welcome** the increase in the share of expenditure for operational activities for development of the United Nations system in the LLDCs in 2018, which reached 24% of total expenditure at the country level, and stress that the United Nations Development system continues to remain a key development partner of LLDCs. We urge the United Nations development system to continue to prioritize allocations to the LLDCs to support them to address their special development needs;
51. **We call on** the Resident Coordinators and the UN Country teams to mainstream the goals and priorities set out in the VPoA and the SDGs into national development plans and strategies in LLDCs and transit countries and to assist the LLDCs in addressing the socio-economic impact of COVID-19;
52. **We underscore** the need to give due consideration to the issues and concerns of LLDCs in all relevant major United Nations conferences and processes and the relevant work of the United Nations development system, and calls for the elaboration of

information specific to LLDCs in a disaggregated manner in all major United Nations reports where appropriate;

53. **We take note** of the work of the Inter-Agency Consultative Group for the LLDCs, led by the Office of the High Representative and the coordinated support that it is providing to the LLDCs and we also take note of the efforts to develop terms of reference for the Group and to further improve its working methods;
54. **We welcome and adopt** the Roadmap for accelerated implementation of the VPoA in the remaining 5 years that highlights priority action areas with concrete deliverables towards the achievement of the VPoA objectives and targets;
55. **We are strongly committed** to lead the accelerated implementation of the VPoA and the Roadmap in collaboration with the transit countries and with the support of our development partners and we call upon the UN system, other international and regional organizations and other stakeholders to support the implementation of the Roadmap;
56. **We stress** that the progress in the implementation of the Roadmap be reported in the annual report of the Secretary-General and we stress that the Roadmap is a living document that will be regularly updated to reflect changes;
57. **We recognize** that while LLDCs do not have direct access to the sea because of their geographical location, the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS) gives them the right to access and use the ocean space as well as the ocean's resources. We call on the United Nations system and the International Seabed Authority to support the LLDCs in awareness raising, capacity-building, technology transfer, and the sharing of experiences to facilitate the participation of LLDCs in the ocean economy and in ocean related norm setting discussions including in the ongoing discussions on the intergovernmental Conference on an international legally binding instrument under the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea on the conservation and sustainable use of marine biological diversity of areas beyond national jurisdiction (BBNJ). We urge LLDCs that have not yet done so to ratify the UNCLOS and be more active in ISA meetings and activities;
58. **We recognize** the critical importance of the work of the International Think Tank for LLDCs in improving research and capacity development for the LLDCs and in promoting networking and collaboration among researchers and research institutions for the benefit of the LLDCs and call upon relevant international and regional organizations including UN-OHRLLS, UN-ESCAP, UNCTAD, UNDP, WTO and others, and research institutions, think tanks, and other stakeholders to strengthen collaboration on research and capacity building with the International Think Tank for LLDCs on all the priority areas of the VPoA and foster coherence in the implementation of the VPoA with the Sustainable Development Goals;
59. **We take note with appreciation** of the contributions made by the host country Mongolia and other LLDCs who are party to the Multilateral Agreement for the Establishment of an International Think Tank for LLDCs and call on development partners, other Member States that are party to the Agreement, United Nations system, other international organizations and other stakeholders to provide voluntary contributions to the International Think Tank;

60. **We urge** all LLDCs that have not yet ratified the Multilateral Agreement for the Establishment of an International Think Tank for LLDCs to do so;
61. **We invite** development partners and the international financial and development institutions to make voluntary contributions to the Trust Fund established by the Secretary-General to support the activities related to the follow-up and the implementation of the VPoA;
62. **We call upon** the United Nations system, including the regional economic commissions, as well as all relevant international and regional organizations, to continue to provide the support necessary to accelerate the implementation of the VPoA;
63. **We stress** that, in accordance with the mandate given by the General Assembly, the Office of the High Representative for the Least Developed Countries, Landlocked Developing Countries and Small Island Developing States should continue to ensure the coordinated follow-up to, effective monitoring of and reporting on the implementation of the VPoA and the outcome of its midterm review, undertake advocacy efforts at the national, regional and global levels raising awareness on the special needs of LLDCs, build multi-stakeholder partnerships, and mobilize international support and resources in favour of the LLDCs;
64. **We call** on the Secretary-General to mobilize the necessary resources, from all sources to enable the LLDC unit of UN-OHRLLS to adequately support the LLDCs and call for the operationalization of paragraph 48 of resolution 74/262 adopted in December last year in which the General Assembly requested the Secretary General to take the action necessary to ensure that additional post and non-post resources are allocated to sub-programmes 2 on LLDCs, and 3 on Small island developing States in the context of the proposed programme budget for 2021 to enable them to effectively carry out their increased mandates;
65. **We welcome** Kazakhstan's hosting of the 12<sup>th</sup> World Trade Organization Ministerial Conference in Nur-Sultan in June 2021 and stress that the Ministerial Conference should deliver a development-oriented outcome including a deliverable in favor of the LLDCs;
66. **We welcome also** Kazakhstan's hosting of the Ministerial Meeting on Trade for LLDCs that will be held in the margins of the WTO Ministerial Conference, and further reaffirm the critical importance of trade to LLDCs in helping them achieve the SDGs;
67. **We welcome also** Turkmenistan's hosting of the Ministerial Meeting on Transport for LLDCs in 2021, and underscore that increased transport connectivity is critical for LLDCs to become fully integrated in regional and global markets;
68. **We look** forward to the convening of the following upcoming global conferences: Food Systems Summit; UN Climate Change Conference COP26 to be held in 1-12 November 2021 (Glasgow, UK); UN Second Global Sustainable Transport Conference; the 15th UNCTAD Quadrennial Conference to be held on 25-30 April 2021 (Barbados); Ocean Conference to be held on 2-4 March 2021 (Lisbon, Portugal) and the World Investment Forum to be held on 6-8 December 2021 (Abu Dhabi, UAE). We recognize the

importance of these meetings to LLDCs and stress that the outcomes of these meetings should take into account LLDCs issues;

69. **We express** our sincere recognition to the Government of the Kazakhstan, in its capacity as the Chair of the Group of LLDCs, for the efforts undertaken in coordinating the Group's activities; and **we further commend** Kazakhstan in collaboration with the UN OHRLLS for initiating and coordinating the establishment of an elaborate Roadmap as a guiding and actionable tool for the acceleration of the implementation of the VPoA for the remaining five year period;
70. **We underscore** the need for closer cooperation to promote the interests and needs of the 91 countries that make up the three Groups – LDCs, LLDCs and SIDS, especially within intergovernmental negotiating processes. **We encourage** the Chairs of the 3 groups to continue to work together to secure the best interests of the most vulnerable countries – LDCs, LLDCs and SIDS.

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*23 September, 2020*



## **Annex 3**

### **Group of Landlocked Developing Countries: composition by region (as of September 2020)**

#### **Africa**

1. Botswana
2. Burkina Faso
3. Burundi
4. Central African Republic
5. Chad
6. Ethiopia
7. Lesotho
8. Malawi
9. Mali
10. Niger
11. Rwanda
12. Eswatini
13. South Sudan
14. Uganda
15. Zambia
16. Zimbabwe

#### **Asia**

17. Afghanistan
18. Bhutan
19. Kazakhstan
20. Kyrgyzstan
21. Lao People's Democratic Republic
22. Mongolia
23. Nepal
24. Tajikistan
25. Turkmenistan
26. Uzbekistan

#### **Eastern Europe**

27. Armenia
28. Azerbaijan
29. Republic of Moldova
30. North Macedonia

#### **Latin America**

31. Bolivia (Plurinational State of)
32. Paraguay

## **Annex 4**

### **List of Participants**

#### **List of Participants**

##### **Afghanistan**

1. H.E. Mr. Mohammed Haneef Atmar, Acting Minister-Designate of Foreign Affairs
2. Mr. Mohammed Naeemi, Deputy Permanent Representative to the United Nations

##### **Algeria**

3. H.E. Mr. Sofiane Mimouni, Permanent Representative to the United Nations
4. Mr. Ahmed Sahraoui, First Secretary

##### **Angola**

5. Ms. Vezua Paiva, Second Secretary, Permanent Mission of Angola

##### **Argentina**

6. Mr. Guido Crilchuk, First Secretary, Permanent Mission of Argentina to the United Nations
7. H.E. Ms. María del Carmen Squeff, Permanent Representative to the United Nations

##### **Armenia**

8. H.E. Mr. Ambassador Zohrab Mnatsakanyan, Minister of Foreign Affairs
9. H.E. Mr. Mher Margaryan, Permanent Representative to the United Nations
10. Mr. Davit Knyazyan, Deputy Permanent Representative to the United Nations
11. Mr. Davit Grigorian, Second Secretary, Permanent Mission of Armenia

##### **Austria**

12. H.E. Mr. Peter Launsky, Deputy Minister for Foreign Affairs at the Austrian Federal Ministry for Europe and International Affairs

##### **Azerbaijan**

13. H.E. Mr. Jeyhun Aziz oglu Bayramov, Minister of Foreign Affairs
14. Mr. Ghulam M Isaczai, Resident Coordinator
15. Mr. Gurban Karimbayli, Executive Associate
16. Dr. Rashad Hasanov, Economist, Resident Coordination Office
17. Ms. Billur Ahmadova, Attaché, Permanent Mission of the Republic of Azerbaijan to the United Nations
18. Ms. Husniyya Mammadova, Director, Department of Economic Cooperation, Ministry of Foreign Affairs

##### **Bhutan**

19. H.E. Dr. Tandi Dorji, Minister of Foreign Affairs
20. H.E. Ms. Doma Tshering, Permanent Representative to the United Nations

##### **Bolivia**

21. H.E. Ms. Karen Longaric, Minister of Foreign Affairs
22. H.E. Mr. Rubén Darío Cuéllar Suárez, Permanent Representative to the United Nations
23. Ms. Susana Sottoli, Resident Coordinator
24. Ms. Liliana Oropeza, Second Secretary, Permanent Mission of Bolivia to the UN
25. Mr. Rodrigo Fernandez Ortiz, Official of the Multilateral Affairs Division of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs

26. Mrs. Claribel Aparicio, Vice-Minister of Foreign Trade and Integration

#### **Botswana**

- 27. H.E. Dr. Lemogang Kwape, Minister of International Affairs and Cooperation
- 28. H.E. Mr. Collen V Kelapile, Permanent Representative to the United Nations
- 29. Professor Mpho Molomo, Special Advisor to the President
- 30. Dr. Kaelo Molefe, Advisor to the President
- 31. Ms. Benetia Chingapane, Director, Multilateral Affairs, Ministry of International Affairs and Cooperation
- 32. Mr. Ishmael Dabutha, Deputy Permanent Representative to the United Nations
- 33. Ms. Lorato Motsumi, First Secretary, Botswana Mission to the UN
- 34. Mr. Ronald Badubi, First Secretary, Botswana Mission to the UN
- 35. Mr. Katlego Mmalane, First Secretary, Botswana Mission to the UN

#### **Brazil**

- 36. H.E. Mr. Ronaldo Costa Filho, Permanent Representative of Brazil to the UN
- 37. Mr. João Genésio de Almeida Filho, Deputy Permanent Representative
- 38. Mr. Vinicius Trindade, Second Secretary, Permanent Mission of Brazil to the United Nations
- 39. Mr. Philip Gough, Minister-Counsellor, Permanent Mission of Brazil to the United Nations

#### **Burkina Faso**

- 40. H.E. Mr. Eric Yemdaogo Tiare, Permanent Representative to the United Nations
- 41. H.E. Mr. Alpha Barry, Minister of Foreign Affairs and Cooperation
- 42. Mr. Levi Levi, Second Counselor, Burkina Faso Permanent Mission to the United Nations

#### **Cambodia**

- 43. H.E. Mr. Sovann KE, Permanent Representative and Ambassador to the United Nations
- 44. Mrs. Soboth Sok, First Secretary, Permanent Mission to the United Nations

#### **Canada**

- 45. Ms. Rebecca Bell, Expert

#### **Chad**

- 46. Mr. Mouctar Abakar, Chargé Affaires a.i., Permanent Mission of Chad to the UN

#### **Chile**

- 47. Ms. Montserrat Gonzalez, Second Secretary, Second Committee Advisor

#### **China**

- 48. Mr. Bing Dai, Deputy Permanent Representative, Chinese Mission to the United Nations

#### **Côte D'Ivoire**

- 49. H.E. Mr. Leon Kacou Adom, Permanent Representative
- 50. H.E. Mr. Desire Wulfran Ipo, Deputy Permanent Representative
- 51. Mrs. Kory Harris, Adviser, Communication and Media
- 52. Mr. Isaac Bile-Hamilton, Minister Counsellor
- 53. Mr. Evariste Yobouet, First Secretary

#### **Denmark**

- 54. H.E. Dr. Rasmus Prehn, Minister for Development Cooperation

#### **Eswatini**

- 55. Dr. Siphelele Dlodlu, Counsellor

### **Ethiopia**

56. H.E. Mr. Redwan Hussien, Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs

### **Germany**

57. Mr. Stephan Ulrich, Counsellor, Permanent Mission of Germany  
58. Mr. Markus Schloemann, Senior Policy Officer, German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development  
59. Ms. Sandra Goetze, Referent, Federal Ministry  
60. Ms. Lena Stuebe, German Federal Ministry for Economic Affairs and Energy

### **India**

61. H.E. Ambassador T S Tirumurti, Permanent Representative to the United Nations  
62. Ms. Vidisha Maitra, Expert  
63. Mr. K Nagaraj Naidu, Ambassador, Deputy Permanent Representative to the United Nations

### **Ireland**

64. Mr. John Gilroy, Climate and Sustainable Development Lead, Permanent Mission of Ireland to the United Nations

### **Kazakhstan**

65. H.E. Mr. Mukhtar Tileuberdi, Minister of Foreign Affairs  
66. H.E. Mr. Kairat Umarov, Ambassador and Permanent Representative to the United Nations.  
67. Mr. Nurzhan Rakhmetov, Mission of Kazakhstan to the United Nations, [nurzhandf@gmail.com](mailto:nurzhandf@gmail.com)

### **Kyrgyzstan**

68. H.E. Mr. Chingiz Aidarbekov, Minister of Foreign Affairs,  
69. H.E. Ms. Mirgul Moldoisaeva, Permanent Representative to the United Nations  
70. Mr. Genadiy Rau, Economics Officer, Kazakhstan Resident Mission of Asian Development Bank  
71. Mr. Daniyar Omurzakov, Third Secretary, Permanent Mission of the Kyrgyz Republic to the UN

### **Lao PDR**

72. H.E. Mr. Thongphane Savanphet, Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs  
73. H.E. Mr. Anouparb Vongnorkeo, Permanent Representative  
74. Mr. Daovy Vongxay, Deputy Permanent Representative to the United Nations  
75. Mr. Virayouth Viengviseth, Second Secretary  
76. Mr. Maythong Thammavongsa, Director General of the Department of International Organizations, Ministry of Foreign Affairs  
77. Mr. Khamphinh Philakone, Director of United Nations Economic and Social Affairs Division, Ministry of Foreign Affairs  
78. Mr. Kalamoungkhoun Souphanouvong, Deputy Director of the United Nations Economic and Social Affairs Division, Ministry of Foreign Affairs  
79. Mr. Kanya Khammoungkhoun, Deputy Director General of the Department of International Organizations, Ministry of Foreign Affairs

### **Lesotho**

80. H.E. Ms. Matsepo Ramakoe, Minister of Foreign Affairs  
81. H.E. Mr. Nkopane Monyane, Permanent Representative to the United Nations  
82. Mr. Tanki Mothae, Principal Secretary, Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Relations  
83. Ms. Limpho Masilo- Motsamai, Director Economic and International Organisations, Ministry of Foreign Affairs

84. Thabang Tlalajoe, Minister Counsellor, Lesotho Mission to the United Nations
85. Mr. Tieho Rankhone, Economic Counsellor, Lesotho Mission to the United Nations
86. Mpho Mokhutsoane, Private Secretary to the Minister, Ministry of Foreign Affairs

#### **Malawi**

87. H.E. Mr. Eisenhower Mkaka, M.P., Minister of Foreign Affairs
88. H.E. Dr. Perks Ligoya, Ambassador, Permanent Representative
89. Mr. Francis Mponda, Director
90. Ms. Madalo Nyambose, Director of Transport Policy and Planning
91. Mr. Luckie Sikwese, Principal Secretary
92. Dr. Elias Tsokalida, Principal Foreign Service Officer
93. Mrs. Renata Chivundu, First Secretary
94. Ms. Mwayi Gidala, Economist

#### **Mali**

95. H.E. Mr. Issa Konfourou, Permanent Representative to the United Nations
96. Mr. Aboubacar Sissoko, Second Advisor, Mali Permanent Mission

#### **Moldova**

97. Mr. Radu Bezniuc, Head of the Communication Infrastructure, Ministry of Economy and Infrastructure
98. Mr. Gheorghe Leucă, State Secretary, Ministry of Foreign Affairs and European Integration
99. Mr. Anatol Urații, State Secretary, Ministry of Economy and Infrastructure
100. Mr. Andrei Nicolenco, First Secretary, Permanent Mission of the Republic of Moldova to the UN

#### **Mongolia**

101. H.E. Mr. Enkhbold Vorshilov, Permanent Representative to the United Nations
102. Mr. Tapan Mishra, Resident Coordinator
103. Ms. Jambal Doljinsuren, Strategic Planning and Team Leader, Resident Coordination Office
104. Ms. Gereltsetseg Baatarsuren, Counsellor, Permanent Mission of Mongolia

#### **Niger**

105. H.E. Mr. Abdou Abarry, Permanent Representative to the United Nations
106. Mr. Samadou Ousman, Counselor, Niger Mission to the United Nations

#### **Nigeria**

107. Mr. Samuel Victor Makwe, Counsellor
108. Mr. Zayyad Abdussalam, Director, Global Institutions Unit, Ministry of Foreign Affairs
109. Mr. Garba Aliyu, Desk Officer, Non-Aligned Movement, Ministry of Foreign Affairs

#### **Nepal**

110. H.E. Mr. Pradeep Gyawali, Minister of Foreign Affairs
111. Mr. Ghanshyam Bhandari, Deputy Permanent Representative to the United Nations
112. Mr. Suvanga Parajuli, Second Secretary, Permanent Mission of Nepal

#### **Paraguay**

113. H.E. Mr. Antonio Rivas Palacios, Minister of Foreign Affairs

114. H.E. Mr. Julio Cesar Arriola, Permanent Representative to the United Nations
  115. Mr. Alberto Caballero, Deputy Permanent Representative to the United Nations
  116. Mr. David Martinez, Second Secretary
- Qatar**
117. H.E. Mr. Soltan bin Saad Al-Muraikhi, Minister of State for Foreign Affairs
  118. H.E. Ambassador Alya Al-Thani, Permanent Representative to the United Nations
- Turkmenistan**
119. H.E. Mrs. Aksoltan Ataeva, Permanent Representative to the United Nations
  120. Mr. Rovshen Annaberdiyev, Deputy Permanent Representative to the United Nations
- Romania**
121. Ms. Cristina Popescu, Minister Counsellor, Permanent Mission to the United Nations
- Russia**
122. H.E. Mr. Vassily Nebenzia, Permanent Representative to the United Nations
  123. Mr. Dmitry Chumakov, Deputy Permanent Representative to the United Nations
  124. Ms. Viktoriia Kardash, Commercial Counselor, Permanent Mission of the Russian Federation to the United Nations
- Rwanda**
125. H.E. Mr. Vincent Biruta, Minister of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation
- Senegal**
126. Mr. Mamadou Gueye, Counselor, Senegal Mission to the United Nations
- Singapore**
127. Ms. Jophie Tang, Deputy Permanent Representative
  128. Mr. Franki Au, Delegate
- Sweden**
129. H.E. Ms. Charlotta Schlyter, Ambassador, Sustainable Development Division
- Tajikistan**
130. H.E. Mr. Sirojiddin Muhridin, Minister of Foreign Affairs
  131. Ms. Farzona Nizomi, Executive Associate
  132. Mr. Owais Parray, Economist, Resident Coordination Office
  133. Ms. Ana Lukatela, Head of Office, Resident Coordination Office
  134. Mr. Firuz Kosimov, Third Secretary, Tajikistan Mission to the United Nations
- Turkey**
135. H.E. Mr. Feridun H. Sinirlioğlu, Permanent Representative to the United Nations
  136. Ms. Damla Fidan, Second Secretary

**Uganda**

137. H.E. Mr. Adonia Ayebare, Permanent Representative to the United Nations

138. Ms. Florence Kyasiimire, Counselor, Uganda Mission to the United Nations

**United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland**

139. Ms. Virginia Browning, Policy Adviser, UK Mission to the UN

**United States of America**

140. Ms. Courtney Nemroff, Acting U.S. Representative to ECOSOC, U.S. Mission to the UN

141. Mr. Thomas Leiby, Adviser, U.S. Mission to the UN

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142. H.E. Mr. Bakhtiyor Ibragimov, Permanent Representative to the United Nations

143. Mr. Zarif Jumaev, Economist, Resident Coordination Office

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144. Mr. Thành Lê Viết, First Secretary, Second Committee

**Zimbabwe**

145. H.E. Mr. David Musabayana, Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs and International Relations

146. H.E. Mr. Ralph Faranisi, Government of Zimbabwe, Chief Director, Multilateral Affairs

147. Mrs. Bernadette Kadyamusuma, Government of Zimbabwe, Deputy Director, Multilateral Affairs

148. Mr. Tapiwa Roy Rupende, Counsellor, Permanent Mission of Zimbabwe to the UN

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**Asian Development Bank**

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150. Mr. Arjun Goswami, Chief, Regional Cooperation and Integration Thematic Group

151. Mr. Yuebin Zhang, Principal Regional Cooperation Specialist, Regional Cooperation and Integration Thematic Group

152. Mr. Saad Paracha, Senior Regional Cooperation Specialist

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153. H.E. Ambassador Sheikh Mohammed Belal, Managing Director

**Department of Economic and Social Affairs (DESA)**

154. Ms. Daniela Bas, Director, Division For Inclusive Social Development

**European Investment Bank**

155. Mr. Gavin Dunnett, Director

**Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO)**

156. Mr. Maximo Torero, Chief Economist, Economic and Social Development Stream

157. Ms. Halka Otto, Senior Liaison Officer

**International Chamber of Commerce (ICC)**

158. H.E. Mr. Patrick Obath, Senior Director of ICC's Global Executive Board  
159. Mr. Raoul Renard, Counsellor, Government Affairs Manager

**International Development Law Organization (IDLO)**

160. Mrs. Jan Beagle, Director-General  
161. Ms. Chris Clelland, Administrative Associate

**International Renewable Energy Agency (IRENA)**

162. H.E. Mr. Francesco La Camera, Director-General  
163. Ms. Gauri Singh, Deputy Director-General, Permanent Observer Office of IRENA to the United Nations  
164. Ms. Sofja Giljova, Associate Professional, Permanent Observer Office of IRENA to the United Nations

**International Trade Center (ITC)**

165. H.E. Ms. Dorothy Ng'ambi Tembo, Acting Executive Director  
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172. H.E. Mr. Houlin Zhao, Secretary-General  
173. Mr. Yushi Torigoe, Chief, Strategic, Planning and Membership Department

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174. H.E. Mr. Michael W. Lodge, Secretary-General  
175. Dr. Marie Bourrel-McKinnon, Senior Policy Officer, Special Assistant to the Secretary-General

**International Road Transport Union (IRU)**

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**Islamic Development Bank (IsDB)**

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181. Mr. Syed Husain Quadri, Acting Director, Country Strategy & Cooperation

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- 199. Mr. Achim Steiner, Administrator
- 200. Mr. Taimur Khilji, Economist

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