



UN-OHRLLS

NEWSLETTER

EMPOWERING THE MOST VULNERABLE NATIONS:
UPDATES, INSIGHTS, AND OPPORTUNITIES



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Dear Colleagues and Partners,

This special edition of the UN-OHRLLS Newsletter is dedicated to the landmark Third United Nations Conference on Landlocked Developing Countries (LLDC3), held in Awaza, Turkmenistan, from 5–8 August 2025. The Conference convened Heads of State and Government, Ministers, Parliamentarians, development partners, the private sector, youth, and civil society, who came together in an extraordinary spirit of solidarity and partnership. Their collective message was clear: geography must not determine destiny.

Over four days of rich deliberations, participants engaged in high-level dialogues, thematic tracks, and side events, addressing the most pressing structural challenges confronting LLDCs - from costly trade and transit barriers to climate vulnerabilities, weak connectivity, and limited access to finance.

LLDC3 delivered a bold blueprint - the Awaza Programme of Action (APOA) and the Political Declaration - setting out a practical path for the decade ahead. The Conference underscored that implementation will be the true measure of success. With strong partnerships, predictable financing, and shared accountability, the APOA offers a transformative opportunity to turn LLDCs from landlocked to land-linked.

This issue captures the key highlights and commitments emerging from Awaza, and the renewed determination of the international community to ensure that the 600 million people living in LLDCs are not left behind in the pursuit of the Sustainable Development Goals.



Ms. Rabab Fatima

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

Data Spotlight



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Did You Know?

Nearly 200,000 km of paved roads and more than 46,000 km of railways need to be constructed in LLDCs to achieve global average of road/rail density. The LLDC3 Conference in Awaza was a key moment to galvanize partnerships to achieve this.

OHRLLS on Social Media

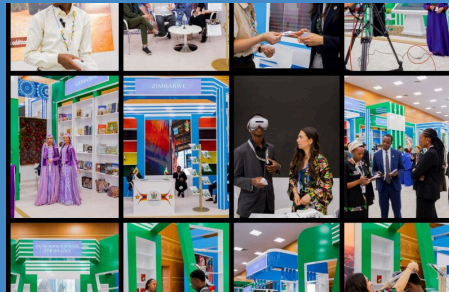


The Flags are raised!!

Today in Awaza, the flags of the United Nations and Turkmenistan were raised together to officially open the venue of the Third United Nations Conference on Landlocked Developing Countries (LLDC3).

This simple yet profound ceremony marks the start of a once-in-a-decade moment; a global gathering committed to advancing the development aspirations of the 32 LLDCs and their 600 million people.

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Do not forget to stop by the LLDC3 Exhibitions!

Our exhibitors have exciting things in store!

The exhibition space at LLDC3 highlights the creativity, ambition, and partnerships shaping the future of Landlocked Developing Countries.

Come visit and explore how LLDCs and their partners are working to drive sustainable development forward.

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A milestone moment at LLDC3

Today, at LLDC3 in Awaza, the first-ever LLDC Private Sector Forum opened with a clear message: the private sector is not only a stakeholder, but a vital partner in delivering solutions that will shape the next decade of progress for LLDCs.

The event culminated in the launch of the LLDC Global Business Network - a dedicated platform to strengthen partnerships with the private sector and ensure their central role in implementing the APoA.

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Opening Plenary

The Opening Plenary set the tone with powerful calls for global solidarity and urgent action to deliver on the Awaza Programme of Action. High-level speakers included H.E. Serdar Berdimuhamedov, President of Turkmenistan; UN Secretary-General António Guterres; the Presidents of the General Assembly and ECOSOC; and OHRLLS-USG Rabab Fatima, Secretary-General of the Conference, alongside other global and regional leaders. The Conference brought together over 5,700 participants from 103 countries, including 16 Heads of State and Government, underscoring the importance of collective commitment to advancing the priorities of landlocked developing countries.

Private Sector Forum

The Private Sector Forum at LLDC3 brought together over 100 participants from business, governments, and partners to advance solutions for LLDCs in their new decade. Discussions focused on strengthening trade and transit, fostering youth entrepreneurship and innovation, accelerating digital transformation, and unlocking financing and investment opportunities. A landmark outcome was the launch of the Global Business Network for LLDCs (GBN-LLDCs), a new platform to amplify private sector voices, foster investment, and shape inclusive policies for resilient and sustainable growth.



Youth Forum

The first-ever LLDC3 Youth Forum amplified the voices of young leaders from across landlocked developing countries, who called for greater inclusion in decision-making and investment in skills, innovation, and entrepreneurship. Discussions emphasized digital literacy, climate action, and access to finance as critical enablers for youth-led solutions. The Forum showcased the energy and creativity of LLDC youth and reaffirmed that empowering the next generation is central to achieving the Awaza Programme of Action and the 2030 Agenda.

Civil Society Forum

The LLDC3 Civil Society Forum, also the first of its kind, brought together organizations united in their commitment to advancing the Awaza Programme of Action. The Forum adopted a Civil Society Declaration calling for people-centered structural transformation, intersectional climate action, ethical digital governance, and fairer financing systems to tackle debt and inequality. Delegates emphasized that civil society must be recognized as co-creators of development and committed to engaging in implementation and monitoring through inclusive, rights-based approaches.



Connectivity Track

The Connectivity Track at LLDC3 highlighted digital and transport-transit connectivity as essential for transforming LLDCs into “landlinked” economies. Discussions emphasized expanding digital access and meaningful use, empowering communities, and leveraging innovative financing. On transport, delegates called for climate-resilient infrastructure, legal harmonization, and regional trade corridors to reduce costs and boost trade. Digital tools like eTIR and eCMR, along with coordinated investments, were showcased as enablers. The track underscored that sustained political commitment, partnerships, and inclusive policies are critical to LLDC connectivity..



Ministerial Meeting South-South Cooperation

The Ministerial Meeting on South-South Cooperation at LLDC3, explored how partnerships among developing countries can drive resilient, transformative development in LLDCs. Delegates highlighted harnessing science, technology, and innovation, boosting regional integration and trade, and scaling up financing for inclusive connectivity. Five case studies showcased LLDCs' progress through collaboration, while development partners reaffirmed their solidarity. The meeting confirmed that South-South and triangular cooperation are essential to delivering the Awaza Programme of Action and the 2030 Agenda.

Women Leaders Forum

The Women Leaders Forum at LLDC3 brought together Ministers, parliamentarians, civil society, youth, business leaders, and UN partners to spotlight the critical role of women in advancing the Awaza Programme of Action, under the theme "From Commitment to Change: Women Driving the Programme of Action". The Forum emphasized gender-responsive policies, economic empowerment, STEM and digital inclusion, leadership development, and improved healthcare. Participants called for coordinated efforts across governments, regional bodies, and international partners to ensure women and girls are fully included in decision-making and development, leaving no one behind.



Parliamentary Forum

Over 100 parliamentarians from 40 countries gathered for the Parliamentary Forum at LLDC3. The Forum highlighted the critical role of parliaments in advancing the APoA, with discussions on unresolved challenges, inclusive trade systems, and accountable governance. The endorsed Parliamentary Message called for stronger partnerships, legislation supporting fair trade, and women's empowerment in decision-making, underscoring parliamentarians' vital role in driving sustainable development in LLDCs.

Meeting of the National Focal Points (NFPs)

The LLDC3 National Focal Points Meeting highlighted the central role of national ownership in implementing the Awaza Programme of Action. Participants underscored close collaboration between national focal points and UN Resident Coordinators, integration of the Programme into national plans, and leveraging multi-stakeholder partnerships for tangible results. Discussions showcased practical tools, including the APoA mainstreaming toolkit, and country experiences from Zambia, Uganda, Armenia, and others, emphasizing regional cooperation, private sector engagement, and capacity-building as key to translating commitments into sustainable, inclusive development outcomes.





Roundtable 1

This high-level Roundtable examined how structural transformation, diversification, and science, technology, and innovation (STI) can drive prosperity for LLDCs. Delegates highlighted the urgent need to reduce dependence on primary commodities, build resilience against shocks, and expand fiscal space. Identified priorities included modernizing agriculture, strengthening industry and services, promoting entrepreneurship and SMEs, and leveraging STI for inclusive growth. Critical minerals and regional cooperation were also recognized as strategic enablers for integration into global value chains and advancing the APoA.

Roundtable 2

Roundtable 2 underscored trade's transformative role in advancing LLDCs' development. Leaders called for stronger integration into the multilateral trading system through a dedicated Work Programme at the World Trade Organization (WTO), tailored assistance, and support for accessions. The WTO Trade Facilitation Agreement was highlighted, with focus on digitalized customs, smart corridors, and resilient infrastructure. Speakers emphasized aligning trade with the SDGs, strengthening partnerships with transit countries, and mobilizing financing. Commitments centered on doubling exports, expanding digital trade, and improving transit to deliver the Awaza Programme of Action.



Roundtable 3:

This Roundtable addressed LLDCs' disproportionate vulnerability to climate change and disasters, despite their negligible emissions. Speakers called for shifting from response to preparedness, prioritizing women, youth, and other vulnerable groups. Scaling up early warning systems, advancing the SG's Early Warnings for All initiative, and strengthening adaptation plans with clear timelines and financing were highlighted. Participants stressed equitable access to climate finance and the importance of regional cooperation. The message was clear: LLDCs must not be left behind in global climate action.

Roundtable 4:

Roundtable 4 highlighted the urgent need to strengthen infrastructure and connectivity for LLDCs, where high transport and transit costs hinder competitiveness and development. Participants stressed stronger regional road, rail, and energy corridors, harmonized legal frameworks, and wider use of digital technologies to empower SMEs and women- and youth-led enterprises. Building climate-resilient infrastructure through PPPs and innovative financing, alongside deeper regional cooperation and capacity-building, was emphasized as key to overcoming structural barriers and advancing the Awaza Programme of Action.





Roundtable 5:

Roundtable 5 emphasized that the Awaza PoA's success hinges on strong global partnerships and mobilizing resources. Delegates highlighted strengthening domestic finance through modernized tax systems and digitalization, scaling up ODA, and expanding access to affordable climate finance. Innovative tools like blended finance, green bonds, and debt swaps, were seen as critical, alongside de-risking to attract FDI and harnessing remittances. Participants called for a fairer global financial system with stronger voice and representation for LLDCs.

Closing Plenary:

The LLDC3 Closing Plenary featured remarks from Turkmenistan's Vice President and Foreign Minister Rashid Meredov, and OHRLLS-USG Rabab Fatima, Secretary-General of the Conference. USG Fatima highlighted the success of LLDC3, noting that its true legacy will be measured by the real changes it delivers for 600 million people in landlocked developing countries. The Closing Plenary also featured presentations from all tracks and roundtables, showcasing collaborative solutions, key commitments, and innovative approaches that will drive sustainable development and foster stronger global partnerships.



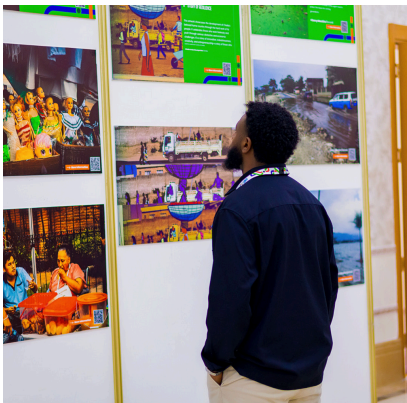
SIDE EVENTS

LLDC3 featured over 40 dynamic side events organized by Member States, UN entities, and partners. Covering themes from digital corridors, trade integration, climate resilience, and disaster risk reduction to youth leadership and innovative financing, these events enriched the Conference, showcased solutions, and amplified the voices driving the Awaza Programme of Action.



EXHIBITIONS

LLDC3 featured a vibrant exhibition space where Member States, partners, and various agencies showcased creativity, ambition, and collaborative initiatives shaping the future of landlocked developing countries. The space also included a youth photo exhibition, highlighting young voices and perspectives in driving sustainable development and fostering innovation across LLDCs.



MEDIA BRIEFINGS

Throughout the week, the LLDC3 Media Briefing Room hosted multiple press conferences, including the Opening and Closing sessions, daily updates, and briefings by UN agencies, host country representatives, and development partners.



Statements by Ms. Rabab Fatima

Under Secretary-General and High Representative for LDCs, LLDCs and SIDS

- Statement by Ms. Rabab Fatima at the Flag Raising Ceremony of the Third UN Conference on Landlocked Developing Countries - 3 August 2025
- Statement by Ms. Rabab Fatima at the Opening Session of the Parliamentary Forum of LLDC3 - 04 August 2025
- Statement by Ms. Rabab Fatima at the Closing Session of the Parliamentary Forum of LLDC3 - 04 August 2025
- Opening Remarks by Ms. Rabab Fatima at the Civil Society Forum - 04 August 2025
- Statement by Ms. Rabab Fatima at the Opening Ceremony of the Third United Nations Conference on Landlocked Developing Countries - 05 August 2025
- Statement by Ms. Rabab Fatima at the High-Level Special Event on “From Potential to Prosperity: Strengthening Agricultural R&D in LLDCs” - 06 August 2025
- Opening Statement by Ms. Rabab Fatima at the Ministerial Meeting on South-South Cooperation - 06 August 2025
- Statement by Ms. Rabab Fatima on the Occasion of the First International LLDC Day - 06 August 2025
- Opening Remarks by Mr. Roland Mollerus, Director on behalf of Ms. Rabab Fatima at the High-level Closing of the LLDC3 Digital Session (Connectivity Track) - 06 August 2025
- Remarks by Ms. Rabab Fatima at the Connectivity Track “From Landlocked to Land-linked” - 06 August 2025
- Statement by Ms. Rabab Fatima on the LLDC3 Private Sector Forum High-level Closing - 06 August 2025
- Statement by Ms. Rabab Fatima at the Side-Event Driving Transformation in LLDCs via Tech and Innovation - 07 August 2025
- Closing Remarks by Ms. Rabab Fatima at Closing Session of LLDC3 - 08 August 2025
- Statement by Ms. Rabab Fatima at the Flag Lowering Ceremony of the Third United Nations Conference on Landlocked Developing Countries - 08 August 2025



KEY LINKS

Key Documents

- [The Awaza Programme of Action](#)
- [The Awaza Programme of Action Key Deliverables](#)
- [The Awaza Programme of Action and the Pact of the Future](#)
- [The Awaza Programme of Action and the SDGs](#)
- [LLDC Handbook](#)

Official Press Releases

- [Third United Nations Conference on Landlocked Developing Countries \(LLDC3\) Opens in Awaza, Turkmenistan, Mobilizing Global Partnerships for Inclusive Prosperity](#)
- [Third UN Conference on Landlocked Developing Countries \(LLDC3\) Concludes with Endorsement of Awaza Programme of Action and Adoption of Historic Awaza Political Declaration](#)

Doha Programme of Action

ABAS

APoA

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