



United Nations Office of the High Representative for the Least Developed Countries, Landlocked Developing Countries and Small Island Developing States

(UN-OHRLLS)

**Report of the Fourth Inter-Agency Consultative Group Meeting on the
Follow-up and Implementation of the Vienna Programme of Action
for LLDCs**

Geneva

8 February 2017

A. Introduction

The Fourth Inter-Agency Consultative Group (IACG) Meeting on the Follow-up and Implementation of the Vienna Programme of Action for LLDCs for the Decade 2014-2024 (VPoA) was held in Geneva on 8 February 2017. The meeting was organized by the United Nations Office of the High-Representative for Least Developed Countries, Landlocked Developing Countries and Small Island Developing States (UN-OHRLS). The IACG provided a platform for the participating organizations to update each other on the implementation of the Vienna Programme of Action (VPoA), as well as consult on ways of fostering collaboration in forthcoming activities related to implementation of the VPoA.

The meeting was chaired by UN-OHRLS and opened by Mr. Gyan Chandra Acharya, Under-Secretary-General and High Representative for the Least Developed Countries, Landlocked Developing Countries and Small Island Developing States. The meeting was attended by participants from 22 different institutions as shown in the participant list in annex 1. The meeting followed the agenda presented in annex 2.

B. Opening Session

Mr. Gyan Chandra Acharya, Under-Secretary-General, and High Representative for the LDCs, LLDCs and SIDS welcomed all participants to the meeting and expressed appreciations to all the organizations for their contributions to the implementation of the VPoA. He recapitulated on the nature and content of the VPoA and highlighted that OHRLS has been consistently highlighting the importance of ensuring coherence in the implementation and follow-up to the VPoA, the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, the Addis Ababa Action Agenda, the Paris Agreement on Climate Change and other development agendas.

He noted that at the regional and global levels, a number of the UN Regional Commissions as well as a number of UN departments and agencies have already taken formal steps to mainstream the VPoA. But he reiterated that solutions need to start at the national level. He informed the meeting that a number of countries have expressed their commitment to implement the VPoA and to mainstream it into their next national development plans, in a coherent way with other global agendas. He noted the need to support the LLDCs in this regard and reduce the monitoring and reporting burden by enhancing coherence.

He expressed appreciation that a number of recent international platforms addressed development issues that are relevant to the LLDCs, including the UNCTAD XIV, the First UN Conference on Sustainable Transport. He noted that it is important that the Global Infrastructure Forum also takes into account the special needs of the LLDCs and informed how he recently led the discussions between the LLDC Bureau and the World Bank management. He noted the recent large replenishment in the context of IDA18, highlighting the need to ensure allocation to the most vulnerable countries and explore how to best serve the interests of the LLDCs. In addition, the rapid implementation of the WTO Trade Facilitation Agreement is now critical as the Agreement is nearing its entry into force and the upcoming WTO Ministerial Conference in December should give strong impetus to certain outcomes that are supportive to the trade expansion of the LLDCs.

He gave brief overview of the important recent meetings organized by UN-OHRLLS and the developments at the intergovernmental level, including the adoption of the annual resolution on the VPoA and the QCPR resolution which also has strong reflections on giving priority to the most vulnerable countries, including the LLDCs.

Going forward, he expressed commitment of OHRLLS to continuing supporting the LLDCs in actively participating in the global development fora, such as the HLPF and others. Mr. Acharya called on the organizations to continue to provide targeted support, in their respective areas of expertise, to assist the LLDCs in the implementation of the VPoA to enable them to transform from landlocked to land-linked countries.

C. Update on the implementation of the Vienna Programme of Action

The Director of **UN-OHRLLS, Ms. Heidi Schroderus-Fox** noted that UN-OHRLLS is mandated with the monitoring and reporting on the implementation of the Vienna Programme of Action and has prepared last year the annual report of the Secretary-General on the implementation of the VPoA. The report provides an overview of recent socioeconomic developments in LLDCs, the status of implementation of the six priorities of the VPoA and recommendations to accelerate its implementation, as well as a special section on fostering coherence in the follow-up, implementation and review of the VPoA, the 2030 Agenda and other global development frameworks.

She then provided a brief overview of the events and activities that UN-OHRLLS has organized since the last IACG in June 2016. OHRLLS and WTO organized the Fifth Meeting of Trade Ministers of LLDCs, in June in Geneva which adopted a very ambitious Ministerial declaration. Amongst its most aspiring points, the Declaration calls upon international organizations to establish special facilities and dedicated programmes for the LLDCs and calls for establishment of a LLDC work programme within the WTO to help address their specific trade issues.

An HLPF Side Event on Sustainable industrialization and infrastructure to support LLDCs was organized by OHRLLS and UNIDO on 20 July in New York. OHRLLS together with the Chair of LLDCs organized the Fifteenth Annual Meeting of Foreign Ministers of Landlocked Developing Countries on 22 September in New York under the theme “Harnessing coherence in the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the VPoA”.

In light of the recognition of sustainable transport in the SDGs and in the lead up to the Global Sustainable Transport Conference, OHRLLS, DESA and the Government of Bolivia organized the High-Level Meeting on Sustainable Transport of Landlocked Developing Countries on 13-14 October in Bolivia which provided an important platform to share experiences between LLDCs and transit countries. The outcome of the meeting, the Ministerial Declaration, provided important perspectives of the LLDCs that fed into the global conference on sustainable transport.

Under the focus area of infrastructure development, OHRLLS, the Government of Austria, UNIDO and SE4All organized the High-Level Seminar: Accelerating Sustainable Energy for All in LLDCs through Innovative Partnerships on 24-25 October in Vienna. The meeting adopted conclusions and recommendations under four thematic areas: National energy, energy efficiency and renewable energy

Strategies, Enhancing regional cooperation, Financing sustainable energy transition in LLDCs and Building Innovative Partnerships.

In order to raise awareness of the importance of transport and infrastructure for the LLDCs, OHRLLS organized two side events at the Global Sustainable Transport Conference in Ashgabat in November 2016 on Financing Sustainable Transport Infrastructure for Enhanced Connectivity of LLDCs and on Aviation Partnerships for Sustainable Development in LLDCs. OHRLLS also participated in the Third session of the ESCAP Ministerial Conference on Transport in Moscow in December 2016 and provided inputs there. This January, OHRLLS and the LLDC Bureau held consultations with the World Bank to facilitate a continuous dialogue on the special needs of the LLDCs and World Bank support to the LLDCs.

The representative of **UN ECE, Ms. Eva Molnar**, stressed that ECE is contributing to mainstreaming of the VPoA at different levels. She informed the meeting that the resolution for the 70th anniversary session of UNECE's Inland Transport Committee, which was expected to be adopted on 21 February, includes a reference to the implementation of the VPoA. ECE is undertaking a number of capacity building activities, events, policy dialogue to facilitate capacity of countries to improve border crossings, contributing to the operationalization of the VPoA. ECE offers the regulatory framework for transport, as well as a number of guidelines for border crossing facilitation and also organized several side events during the First UN Conference on Sustainable Transport on border crossing facilitation. In terms of connectivity, the Euro-Asia transport linkages project, which is coming to end of third phase, has provided a lot of concrete results on how to address bottlenecks in transport. Ms. Molnar also mentioned a project on development of advanced GIS system, which will be replicated in cooperation with Islamic Development Bank in their African members.

ECE has been undertaking efforts to promote accession to UN transport conventions, in particular the TIR and Harmonization Conventions, including through cooperation with OHRLLS in this regard, but there are still around 24% of the UN members who have not joined any of the UN transport conventions. Ms. Molnar noted the recent accession of China to the TIR Convention which will facilitate access to wider markets for many LLDCs and said that next focus should be on India and a number of LAC and African countries in order to unlock the LLDCs. She also stressed that new conventions are needed to be developed. ECE has been developing the unified railway law which is close to completion. The importance of monitoring progress towards the SDGs and cooperation of all stakeholders was highlighted, noting the DESA led efforts to develop indicators as well as the recent initiative led by World Bank on Sustainable Mobility for All.

The representative of **UNCTAD, Mr. Paul Akiwumi** highlighted that UNCTAD contributes to VPoA implementation through policy research and analysis, technical cooperation for capacity building and intergovernmental consensus building. He highlighted recent analysis that revealed that LLDCs face challenges such as weak productive capacities, export competitiveness, unemployment and lack of an overall structural economic transformation, as well as enormous difficulties to connect to regional and global commodity value chains including in sectors where they have comparative advantages. Two of the flagship reports of UNCTAD are of particular relevance to LLDCs include the Economic Development in Africa Report and the Least Developed Countries Report that were launched earlier this year. He noted that the findings of these reports could be useful for agencies in headquarters but also in the field and requested OHRLLS to inform UNCTAD on the specific issues to be potentially included in the reports.

In terms of technical assistance, UNCTAD has recently offered support to a number of countries, including to one LLDC, Uganda through project on building productive capacities to upgrade and diversify their fish exports. Uganda's success in gaining access to the EU market provides a promising example to the other beneficiary countries of this project. Mr. Akiwumi highlighted UNCTAD's interest to work with other agencies to replicate this example in other countries. On technical cooperation for capacity building, LLDCs benefit from UNCTAD's interventions in the areas of international trade, investment, debt management and customs automation or modernization. In addition, UNCTAD's intergovernmental machinery and the work of the secretariat assist LLDCs to fully integrate into the international system and the global economy and play a role in the debates and events that are directly relevant to them.

Mr. Paul Wessendorp of UNCTAD informed the meeting on UNCTAD's flagship annual World Investment Report. The annual reporting on investment trends and prospects for LLDCs will continue as part of the annual report as well as through special issues of UNCTAD's Global Investment Trends Monitor. In 2016, UNCTAD prepared Investment Policy Reviews (IPRs) for Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan, which brings the total to 15 policy reviews for LLDCs, while requests from another 11 LLDCs were received. In terms of international investment agreements, UNCTAD also advised COMESA, SADC and the East African Community on regional investment policy initiatives and provided training on international investment policies to officials of 15 LLDCs last year.

UNCTAD also continues to carry out advisory work and training on investment promotion in LLDCs. For example, a project on green investment which provided training to officials from 10 LLDCs, was recently completed and a new project to help forge partnerships between inward investment promotion agencies (IPAs) in developing countries and outward investment institutions in home countries for the preparation and marketing of bankable Sustainable Development Goals projects has started.

UNCTAD also launched during the 2014 UNCTAD World Investment Forum the third edition of its Investment Guide to the Silk Road, which outlines the investment climate and opportunities in Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan. A new edition of this Guide is planned for 2018. In addition, UNCTAD has produced national investment guides for seven LLDCs. Lastly, UNCTAD has given out a number of its annual investment promotion awards to agencies from LLDCs, which demonstrates improvements in the investment promotion capacity in landlocked countries.

Mr. Poul Hansen of UNCTAD highlighted that UNCTAD works with many international and regional organizations on the TFA and will continue to work with developing countries, including LLDCs on its implementation. This includes issues of ratification, categorization of provisions, project proposals, establishing national trade facilitation committees, and implementation of Article 11 whose implementation is difficult for many countries. UNCTAD will continue to support countries through capacity-building training, sharing of good practices and trade facilitation standards, etc. In terms of transport, UNCTAD is working to support capacity building in developing countries to shift to sustainable freight transport through UNDA project. Phase I focuses on East Africa's Northern and Central corridors and phase II will focus on developing island countries.

The representative of **WCO, Mr. Luc De Blicck**, focused his intervention on the transit handbook that WCO developed in 2014. The Handbook deals with many of the aspects of operation of customs procedures, comprising a lot of experiences from WCO members. It is aimed at improving transit regimes which is critical for LLDCs who are dependent on smooth flow of goods.

WCO recently undertook the exercise to transform the transit handbook into transit guidelines, which will be launched during the global transit conference in Brussels on 10-11 July 2017. He informed that invitations will be sent out soon. The WCO secretariat organized 3 regional workshops to develop these guidelines, in Abidjan, Lusaka and La Paz, where customs administration shared their national experiences on transit and many development partners and regional and international organizations provided their inputs. The next workshop will be in May in Central Asia. He noted that WCO would be happy to receive additional comments from the participating organizations. In addition, in supporting the implementation of the TFA, WCO also supports countries through its Mercator programme.

The representative of the **WTO, Mr. Raul Torres**, stressed that the Trade Facilitation Agreement (TFA) is only 2 ratifications away from reaching the necessary number for the agreement to enter into force. By 8 February, 15 LLDCs and 20 transit countries have ratified. The benefits of the TFA include an estimated 15.4% average reduction in trade costs for LLDCs. TFA is also expected to help LLDCs to attract investment, generate more customs revenue, lower corruption and increase export diversification by enhancing their capacity to participate in global value chains and lowering barriers for small firms to join international trade.

TFA can also serve as a model on how WTO members can craft special and differential treatment provisions that take into account the individual member's capacity to implement new obligations. In terms of the implementation process, WTO has already received 93 category A notifications, including 17 from LLDCs and 20 from transit countries (7 are fully ready to implement article 11 and 8 to partially implement it). Members are also providing notifications of commitments in Categories B and C and WTO is working with different agencies to help countries categorize those provisions. Mr. Torres highlighted the importance of early notifications so that countries can take full advantage of the technical assistance and capacity building facilities available.

On aid for trade (Aft), Mr. Torres informed that the biennial Aid-for-Trade Work Programme for 2016-2017, with the theme of "Promoting Connectivity", continues the work on reducing trade costs and addresses supply-side capacity and trade related infrastructural constraints faced by LLDCs, particularly in e-commerce, services and in upgrading infrastructure. The preparations are ongoing for the sixth global aid for trade review which will take place on 11-13 July 2017. The responses to monitoring questionnaires will provide insights on the Aft needs of members and the effectiveness of the Aft received. WTO already received 63 responses from partner countries (including from 16 LLDCs), 37 from donors, 3 from south-south partners and 7 from RECs and transport corridors.

For example all LLDCs that replied said trade priorities were included in their national development strategies and most identify export diversification, trade facilitation and transport infrastructure as their Aft priorities. On e-commerce, half of the LLDC respondents said that they had a national e-commerce strategy, but high shipping costs were amongst the most common challenges identified to join e-commerce flows. All LLDCs said that their development strategy includes investment climate promotion. Aft flows to LLDCs in 2014 were \$6 billion compared to \$6.2 billion in 2013, but regional Aft disbursements were up from \$2.7 billion to \$3.1 billion. Lastly, potential deliverables for the next WTO Ministerial Conference include reductions on agriculture domestic support, how to help smaller companies to trade, and how to harness the power of e-commerce to support inclusiveness.

The representative of the **World Bank, Mr. Ferran Pérez Ribó**, stressed that the World Bank Group is firmly committed to the VPoA implementation as it aligns well with the twin goals of ending extreme

poverty and boosting shared prosperity. In terms of the SDGs, the World Bank's niche is to work on data, financing and implementation. He mentioned that in December of last year, a record \$75 billion commitment was made for the IDA replenishment, noting its innovative aspects and many priorities that are relevant to LLDCs. He also mentioned the launch of the Sustainable Mobility for All initiative.

The World Bank actively supports the LLDCs' agenda as part of its country programs and LLDCs can also benefit from a number of trust funds. These resources support a range of development activities including infrastructure, transport, connectivity, and trade. Over the past 10 years the World Bank has provided financing amounting to \$51 billion dollars to LLDCs. Between July 2014 and May 2016, 28 new VPoA lending projects were approved or submitted for approval, valued at over \$3 billion, with more than half of the portfolio focusing on Africa.

World Bank undertakes activities related to priorities 1, 2, 3, 4 and 6 of the VPoA, specifically through working with 29 LLDC governments on bilateral and regional transit arrangements, border cooperation and joint approaches to standards; transport & ICT projects; support to activities aimed at improving transport corridors (including specific projects to facilitate transit on the Abidjan-Ouagadougou corridor by supporting the increasing of competition in dock services at the port and the trading services in both countries) and simplifying, streamlining and harmonizing border procedures. The Bank's transport portfolio includes \$42 billion and 217 projects realized in 78 countries, with one fourth of all transport-related programs focused on enhancing the connectivity and regional integration of LLDCs.

The representative of **IRU, Mr. Jens Hugel** highlighted that IRU remains committed to continue to implement the VPoA by supporting countries with their trade and transport facilitation activities and as such fully support actions set out in VPoA. He noted that there will be a new momentum for the VPoA in 2017 given that the WTO TFA will come into force, the UNECE Inland Transport Committee meeting, and the momentum created by the Ashgabat Sustainable Transport Conference.

There has been increasing willingness from UN Members to harmonize border crossing procedures with a view to facilitating trade and transit of goods across borders, which will have positive effects on volumes of regional and global trade. The tried and tested UN conventions such as the TIR and Harmonization Convention are the best tools for harmonization. Some success stories of 2016 include China ratifying the TIR Convention and Pakistan becoming TIR operational. These developments have triggered a lot of interest in Asia and IRU is hopeful that Vietnam, Bangladesh and India will start implementing the TIR convention as well. He announced that IRU will participate in the meeting in Vietnam.

The representative of **ITU, Ms. Vanessa Gray**, highlighted that ITU has maintained a dedicated programme for LLDCs since 2003 and special resolutions have been adopted for implementation in favour of LLDCs. ITU continues to make efforts through leveraging the power of ICT and broadband for the implementation of the VPoA and is working with different partners and stakeholders to improve connectivity of LLDCs in the most effective and transformative manner. ITU continues to carry out different projects and activities under priority 2(b) of the VPoA.

ITU is assisting the LLDCs in decreasing high transport and ICT infrastructure development; ensuring that appropriate technical standards are developed, with efficient legal and regulatory frameworks; employing of Broadband Wireless Networks; development of ICT applications and development of national ICT broadband network plans. Assistance is also provided in the areas of emergency

telecommunications, including a project to set up an early warning system in Zambia, and for cybersecurity and human capacity building in Rwanda. Another example of ITU's focused support to LLDCs is ITU's work to help the transition of Bolivia and Paraguay from analogue to digital broadcasting.

Ms. Gray also noted that ITU has mandate to track progress that developing countries, including LLDCs, are making towards becoming information societies and will publish information society index. The 2016 edition of the global ICT development index revealed that 3 of the 10 most dynamic countries were LLDCs – Rwanda, Bolivia and Bhutan.

The representative of ITC, **Ms. Fernanda Leite**, highlighted that ITC is committed to implement 70% of its resources in LLDCs, LDCs and SIDS, but in 2016 this share amounted to more than 80%. ITC's interventions are focused on soft infrastructure related to trade and investment with a strong emphasis on women's economic empowerment. In LLDCs, ITC work is targeting sectors with high female participation such as textiles in Burkina Faso and Nepal, horticulture in Lesotho and tourism in Laos. Another highlight of ITC's work in the LLDCs is the program on non-tariff measures business surveys which have been conducted in Burkina, Ethiopia, Malawi, Mali, Rwanda, Uganda as well as in Kazakhstan and Paraguay. The findings of these surveys can help to better understand the obstacles to trade faced by the private sector in the LLDCs.

ITC works closely with other partners, such as UNCTAD and ECE on trade facilitation. ITC has also prepared a number of publications, ranging from a step-by-step guide for governments to set up National Trade Facilitation Committees, to analysis explaining the benefits of the Trade Facilitation Agreement from the business perspective and spelling out how to ensure SMEs in LLDCs can realize these gains.

The representative of ESCAP, **Mr. Oliver Paddison**, informed the meeting that the 12 Asian LLDCs in the region continued to make progress in implementing the VPoA, but an economic transformation from a centrally planned economy to free market economy in 9 of them, as well as continuing uncertainty in global trade and investment flows and low commodity prices are compounding LLDCs' development challenges. ESCAP was involved in several activities and organized a number of initiatives in 2016 to enhance the efforts of mainstreaming and implementing the VPoA. For example, an expert group meeting was held in November 2016 to examine the progress in the regional implementation of the VPoA. ESCAP also co-organized a Ministerial Conference on Transport in Moscow in December 2016, which adopted the Regional Action Programme for Sustainable Transport Connectivity. On the SDGs, ESCAP also organized training workshops on the SDGs in Nepal and Lao PDR, on infrastructure development financing in Nepal and on improving data and statistics in Tajikistan, Kyrgyzstan, Mongolia, Nepal and Lao PDR. ESCAP also actively supported LLDCs in building national capacity in trade policy formulation and analysis and supported the preparation for free trade agreements in Mongolia.

Mr. Paddison also highlighted that ESCAP is promoting regional integration in central Asia, through the UN Special Programme for the Economies of Central Asia (SPECA) which was recognized as important forum for implementation of the SDGs and VPoA. ESCAP has also undertaken seminars and pilot projects on green growth in some LLDCs. In addition, ESCAP is collaborating with external actors, undertaking project with GIZ on fostering the diversification of LLDCs, paying particular attention to the China-led

Belt and Road Initiative. Regional workshop was held in May, as well as national workshops were held in Mongolia and Lao PDR, with second regional workshop to be held in Bangkok.

The representative of **UNFCCC, Ms. Julie Amoroso-Garbin**, highlighted UNFCCC activities towards implementation of the VPoA, that stem from the work on LDCs, given that 17 of them are also LLDCs. UNFCCC is assisting in building the capacity of LDCs to implement the convention, its Kyoto protocol and the Paris Agreement, which includes amongst other things, the National Adaptation Programmes of Action (NAPAs). The NAPAs were established to support the LDCs to address the challenge of climate change given their particular vulnerability. They enable the LDCs to identify and implement priority activities that respond to their urgent and immediate needs with regard to adaptation to climate change. The LDC Expert Group provides LDCs with technical guidance in preadaptation of the NAPAs, implementation and monitoring and in identifying bottlenecks and challenges faced by the LDCs and working with relevant partners to address those. A total of 231 NAPA implementation projects had been approved by the GEF Council for funding from the LDC Fund and 11 countries had completed the implementation of one of their NAPA projects.

Ms. Amoroso-Garbin stressed that the COP established National Adaptation Plans (NAPs), providing an opportunity for developing countries, including LLDCs to address medium to long term adaptation needs and priorities. The NAPs carry two objectives: to reduce vulnerability to the impacts of climate change, by building adaptive capacity and resilience; and to facilitate the integration of climate change adaptation, in a coherent manner, into relevant new and existing policies, programmes and activities. As at 06 February 2017, six NAPs had been submitted to the UNFCCC, one of which is from an LLDC. UNFCCC is providing technical guidance and support to developing countries for the process to formulate and implement NAPs.

In terms of financial support, there is the Green Climate Fund to which are attached provisions for better enabling the LDCs to access the funding and for expediting support for the formulation of NAPs and implementation of the policies and projects identified by them. Under the LDC Fund, there are three approved projects that are aimed to advance the process to formulate and implement NAPs for Senegal, Rwanda and Chad. UNFCCC conducted the NAP Expo 2016 entitled “Advancing NAPs post-Paris” in July 2016 to promote exchange of experiences and foster partnerships between a wide range of actors and stakeholders on how to advance NAPs. Ms. Amoroso-Garbin also mentioned NAP Central which is a main repository of data, information and resources on national adaptation plans.

The representative of **CFC, Mr. Andrey Kuleshov**, informed the meeting that CFC operates on project basis and seeks to enable the contribution of commodity production and trade to development of countries dependent on those commodities. Since the adoption of the VPoA, the CFC recognizes LLDCs as a special vulnerable group of countries eligible for priority support in CFC financed projects. He noted that CFC is operating on the basis of an open call for proposals. In 2016 about 200 different projects were received in the open call, of which 21 have been selected for further consideration. 51 projects came from LLDCs, of which 4 were selected as suitable for CFC financing, with total value of \$3.5 million.

CFC pays special attention assessing the impact of projects, and particularly on measuring their contribution towards the SDGs. Developing new instruments specially tailored address the needs and deliver development impact in special vulnerable groups occupies an important place in the work of the

CFC. Among these are public-private impact investment funds and development impact bonds as new instruments with great potential value in achieving sustainable development. Mr. Kuleshov noted that the use of these more complicated instruments requires involvement of various partners and called on the participating agencies for collaboration. He noted that all LLDC projects came from Africa and that some LLDCs, particularly those in Central Asia are facing a particular challenge in becoming Members of the CFC. However, the main barrier to becoming member of CFC is lack of information and understanding of the facilities of the CFC.

The representative of the **EIF Executive Secretariat, Mr. Simon Hess**, stressed that there are strong synergies and linkages of the EIF with the VPoA and the 2030 Agenda. The EIF continues to work on key areas in the implementation of the VPoA, and the new phase from 2016-2022 will include focus on even more key areas for LLDCs, including a stronger focus on regional trade, technology and building inclusive trade.

The EIF is working with UNCTAD in linking the analysis in the Diagnostic Trade Integration Studies in Ethiopia and Djibouti with a joint validation and working session focusing on trade facilitation and linkages between the two countries. Similar initiative was undertaken with the World Bank for the Diagnostic Trade Integration Studies for Malawi and Zambia.

The EIF also continues its major focus on productive capacity building and value addition, including through projects in Rwanda (supporting small-scale traders' trade), Zambia (increased linkages between honey producers and processors), Mali (mango processing), Lesotho (horticulture), Uganda (support to businesses), Malawi (supporting small-scale farmers), Nepal (Ginger, medicinal and pashmina products) and Lao PDR (developing the national quality infrastructure and industrial statistics development).

The representative of **UNIDO, Mr. Koffi Edme**, highlighted that UNIDO remains committed to supporting vulnerable countries on their path to industrialization, thus to poverty alleviation. As part of its contribution related to its Global forum function, UNIDO organized a number of events. This includes a side-event on "Enhancing Africa's Structural Economic Transformation through Agenda 2063 and Inclusive and Sustainable Industrial Development (ISID)", in collaboration with the African Union Commission and the Government of Kenya, on the margins of the TICAD VI, held in August 2016 in Nairobi, Kenya. The 1st International Agro-Industry Investment Forum was jointly organized by UNIDO and the Ethiopian government from 5 to 7 October 2016, in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia and the 5th ISID forum co-organized by UNIDO and the Government of Senegal in November 2016 which shared experiences and results of UNIDO's pilot country partnerships programmes and how to implement them at the regional level. UNIDO and OHRLLS also organized the High-Level Seminar: Accelerating Sustainable Energy for All in Landlocked Developing Countries through Innovative Partnerships with the Government of Austria in Vienna, on 24-25 October, as well as a side event during the 2016 HLPF on Sustainable industrialization and infrastructure to support LLDCs.

In terms of technical cooperation, UNIDO developed a new type of assistance: the Programme for Country Partnership (PCP) which ensures strong partnerships between countries, development and financial institutions and private sector. The PCP were piloted in Ethiopia and Senegal in 2014 and replicated in Peru in 2016. UNIDO also continues to deliver technical assistance to LLDCs through its regular country programmes which help in ensuring implementation of VPoA and 2030 Agenda, which are ongoing in Afghanistan, Burkina Faso, Chad, Lesotho, Niger, Uganda, Rwanda and Zambia. Bhutan

and Lao PDR also benefited from UNIDO's technical cooperation. In some cases, UNIDO implements stand-alone projects, such as in Malawi to enhance the performance of the national bureau of standards or in Mali to support resilience capacity of youth and women. In addition, UNIDO produces various publications focused on LDCs and LLDCs, including a report to G20 on how to strengthen industrialization in Africa and LDCs

The representative of **WHO, Mr. Wasiq Khan** stressed that health is the outcome as well as contributor to development. He noted that WHO is making direct contribution to LLDCs through its country officers and by working directly with Government, civil society, the UN and other partners. WHO is currently undergoing some structural changes, focused on strengthening of country offices. The WHO in Geneva has recently started collecting data on LLDCs, cognizant of the need to have a central database on health indicators, and will be able to contribute to data on health specific indicators in LLDCs for the next IACG. The data is being collected as a step towards advising on national policy. He noted that WHO is looking at the various regional platforms in order to get all LLDCs to benefit from the momentum of the regional blocks and other groups such as BRICS that offer opportunities for development. WHO is also advocating for LLDCs to be included in the next BRICS health meeting.

The representative of **UN WTO, Ms. Zoritsa Urosevic**, stressed that tourism is included in VPoA, as well as in the SDGs; particularly SDGs 8 and 12 which include targets related to tourism and sustainability and competitiveness. She noted that trade in services represents 10% of GDP and 7% of total exports. Tourism was the third export earning category in 2015 after fuels and chemicals. For LLDCs specifically, international arrivals in LLDCs grew from 1% of world share in 1995 to 2.6% in 2013, while UN WTO would like to see this to increase to 4% in 2025. Tourism receipts of LLDCs represent 1% of total tourism receipts, while UN WTO is aiming for this to increase to 2% by 2025. She noted that LLDCs are very rich in natural and cultural assets and tourism is creating jobs for youth and women.

UN WTO is working on analysis to help understand where tourism is placed in the 2030 Agenda and how the different stakeholders that are implementing the SDGs can make progress on the tourism related targets. The two main streams for the next Aid for Trade review are connectivity and market access through ICT, with tourism also having its place there. She noted that UN WTO has a dedicated programme on sustainable tourism and participates in the Silk Road initiative with UNESCO. UN WTO will participate in the EXPO 2017 on Future Energy in Astana. Furthermore, 2017 has been approved as the international year of sustainable tourism for development and UN WTO has a number of activities planned.

The representative of **UNOSSC, Mr. Adam Rogers**, noted that while not specifically targeting the VPoA, UNOSSC seeks to promote south-south solidarity for the achievement of the SDGs. He noted that UNOSSC would welcome suggestions on how to increase collaboration, especially in lead up to the 40th Anniversary of the Buenos Aires Plan of Action for Promoting and Implementing Technical Cooperation among Developing Countries.

He informed the meeting that the eighth annual Global South-South Development Expo took place from 31 October to 3 November in Dubai. The theme of 2016 Expo was South-South Cooperation: Enhancing innovation towards achieving the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. It was attended by close to 700 delegates from 91 countries, more than 25 UN system organizations and 124 other institutional partners. More than 20 thematic topics related to South-South and triangular cooperation for sustainable development were discussed; over 170 concrete Southern-grown development

solutions and initiatives presented and 90 Southern-grown development solutions, technologies and initiatives exhibited.

In addition, against the backdrop of the One Belt One Road initiative, UNOSSC and China International Center for Economic and Technical Exchange (CICETE), in collaboration with other UN entities, established the Maritime and Continental Silk Road Cities Alliance: Unlocking Trade, Investment, Sustainable Development at the Local Level in 2015. This initiative is connecting cities along the historical Silk Road to facilitate collaboration and mutual exchange in a number of social and economic areas.

The representative of **UNESCO, Ms. Clare Stark**, noted that UNESCO supports the implementation of the VPoA, as well as ensuring coherence with the 2030 Agenda. UNESCO is leading work on the education 2030 agenda, including through leading the multi-stakeholder education 2030 steering committee. UNESCO has been organizing regional consultations with its partners and recently held regional meeting in LAC and Caribbean with education ministers. Other regional meetings are planned for 2017.

UNESCO has developed guides on how to translate SDG4 at the national level. UNESCO is also working on science, technology and innovation issues, including supporting number of LDCs and LLDCs in developing their STI reviews. UNESCO is also active in supporting LLDCs in data capacity development, including through its institute for statistics. In terms of knowledge products, UNESCO has a number of major flagships reports, published a report on sustainable cultural tourism together with UN WTO and recently issued major report linked to SDG 11 on sustainable cities.

The representative of **UNEP, Ms. Ellen Daltrop**, informed the meeting that UNEP assists countries, including LLDCs, in the implementation of their national environmental policies upon request. Support to LLDCs is done in the context of UNEP's medium-term strategies and programmes of work, which have seven thematic priority areas, namely, climate change; disasters and conflict; ecosystem management; environmental governance; harmful substances and hazardous waste; resource efficiency and sustainable consumption and production; and environment under review.

On priority 2 of the VPoA, UNEP is supporting countries in: Improving understanding of science-policy interfaces; policy advice for strengthening of policy and institutional framework policies; Stimulating uptake of low carbon/carbon neutral and resource efficient technologies and practices; and Promoting sustainable production, consumption and lifestyles. On energy infrastructure, UNEP's Projects and initiatives include promotion of energy efficiency measures, support to developing countries to develop Technology Needs Assessments and creation of enabling conditions for energy efficiency and renewable energy investments.

On priority 3, UNEP leads the Green Economy Initiative (GEI) to assist countries in integrating environmental and social considerations into economic and trade policies. It also launched the Environment and Trade Hub in 2015, which offers capacity building and related policy advice on sustainable trade and investment. The GEI also contributes to priority 5, by providing analysis, advisory and policy support for investing in green sectors and in greening environmentally unfriendly sectors. Other initiatives include the Partnership for Action on Green Economy, 10-Year Framework of Programmes on Sustainable Consumption and Production Patterns, UN Environment Finance Initiative and the work of the Poverty-Environment Initiative in Asia Pacific. On priority 4, UNEP supports regional and sub-regional ministerial forums for policy exchange and priority setting as well as facilitating

consensus building on key environmental issues. On priority 6, UNEP focuses on technology support and environmental capacity building. UNEP is also working with UN Country Teams to mainstream environmental sustainability in One UN Programmes and UNDAFs so that UNCTs become better able to assist countries in addressing their environmental challenges.

Ms. Daltrop also informed that UNEP Executive Director will be attending the Expo 2017 in Astana, where UNEP will also have a booth with energy and climate stories and celebrate the UN Environment Day at the EXPO.

UN DESA submitted a written input to the meeting, focusing on the 2017 High Level Political Forum on Sustainable Development (HLPF). The HLPF is UN's central platform for the follow-up and review of the 2030 Agenda. The GA resolution on follow-up and review of the 2030 Agenda at global level (A/RES/70/299) outlined the themes of HLPF over the next three years as well as the sets of SDGs to be reviewed in-depth together with the annual review of means of implementation (incl. Goal 17). The 2017 HLPF will be held from 10 to 19 July 2017, on the theme "Eradicating poverty and promoting prosperity in a changing world", focusing on SDGs 1, 2, 3, 5, 9, 14.

GA Resolution A/RES/67/290 on the format and organizational aspects of HLPF decided that the meetings of HLPF "shall devote adequate time to the discussion of the sustainable development challenges facing developing countries, including the most vulnerable countries, in particular the LDCs, SIDS and LLDCs and African countries, with the aim of enhancing engagement and implementing commitments " (para11). In addition to having a session dedicated to countries in special situations, LLDCs are also showing increasing interest in the Voluntary National Reviews (VNRs) at HLPF. In 2016, there was only one LLDC (Uganda) participating in the VNRs out of the 22 participants. In 2017, there will be Afghanistan, Azerbaijan, Botswana, Ethiopia, Nepal, Tajikistan and Zimbabwe. It will be an opportunity for other LLDCs too, to raise questions at their VNR presentations and learn from the experiences they share, particularly on how they address LLDC-specific challenges.

D. Way forward and consultations on planned events and activities in 2017 of importance to LLDCs

A representative of **UN-OHRLLS, Ms. Gladys Mutangadura** highlighted some of the key upcoming events that OHRLLS will be working on. The High-Level Euro-Asia Regional Meeting on Improving Cooperation between LLDCs and Transit Countries on Transit, Trade Facilitation and the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, will be held from 7-9 March 2017, in Hanoi, Vietnam. It is co-organized with and hosted by Government of Vietnam, with funding support from the IRU and WCO. The Meeting is being organized as part of the follow-up and implementation of the VPoA, the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the WTO TFA. It will be attended by Ministers and senior government officials from LLDCs, transit countries, development partners, United Nations organizations and relevant international, regional and national organizations, private sector and NGOs. The meeting will provide a platform to share ideas, lessons learnt, good practices, future policies, and initiatives and offer recommendations on how to improve transit issues for increased connectivity and trade potential of both the LLDCs and the transit countries and achievement of the SDGs.

OHRLLS is also planning to organize an LLDC side event during HLPF in July 2017 in New York, focused of aspects of SDG 9, as well as an event focused on the private sector as a follow-up to the private sector

track of the Second UN conference. An annual ministerial meeting of the LLDC during the high level segment of the General Assembly will be held in September.

The representative of **UNFCCC** informed that UNFCCC and the LDC expert group are organizing 5th NAP Expo on 11-13 April to advance formulation of NAPs. The expert group will also hold five regional workshops on formulation and implementation of NAPS this year. The aim is to enhance the capacity of LDCs and LLDCs to develop national adaptation solutions, explore linkages with SDGs, help countries to access funding from the GCF and enhance collaboration.

Representative of **UNCTAD, Mr. Benjamin McCarthy** noted that over the course of this coming year UNCTAD will be ramping up a project on "Indices for benchmarking productive capacities for evidence based policymaking in landlocked developing countries." The project will assist the LLDCs to know where they stand with respect to their productive capacities and the process of structural transformation and how they can use the information to formulate policies to enhance their strengths. This project is being discussed at a workshop in Botswana, with more workshops in Lao PDR and Rwanda and other LLDCs to come over the course of this year and the next.

The representative of **UNIDO** informed the meeting that the Vienna Energy Forum 2017 will be held on 9-12 May in Vienna, with the theme "Sustainable energy for the implementation of the SDGs and the Paris Agreement". The Second International Agro-Industry Investment Forum will take place in October 2017 and the UNIDO General Conference will be held from 27 November to 1 December 2017 in Vienna where UNIDO is planning to hold an LLDC side event.

The representative of **the World Bank** informed that the 2017 Global Infrastructure Forum, organized this year by IADB and EIB, will be held on 22 April at the same time as the Spring meetings. World Bank and DESA and other partners are actively engaged in the preparations. The overarching focus of the meeting will be on delivery and implementation of sustainable development but plans include more focus on the role for national development institutions, with emphasis on need to foster early planning, project preparation facilities to build bankable sustainable projects as well as how to deliver and scale up access to infrastructure financing options. He noted that there is room for engagements from different stakeholders in order to make the process inclusive.

The representative of **ECE** mentioned that a paper on the assessment of logistics competitiveness of Tajikistan is about to be published. She also mentioned that within the context of SPECA annual meeting for transport and border crossing facilitation, there is a special working group meeting which was last year combined with training on transport statistics. This exercise is likely to be repeated in 2017. In addition, Poland and ECE are working with Netherlands to host global conference for countries with navigable inland waterways in Poland in October 2017. In Europe, there are very advanced regulatory and institutional frameworks for inland water navigation which can be shared with other regions. By end of 2017, ECE will also publish regional study on transport adaptation and hotspots for adaptation measures in the region.

Other upcoming meetings that were highlighted earlier in the meeting include: the Sixth Global Aid for Trade review to be held 11-13 July 2017; the WCO Global Transit Conference 10-11 July 2017; and the High-Level Political Forum to be held from 10-19 July 2017.

E. Conclusion

In closing, **Mr. Acharya** noted that there are many dedicated programmes for LLDCs and encouraged for those to be scaled up given that those farthest behind require most assistance. To those organizations that do not have dedicated programmes for LLDCs, Mr. Acharya urged to look at how to give due priority to LLDCs within their programmes. Given that many LLDCs are also LDCs, there may be opportunities to explore. LLDCs have acknowledged that the SDGs focus on human development, but are also linked to economic growth while making sure that their growth is not undermined by disasters and climate change impacts. He stressed that LLDCs face many challenges and that by promoting their interests, we can contribute to global stability. He highlighted the importance of national leadership, but also the need for regional and international cooperation.

Annex I: List of Participants

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Annex II: Agenda

Fourth Inter-Agency Consultative Group Meeting on the Follow-up and Implementation of the Vienna Programme of Action for LLDCs

8 February 2017
Room S3, World Trade Organization, Geneva
Agenda

10:00 – 10:15	Opening session <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Opening by Mr. Gyan Chandra Acharya, Under-Secretary-General and High Representative for the Least Developed Countries, Landlocked Developing Countries and Small Island Developing States (UN-OHRLLS)
10:15 – 12:15	Update on the implementation of the Vienna Programme of Action <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Presentation by UN-OHRLLS on the progress in the implementation of the Vienna Programme of Action and activities in second half of 2016• Presentations by participating organisations on their efforts to mainstream and implement the VPoA – ECE, ESCAP, IRU, ITC, UNCTAD, UNFCCC, UNOSSC, UN WTO, UNDP, UNIDO, WCO, WTO, World Bank, etc. (ECLAC, UN DESA – written inputs)• Discussion and proposals for improved follow-up and implementation
12:15 – 13:00	Way forward and consultations on planned events and activities in 2017 of importance to LLDCs <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Presentation of upcoming events<ul style="list-style-type: none">○ High-Level Euro-Asia Regional Meeting on Improving Cooperation between LLDCs and Transit Countries on Transit, Trade Facilitation and the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, 7-9 March 2017, Hanoi, Vietnam○ LLDC side event during HLPF, July 2017, New York○ LLDC private sector event• Presentations by participating organizations on their planned activities and events for 2017• Discussion and proposals for collaboration on planned activities
15:00 – 15:50	Way forward and consultations on planned events and activities in 2017 of importance to LLDCs (<i>continued</i>)
15:50 – 16:00	Conclusion <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Summary of discussion and concluding remarks by Mr. Gyan Chandra Acharya, Under-Secretary-General and High Representative, UN-OHRLLS