

**(Pre-recorded message)**  
**Statement by**  
**H.E. Mr. Sirojiddin Muhridin**  
**Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Tajikistan**  
**at the Annual Meeting of Ministers of Foreign Affairs**  
**of landlocked developing countries (LLDCs)**  
*(23 September 2020, 08:00-11:00, virtual meeting)*

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3 min

*Theme: Partnering for accelerated implementation of the VPoA and achieving sustainable development in LLDCs in the COVID-19 Era*

**Distinguished Mr. Chair,**  
**Distinguished Under-Secretary-General and High Representative for LDC, SIDS and LLDCs,**  
**Dear colleagues,**  
**Ladies and Gentlemen,**

We stand at pivotal crossroads in our history.

Unprecedented in its scale and impact, the COVID-19 pandemic that began as a health crisis has quickly become the worst socio-economic crisis.

In this regard, we welcome the call by the United Nations Secretary-General to tackle the health emergency and focus on the social impact and economic response measures.

**Mr. Chair,**

Despite some progress in implementing the VPoA, there are still significant gaps and challenges that need to be addressed.

To this end, advancing the issues of transit and transport, international trade, information communication technology, regional integration, trade facilitation, and climate change, among other things in the COVID-19 era, would be paramount for the interest of the Group.

Tajikistan pays special attention to promoting and expanding sub-regional and regional trade.

We believe particular attention should be given to the development of infrastructure, enhancement of competitiveness and trade, regional cooperation, and assistance for economic growth and sustainable development.

To this end, the construction of the interregional transmission line – CASA 1000 aimed at exporting electricity from Tajikistan and Kyrgyzstan to Afghanistan and Pakistan which will increase the wellbeing of the population and ensures energy security in the region, becomes important. It will also lead to an increase in industrial production and trade in the Central and South Asia regions.

**Mr. Chair,**

LLDCs are the most water-stressed countries. Water challenges are exacerbated by the effects of climate change prevalent in the LLDCs, such as desertification, drought and land degradation, as well as water-related natural hazards.

In our opinion, one of the prominent platforms to address water-related challenges would be International Decade for Action' Water for Sustainable Development', 2018-2028 (Water Action Decade), which each member of the Group supported in 2016.

To fulfill the mandate of the resolution 73/226 on 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. We hope you will render your valuable support to my delegation in co-sponsoring and advancing the abovementioned draft resolution through the General Assembly this year.

I thank you for your attention.