

**STATEMENT DELIVERED BY PERMANENT  
REPRESENTATIVE OF TURKEY, HE MR FERIDUN H.  
SİNİRLİOĞLU AT THE ANNUAL MINISTERIAL MEETING OF  
LANDLOCKED DEVELOPING COUNTRIES**

**(23 September 2020, 08:00-11:00)**

Excellencies, ladies and gentlemen,

It is a great honor to be with you today.

I would like to begin by congratulating Kazakhstan for taking over the chairmanship of the Group of Landlocked Developing Countries (LLDCs), and thank Paraguay for their commendable leadership.

The world has been utterly shaken by a global health crisis since our last meeting in September. The pandemic has triggered an economic downturn with acute repercussions on the functioning of open markets and global supply chains.

Unfortunately, as many developing countries, LLDCs have also been severely hit by this crisis. Their geographical disadvantages, coupled with interruptions in cross-border transport networks, caused wide disruptions on their access to essential goods, including food and vital medical supplies.

As a transit, and a donor country, Turkey has taken every measure to ensure that no one is left behind in implementing an effective Covid-19 response plan.

We removed customs tariffs on essential medical equipments including masks, ventilators and respiratory devices from certain countries to ensure the continuity of supply chains.

We granted exemption from COVID-19 related restrictions to road vehicles and cargo planes traveling in and out of Turkey to guarantee uninterrupted flow of food and medical supplies.

To date, we have responded to medical equipment needs of more than 140 countries and 7 international organizations, and

we will continue to work with our partners to help others cope with the adverse effects of COVID-19.

Excellencies,

This year marks the beginning of the “Decade of Action” to implement the Sustainable Development Agenda.

However, the current international economic system remains far from addressing the vulnerabilities of LLDCs.

The existing architecture for international cooperation is insufficient to offer a large-scale and coordinated response to their challenges, including the current pandemic.

We need to increase our efforts to strengthen the integration of LLDCs into the global trading system, and foster a rules-based international economic and trade environment for their sustainable recovery.

In this vein, Turkey supports the related G-20 and IMF initiatives, including the debt service payment suspension. Such measures have been instrumental in those countries in creating more fiscal space to focus on the immediate health response.

We closely follow the Secretary-General’s “Financing for Development” initiative, and support the discussions around improving the capacity-building of LLDCs in terms of allocation of resources and utilization of innovative financing models.

There remains more to be done on these issues at the IMF, the World Bank, the G20 as well as the UN.

Excellencies,

Unfortunately, the weak production capacities still overshadow LLDCs’ prospects for inclusive growth and sustainable development.

Diagnostic tests and basic equipment are still lacking to fight against the spread of the virus and ensure effective medical responses.

The provision of affordable and rapid supply of vaccines and antiviral drugs is urgently needed.

The UN Technology Bank in Turkey, together with the World Health Organization, UNDP and UNCTAD, launched the “Tech Access Partnership (TAP)” initiative to increase local production of essential medical technologies in developing countries.

The initiative brings together innovators, manufacturers and the academia with local manufacturers in developing countries to share data, knowledge and other necessary support.

Furthermore, opening of the World Health Organization (WHO) Geographically Dispersed Office for Preparedness for Humanitarian and Health Emergencies in Istanbul early this month will support global efforts to effectively respond to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Dear friends,

We need to make sure to align our response and recovery efforts with the Sustainable Development Agenda, and accelerate the implementation of the Vienna Programme of Action.

LLDCs failure to attain sustainable development goals will have global implications.

Turkey will continue its efforts to keep the vulnerable groups and countries in special circumstances, including the LLDCs, high on our agenda, especially in these trying times.

Thank you.