

UNITED NATIONS



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THE SECRETARY-GENERAL

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**REMARKS AT ANNUAL MINISTERIAL MEETING OF FOREIGN
MINISTERS OF LANDLOCKED DEVELOPING COUNTRIES**

21 September 2023

(To be delivered by the Chef de Cabinet)

Excellencies,
Ladies and gentlemen,

I am pleased to be with you at this important gathering. The Secretary-General regrets not being able to join you today and asked me to deliver the following statement on his behalf.

Excellencies,

Let me begin by thanking the delegation of Botswana for the exemplary leadership of the Group of Landlocked Developing Countries at this pivotal time.

We are at the halfway point of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, and the Vienna Programme of Action is drawing to a close.

Let me be frank: the picture before us is bleak.

Yes, we have achieved some progress.

But the combined effects of the COVID-19 pandemic, the ramifications of the war in Ukraine, including global supply chain disruptions, and the escalating climate emergency and rising cost of development finance are pushing us backwards.

The specific challenges and vulnerabilities of Landlocked Developing Countries are well-documented.

But they do not receive nearly enough global attention and support.

Solidarity is missing in action – just when we need it most.

Excellencies,

We need solidarity – and we need action.

First, action to reform an outdated, unjust, and dysfunctional financial system.

That is why I have been advocating for deep structural changes to make global governance – including the Bretton Woods system – truly universal and more representative of the realities of today’s economy, and more responsive to the needs of developing economies.

But I know that change takes time. Which is why I have put forward concrete measures we can take right now, including an SDG Stimulus of at least \$500 billion per year.

Together with more contingency financing for countries in need, and a more effective debt workout mechanism, these measures would go a long way in ensuring you have the financing you need to weather today’s multiple crises and invest in sustainable development.

I am encouraged by the support expressed in the Political Declaration for the SDG Summit and the recent G20 Leaders’ Summit in New Delhi. Now we must move to implementation without delay.

Excellencies,

The question of resources is also critical in relation to the climate crisis.

Across many LLDCs, the climate crisis is already destroying lives and livelihoods – from rapid desertification and persistent drought to dramatic biodiversity loss and fast-receding glaciers.

At the same time, you are in a prime position to reap the rewards of the renewables revolution and advance an energy transition that is sustainable, just, inclusive, and equitable.

But to do so, LLDCs need much more support – along with much quicker access to financing.

That is why I will continue to push developed countries to finally make good on their financial commitments – including by meeting the \$100 billion goal, doubling adaptation finance, operationalizing the loss and damage fund, and robustly replenishing the Green Climate Fund.

In all these priorities and more, the United Nations stands with you.

Together, we can lay the foundation for a more resilient, diversified, and sustainable future for all people – women and men, children and youth – of landlocked developing countries everywhere, leaving no one behind.

And it starts with making the Third United Nations Conference on LLDCs in June of next year a success.

The conference is a crucial opportunity to chart a path forward for the decade ahead.

To realize transformative change in the lives of over 500 million people, which include some of the most vulnerable people on earth.

And to forge a new generation of multi-stakeholder partnerships across LLDCs, transit countries, and development partners – global in reach, local in impact.

I salute the Government of Rwanda for agreeing to host – and I want to assure you that the entire United Nations system is mobilized to ensure a successful and decisive conference.

Excellencies,

I was heartened to learn that all Landlocked Developing Countries surveyed on our reform efforts said that the UN's activities were aligned with their needs and priorities, with real impact on the ground.

The United Nations is proud to be your partner – today and in the future.

I wish you every success.

Thank you.
