Statement of the President of the Republic of Kazakhstan, Chair of the LLDC Group Mr. Kassym-Jomart Tokayev at the High-level Meeting on Financing Development in the Era of COVID-19 and Beyond)
(28 May 2020, virtual meeting)

Dear Secretary-General,
Distinguished colleagues,

On behalf of the Group of 32 Landlocked Developing Countries (LLDCs), I commend Secretary-General **António Guterres**, and the Governments of **Canada** and **Jamaica,** for convening this High-Level Event.

The COVID-19 crisis has put at risk the development gains of all countries. The **LLDCs are among the worst hit** with severely tightened external financing; disrupted trade, supply chains and investment flows, with persistent marginalization from international trade.

The international community must therefore strengthen **inclusive multilateralism** to ensure that no country is left behind and that the 2030 SDG Agenda is implemented.

On behalf of the Group, **I want to echo our support to UN-led efforts, and call** on all development partners to deliver collectively across all seven action areas of the **Addis Ababa Agenda**.

Ladies and gentlemen,

Facing this unprecedented Pandemic, **we cannot run business as usual**. The well-being of each of us depends on the well-being of all of us.

In this regard, on behalf of the LLDC group, I call for concerted actions in the following areas.

First, we must address **debt vulnerabilities** by suspending debt repayments to international creditors. Innovative solutions like debt-to-health swaps channeling additional funds to health systems should be offered by international financial institutions to all developing nations.

Financing regional development projects in exchange for debt relief should also be considered.

Second, it is critical to preserve and improve the **food economy** as an essential part of the socio-economic response to address the disruption of food supply chains and the compromised food security around the globe, with a special emphasis on labor-intensive agricultural sector.

Providing a wider access to **clean potable water** will help increase the resilience of national health systems and enhance the food economy.

Third, the LLDCs, LDCs and SIDS need to transfer to green technologies and climate-proof agricultural sector on which they rely most heavily for food security to combat **climate change**.

Fourth, the WHO, IFIs and the pharmaceutical industry must work collectively to develop, test and produce safe, effective, and affordable **COVID-19 tests, medicines and vaccines**, in accordance with the 19 May resolution of the World Health Assembly.

Fifth, we should broadly stimulate more active **engagement of private businesses in sustainable development projects**, including through the PPPs.

Specifically, we call for more private investments to overcome **digital inequality** and inadequate Internet connectivity.

Sixth, international community must halt imposing **new trade-restrictive measures**, which have grown almost 10 times larger than two years prior. International trade should restore its genuine role as an engine for development.

All the six priorities demand a special focus on the most vulnerable groups in our societies: **women, youth, children, persons with disabilities and older persons**.

Excellencies,

I would now like to say a few words in my **national capacity**.

Kazakhstan has financially contributed to the **Global Humanitarian Response Plan** and provided **humanitarian assistance** to several countries to tackle the virus.

We stand ready to further utilize **the 16 UN Agencies in Almaty** to facilitate coordination across Central Asia for SDG related experience-sharing and capacity support.

Kazakhstan is capable of contributing to global efforts in the key sectors of food security, efficient and affordable COVID-19 treatment, and mediation in conflict-resolution and peacebuilding.

To conclude, let me reiterate the unfailing support of the LLDC Member States in implementing the global development agenda.

I thank you.